

Missing Coffin Bone Tip: A Horse Named Destiny

by Ute Philippi

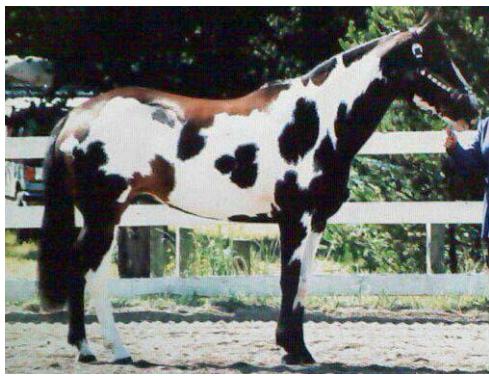
This is the story about a mare who was missing the tip of her right front coffin bone. She is now completely sound and under saddle. She showed everyone what is possible, if only given half a chance. Traditional hoof care was unable to heal her hoof. The remaining option was to try to rehabilitate her hoof barefoot...

I had first noticed her on a local rescue forum. The current owner wanted to re-home her, because she could not get the right resources to help her with her hoof issues. I wished to take her on as a rehab case, but it was not possible at the time. This was in the fall of 2011. Her name was Destiny. Little did I know at the time how much we were destined to get together, so I could try and help her.

About 2 months later, a client of mine told me she had taken on another horse and wanted me to come and look at her, to see what we could do about her hoof issues. The more we talked, the more familiar the horse sounded. I asked my client: "Would this mare's name be Destiny?" and she said "Yes, how did you know?!" And so our journey began.

Sketchy Past

Her history is sketchy. We were never able to exactly piece together how long she has had hoof issues, but it was at least for a couple of



An old photo from Destiny's show days, many years ago.

years, and she's also had some foals along the way. We got a hold of an old photo of her, in which the right front looked rather normal. It suggests that the trouble with the right front was man-made. All we know for certain is that she suffered from horse care professional ignorance for some time.

She is left side dominant, which means she loads her left front hoof more, making it wider and flatter. Since the right front is loaded less, it tends to grow more upright. This is often referred to as high/low syndrome and is, unfortunately, still too often incorrectly addressed through trimming. It is



Destiny with her foal laying down beside her in the summer of 2011.

All photos courtesy Ute Philippi



The condition of Destiny's right front hoof at the end of 2011. X-ray below taken in December 2011.



the primary reason why her right front hoof became this bad.

The Rehabilitation

Her rehabilitation started in December 2011. The x-ray of her right front looked pretty discouraging. All we were hoping, at the time, was to try to do the best we could, and make her as comfortable as possible. She also had a big hole in the sole at the toe, from an old abscess blowout.

We addressed diet and started to re-establish correct hoof balance, and supported what was growing around the altered coffin bone. She slowly and steadily began to improve, but remained slightly lame. She kept stepping short with the right front leg, despite foreleg stretching to help her regain normal range of motion.

Then, one day in late summer 2012, her owner took the other horse away for a short trailer ride and she literally RAN herself sound! The short stepping essentially developed from compensation for the hoof problem she had, but at the same time it also created bad muscle memory, which altered her right front leg movement. It looked like lameness, yet it was not. It took her frantic running to break through this, and showed us how much bad muscle memory CAN influence rehabilitation!

After that, we never looked back. She had a few minor set backs due to abscessing, but she



Destiny in January 2014.

One cannot say something is not possible until it has been thoroughly tried, as this story shows so well! Never give up as long as there's hope!



(Left to Right) Hoof photos show what we started with in Dec. 11, then Jan. 12, Feb. 12 and Nov. 12—when she became sound.

All photos courtesy Ute Philippi



essentially remained sound and has been under saddle since late spring 2013 and is doing great.

Never Give Up

Destiny showed us what was possible with the right approach and her owner's dedication. This mare got ALL the support she needed to become well, including bodywork sessions. Without < Destiny and her dedicated, happy owner.

this strong dedication, she probably would have never made it. Most horse care professionals would have probably recommended to put her down.

One cannot say something is not possible until it has been thoroughly tried, as this story shows so well! Never give up as long as there's hope! This lucky girl has an exceptional human taking care of her. Fate brought us together to help a mare named Destiny. It is what miracles are made of! 🍀

©2014 Ute Philippi. About the author: Ute is a natural hoof care provider since 2007, and a licensed human and animal bodywork practitioner since 2005. She specializes in fascial release techniques and barefoot hoof rehabilitation. For more info and case studies, visit her website at: www.balanced-step.com or Balanced Step on Facebook.

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