An Introduction to Training & Handling Camels

Using Trust Based Handling Technique

By Russell Osborne
Hi I'm Russell Osborne. In this document I explain the basics of training wild camels to becoming domestic, working camels. There is a lot more to the entire process than what can be described here in this blog and camel training should only be done under the instruction of a trained professional. In saying that, the relationship developed between camel and handler depends on the level of trust that is achieved.

Training camels from the wild is exciting, challenging, is time consuming but also, extremely rewarding. Wild camels must first be found, mustered into yards for selection of which camels are to be trained and which camels are not.
All camels can be trained but some are naturally easier than others to handle and train. An experienced trainer will be able to tell the difference from a herd of wild camels.

Selecting the camels for training. Each camel from the wild herd is individually 'tested' for suitability for training. "It's all in the eye."

This process can be dangerous and all senses need to be on high alert. The trick here is to keep at a safe distance from the young wild camel. Camels of about 2-3 years of age are most suitable for training.
Using an experienced working 'coach' camel to assist with the training of a young wild camel is invaluable to the entire process. The young camel senses a level of comfort with the older, more mature camel. By using the coach camel, it is less dangerous to tie the young wild camel to the rails of the yard ready for training. Once tied to the rail, the coach camel is also tied to the rails, close to the young camel but not so close that they will be in the way of the training process.
Let the camel come to you. At the camel will be scared out of his wits. His rope will be tight to the rail and at this stage, don't initiate any contact. Eye contact with a camel at this stage can be seen as a threat. Only after the camels curiosity has taken over and they are sniffing you continuously, (Hint: wear a hat), gentle contact in a non-threatening manner is made with the camel. Gain his trust that you are not going to hurt him. This is critical in developing a successful bond between you and the animal.
One of the critical training aspects of camel training is to teach the camel to "hoosh" (sit) on command. A camel who cannot do this because they haven't been taught, is of no use to a cameleer. "Hooshing" is natural behavior for camels, all camels know how to do it. The trick is to get them to do it on command. In this picture below the stick is used only as a tool to "tickle" the camel to encourage the hooshing of the camel. At no stage should the use of violence be used. It is totally unnecessary, cruel and (hopefully for where you live), illegal.
By using the coach camel again, the young camel is at ease when in the halter training phase of his development.

Eventually, when the young camel will have enough trust in you as the handler, you will be able to lead the young camel around without the use of the coach camel. At this stage, the young camel can be turned out to let him know that there is an end to all of the training, poking, prodding, hooshing and being led around.

**Everything must be introduced to the young camel in a non-threatening manner.** By doing this, the trust level between handler and camel shall rise to new heights.

Allow the camel to become familiar with all of the equipment. **If done correctly, the camel will have no fear of the gear that will be strapped onto him.**
By stringing up the young camels up with older, mature and trained camels, taking them on a long walk will settle them down and prepare them into their new life.

On this trek (below) of training six young camels, they were walked seven hundred kilometers.
ABOUT RUSSELL OSBORNE

My passion for camels and in-particularly, the trust based handling techniques I have acquired through expert mentorship from Australia's foremost cameleer, Mr Phil Gee, has led me to a point whereby I strongly encourage others to adopt this incredible technique of camel handling.

All of the participants of the Outback Australian Camels Safaris receive a taste of this technique. All leave with an incredibly strong bond and love for the camel and in many instances, a totally changed perspective on what the camels are all about.

Passion doesn't stop there. The Trust Based Handling Techniques are a major part of the worlds only Camel Expedition Training Course, Cameleer Training Academy & Camel Training Academy of which Australian Camels is proud to assist those who want to take up the immense challenge of conducting their own camel expedition or train/handle their own camel(s). Getting the right information from an experienced camel expeditioner & camel handler could mean the difference between success and failure in situations where failure isn't an option, especially when it comes to remote expedition work.

My personal aims are to train as many strongly committed, adventurers into the art of camel expedition adventures and to assist others to build a strong understanding of camel psychology, offering them my wide experiences of living and working in isolated and remote regions of Australia, the training I undertook from Mr Phil Gee as well as the training and experience of having completed the two year transcontinental expedition titled: "The Darwin to Melbourne Thank You Camel Expedition 2008-2009."
The sheer joy of taking adventurous people on a camel trek safari and seeing the change in the participants over the week, towards camels, the environment and themselves is nothing less than staggering. The desert never lies and when in such a remote location, with no vehicle back up, no roads or tracks to rely on, where pure wilderness totally surrounds you, there are no options left but to reflect upon the life left behind in mainstream society and to plan your future direction in life. It just happens out there and to be trekking into such a region where nature rules, we once again become a part of the entire environment surrounding us.
It's very powerful stuff indeed!

Finally, my passion to share the stories of a life in the bush, of living with Aboriginal groups throughout the Australian deserts, the coastal regions of Arnhem Land and the Kimberley Region, Western Australia, the experiences I have gained with extensive travel to and living with numerous indigenous races around the globe and the messages of hope I share of global co-operation for a better world through my public speaking engagements, provides inspiration for the listeners to fulfill their own passion and dreams. Assisting others to strive for their personal best and never to accept defeat, unfounded criticism and negative influences when the dreams and goals are strong enough is a passion without doubt.

Camels are a gift to us all when allowed to be and it is my life goal to share the skills, knowledge and sheer pleasure of connecting with that gift with as many other ambitious and adventurous people as possible.

Many say that I am a passionate man with passionate dreams, goals and ambitions.................you know what? They are right.

Author, Transcontinental Cameleer,
CEO Australian Camels, Children First Ambassador,
Coach Mentor & Public Speaker.
AUSTRALIAN CAMELS CAMELEER TRAINING ACADEMY

Camel Expedition Training Course

Trust Based Camel Handling Course

Wild Camel Training Course

Outback Australian Camels Safaris and Treks

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Camelman Dreaming is the true story of a dream that took fifteen years in total to complete. The Darwin to Melbourne Thank You Camel Expedition 2008-2009 resulted in over $30,000 raised for the Children First Foundation along with national and world wide awareness of the Foundations goals of saving and changing children’s lives in need of specialist medical procedures.

Russell Osborne, the creator of the Darwin to Melbourne Thank You Camel Expedition 2008-2009, had been a lecturer in English on the Gold Coast of Australia when in an instant, he had developed a self-driven purpose to walk the continent of Australia with a herd of camels for a children’s charity after a bout of depression following the death of his mother.

Not knowing a single thing about camels, camel expedition work, the deserts of Australia, navigation and how to organize a transcontinental crossing through some of the harshest and most isolated desert regions on the planet, he set his goals with unwavering determination to “Get the Job Done”.

The camel expedition arrived in Melbourne exactly the same time as the successful separation operation of conjoined twins, Trishna and Krishna, from Bangladesh, whom the founder of the Children First Foundation, Moira Kelly AO, had arranged for the twins operation at the Royal Children’s Hospital.

Arriving at the Royal Children’s Hospital on the 22/11/2009, after walking with the eight pack camels and Ros Consoli some 6500 kilometers, the expedition and its supporters thanked Moira Kelly for her selfless life of changing and saving children’s lives.

This book is Russell Osborne’s personal account of the thirteen years of preparation and the two years of walking across the continent of Australia to achieve the dream.

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