

## **“BEFORE YOU RIDE...VISUALIZE!! MENTALLY BUILDING CONFIDENCE”**

### **SEMINAR OUTLINE**

- Your thought process has the power to determine the direction of your session with your horse, like a self-fulfilling prophecy. We as humans tend to anticipate worst case scenarios and snowball them in our head, don't get caught in this trap with your equine partner.
- Mental rehearsal can take up to 2-4 weeks to start working, keep practicing daily, do not give up.
  - Make sure to do 5-10 minutes a day during a quiet time, first thing in the morning, on a lunch break, before bed, etc...
- Good or bad, what you anticipate is usually what you get.
  - Learn to do away with negatives and reinforce positives.
  - The power of positive thinking is a powerful thing.
  - Many equine professionals visualize rides/runs before they take them and have fantastic outcomes, follow their example.
- See where you are at....
  - Visualize your normal equine scenario in your head...
    - What happens? Good? Bad?
    - Why do you think you visualize this happening?
    - Let's start to reprogram your thoughts
- Erasing the negatives.
  - Start your ride in your head, every time you envision something negative happening, shake your head, erase that thought and start over!!
  - Keep this up until you can “visualize” an entire ride/session without negatives popping in.
  - Practice this daily, it may take weeks before you can accomplish a “negative free” mental ride.
- Insert confidence builders.
  - Once you can envision the positive session, start to through in some curve balls.
    - You need to build your confidence in yourself that you can handle negative situations without disastrous results.

- Visualize yourself handling this “bump” in the ride with ease and moving on to complete a successful session.
  - Start to make the “problems” you interject into your visualization a little more daunting....and visualize yourself and your horse working through it confidently and competently.
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- Write down affirmations, make them simple but powerful, repeat these when feeling negative or discouraged. Post them throughout your job, home, etc...
  
  - The key is to believe in yourself and your horse enough to know you are capable of having a great, drama free ride BUT also that you can and will handle problems without major consequences.
    - Your rides/sessions will NOT always go perfectly but being mentally prepared on how to handle yourself and your horse is half the battle already won!!
    - Do NOT let your negative thoughts ruin your time with your horse!! You can get past those mental demons, visualization exercises can and do help!!

***Before you ride...visualize!!! The power of positive thinking can be one of your best tools when it comes to interacting with your horse.***

We as humans have a tendency to focus on and expect the worse scenario to happen in our minds, before we even start the task ahead. We envision things going wrong and in doing so we sabotage ourselves.

It does not help that we are constantly bombarded by videos and pictures of disastrous situations on television and the internet. These images burn themselves into our brains and rear their ugly head whenever we may be entering a similar situation ourselves.

When this negative thought process enters your equine life it impacts and effects how we interact with and handle our horses. It can in essence become a self-fulfilling prophecy!! So how do you go about stopping your visions of getting bucked off, kicked, run over, and so on.... Change your thought process!!!

Whether you tend to envision physical accidents, negative behaviors from your horse or simply blowing your next class at a show this process will help!! If you become nervous about riding your horse alone, with other horses, when it's windy, at a new location, and so on...it doesn't matter, visualization exercises will help!!!

Before any actual physical interaction with your horse you need to accomplish a "mental" test run. Let's begin.... In your head visualize the situation you are about to enter with your horse going perfectly in your head, from start to finish. Every time your mind wants to interject negative scenarios you need to start over. I find it helpful to actually shake my head clear of these negative thoughts and restart my "mental video". Do not stop until you can complete the video without any negativity trying to enter in. It may take quite a while to accomplish this the first few times but it will get easier!! You can practice any time of day at any place when you find yourself with some free time. Practice makes perfect. When we become confident in our handling of our horse things will naturally go better. You are teaching yourself to think positively and that will also turn itself into a self-fulfilling prophecy!!

The next step is to run your mental video and purposely add in some possible problems that could arise and visualize yourself dealing with them and working through them successfully! This will increase your confidence in being able to handle yourself, your horse, and a less than desirable situation that will inevitably occur at one point or another. One day your horse will spook, another horse will kick out at you on the trail, you will blow that maneuver in your showmanship class...etc.... The trick is to believe in yourself enough to get through it!! If you've practiced in your head how you will handle it safely and productively you will be much more likely to succeed when the moment comes that you need to handle the situation in reality.

I have used this technique hundreds of times myself and have my clients routinely practice this when confronted with a situation they may have developed a negative thought process about. Whether it's before your next class at the show, before you mount up for a trail ride on a windy day, before you ask your horse to canter after you've fallen off in the past, or any other possible mental roadblock these visualization exercises will get you over it and on your way to success with your horse!!!

***If you believe in yourself and your horse, you have won half the battle already!!!***

