



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MINDY TATZ CHERNOFF

TED Talks Horses

Whether it's illustrating a speech or serving as a therapy horse, this American Quarter Horse finds ways to inspire others.

By Alexis O'Boyle

WHEN MINDY TATZ CHERNOFF GAVE A TEDx TALK IN WILMINGTON, Delaware, last year, the audience was treated to an opening slide of a beautiful gelding. As she talked about how horses heal, transform and empower people, she thought about how the horse in the photo, Tack Change, had done just that for her.

TED Talks initially started as a single conference on technology, entertainment and design (TED, for short), but have evolved into nationwide events that feature short speeches on a variety of inspirational or thought-provoking topics. Mindy added her voice to the conversation as owner and founder of The Resonant Horse, a Newtown, Pennsylvania, therapy center for those who have witnessed trauma or sustained emotional damage or physical injuries.

"I believe every lesson in life can be learned or taught in a barn. Sometimes, it just takes getting out of the mundane

routine of life and stepping into a new perspective to gain the healing we crave," Mindy says.

Mindy's own journey to healing started after a challenging divorce. She went back to college and earned a master's degree in spiritual direction and holistic medicine from Chestnut Hill University in Philadelphia. Mindy hoped to help others through their own personal struggles. And that led to her next endeavor, one that not only encompassed her education and life experience, but also her burning passion — horses.

The Resonant Horse is, without a doubt, Mindy's pride and joy. And 28-year-old Tack Change, aka "Snickers," is helping her in her mission, after the two friends took a hiatus of more than two decades from one another.

"God brought Snickers back" into her life, Mindy says.

Mindy grew up in the suburbs of northwest Chicago with



Mindy came to own "Snickers" in 1992 and loved showing him. He quickly became a family favorite, even giving rides to Mindy's young children.



her parents and older sister, Jody. Although her childhood home was not exactly in horse country, that didn't stop Mindy from cultivating a love of the equine species that would last a lifetime. Whether she was in the show ring or lost on the trails for hours, with nothing but herself, her horse and a candy bar in her back pocket, Mindy simply could not stay away from her beloved horses.

In their younger years, Mindy and Jody both showed horses. But as Mindy grew older, major life events started to occur: high school drew to a close, college started, and Mindy began to drift away from her horses and riding. She married and relocated to the outskirts of Philadelphia, where she and her husband raised two children. With a family, career and college degree under her belt, Mindy could not help but dream about her younger days and the horses she once knew and loved. So, slowly but surely, Mindy jumped back into her lifelong passion, this time as an instructor.

Around the time Mindy started to give lessons, her father recognized that his daughter was missing one crucial thing: her own horse. So, he asked Jody to find her sister a horse. With \$2,500 in her pocket, Jody began the search, and a few months later, she found a horse that she said would "suit Mindy's needs beautifully." It was a 4-year-old gelding that went by the name of Tack Change (Mr. Kane Raiser-Tonto Time Raliegh by Sir Raliegh). The gelding was in Ocala, Florida, not far from where Jody lived, and he was soon on his way to Pennsylvania.

Mindy recalls bursting into tears when the stunning gelding backed off the trailer.

"He had that once-in-a-lifetime personality from the get-go, with talent to match," Mindy says. Those qualities were put to the test in multiple disciplines – western pleasure with Mindy and three-day eventing with her daughter's friend, Janelle Wilson. Janelle bought Snickers when Mindy decided to sell him in 1994 after the birth of her third child.

Last year, Snickers and Mindy reunited due to nothing but sheer luck and God's timing. Mindy remembered the day clearly: "I received a phone call from a woman who said

she bought Snickers from Janelle (who had left for college) a few years back, and she was interested in selling him, due to her lack of time because of family matters. I couldn't believe my luck."

As one could imagine, the decision to bring Snickers back to Pennsylvania was not a difficult one, and with that, Mindy purchased the gelding for the last time, and he was hauled to his forever home with Mindy. Today, Snickers helps with the therapy at The Resonant Horse, helping others just as he helped Mindy.

"These animals truly do heal, transform and empower people to be the best versions of themselves that they can be. I know this because a grulla gelding by the name of Snickers did just that for me," Mindy says tearfully, "and he continues to do just that for everyone he meets to this very day." 🐾

Alexis O'Boyle is the fall 2016 AQHA Media intern.

Download a QR code scanner app on your smartphone to watch Mindy's TEDx Talk while you're reading this story. Or go to our digital edition and find the link to that video. Instructions for accessing the digital magazine are on Page 56.

