

# HOW MY CLIENTS WENT FROM FRUSTRATED AND ANXIOUS TO ENJOYING EVERY MOMENT OF THEIR RIDING

THE FIRST 21 THINGS I MAKE SURE ALL MY CLIENTS KNOW AND DO



COACHING FOR  
CONFIDENCE



1. If you want to increase your enjoyment and confidence your self-esteem needs to improve and this can only happen if we take charge of your self talk.
2. When you speak negatively to yourself this has the same effect on your confidence as someone else putting you down constantly.
3. Know that you do have control over your self-talk. YES - it takes effort to start changing the way you speak (the longer you've been negative towards yourself the more effort it takes) BUT each time you make the effort you will find the effort needed next time reduces, until it is no effort at all and you find it fairly natural to be nice to yourself. How lovely would that be!
4. So now you know the above!...Stop describing yourself from a place of 'I'm not confident' to other people or coaches. For example 'I'm Alex and this my horse Paz, I'm working on my balance and confidence in my seat in the canter' is much better for your mindset than 'I'm Alex, this is my horse Paz who's awesome I just can't ride / I'm a nervous nelly, I only want.... x/y/z)
5. Stop comparing your first go to someone else's 50th, your 50th to someone else's 100th and so on. Social media is terrible for this - what you're looking at is not a fair comparison.
6. Know that once upon a time even William Fox-Pitt couldn't rise up and down properly in trot. He practised and he got better. It doesn't matter how basic or complicated the thing is you're trying to master. The same rules apply. It is not meant to look perfect when you're learning.
7. Get really comfortable that the journey will not always feel like its on a upwards projectile. My clients who succeed are the ones who are OK with this. They know that this is horses - this is sport - this is life. Things that are not going our way do pass. Allow the disappointment of course. As soon as you can look for the solution, what is going to get us moving again.
8. Understand that fear is learnt. You were not born scared to ride horses. Some of you might feel like you were but you weren't . You learnt to be. Through everything you saw, everything you heard and were told, everything you felt and of course experienced.

9. Know that if fear was learnt it can be unlearned. Look back at the experiences you feel may have impacted you negatively and pay attention to the perception you have of them. For example maybe you had a whizzy pony and always did badly at dressage so you came to conclusion that you were more of a happy hacker... but when you look back you actually did incredibly well to just keep said pony in the arena at all? Or maybe... you had a fall and decided you were not good enough for your young horse because people had been feeding this information to you since you got him, but actually when you look at that incident anyone could have fallen? And the horse actually only reacted how any horse would have reacted? Being young was irrelevant ... I could go on!....

10. As human beings we are wired to focus more on negativity. So you have to really focus on bringing more positivity into your life. Make yourself notice good things about the way you ride, the way you look, your positive attributes, say them out loud. Rainy day... don't talk about how rubbish it is... maybe theres something positive? Did that hack in the rain make you feel connected to nature and alive. It is a choice to change your perspective.

11. Protect yourself from negativity going forward. If someone is re-inventing a fall or a negative experience it is your job to move the conversation on politely. You could even explain to people close to you why you're doing this so they don't feel you don't care. You've just learnt that actually their negativity WILL add to your own fear - and theirs for that matter.

12. Make a point of changing your focus onto things that you do well first - and then say it out loud! For example someone says how did your horse school? You say good! I felt like my position is getting stronger... then if you like you can then say you still need to work on the transitions BUT you didn't say 'Oh i just can't get these transitions' ... changing your focus is soooo important. Even if at the moment it's hard to find something you were pleased with. Try. Over time you will notice yourself being happier with yourself without trying!

13. Know that a LOT of people have been exactly where you are. This is not to call you out like your situation is not important. but just so you know you are not alone, and that it is not forever. EVERYONE can regain confidence and enjoyment in their riding.

14. Let go of the start point. Some of us have advantages and some of us have disadvantages. You have to draw a blank. Other peoples start point doesn't change yours. Start where you are.

15. Look at people who are doing what you want to be doing not with envy or bitterness. But ask 'Right what are they doing that I'm not?'...
16. Understand what a confident you would be like. Get to know that rider. How would they walk? How would they talk? How would they present themselves around the yard? How would they ride? - Now what's the gap? The gap between that person and you now?
17. Go and make a change that closes that gap!
18. Make a small teeny tiny step regularly - not one big step occasionally  
No step is too small - if it helps you get it done do it!
19. Understand and implement correct bitesize training on your horse - I always say to clients work 80% in your comfort zone, consolidate consolidate consolidate! Then 20% of the time can be spent pushing the boundaries a bit. A bit being key! You need to find what I call the training zone. This is where you feel your learning OR you feel your horse is learning but you still feel you've done your homework and it's more than likely to go well! I use this rule within one training session and over the course of the week.
20. Know that somedays it is just not a day for expanding the comfort zone. Whether your horse is stressed - your tired - whatever it is I don't mind ... there's always another day.
21. When you don't do the thing you planned DO NOT beat yourself up. This only lowers your self worth and makes it less likely you will feel like you can do it the next time you try. Instead look at why you didn't do it and find the solution. Maybe you were just tired. Fine go home and have a rest. Maybe you were genuinely too busy - also fine! Maybe you know really you could have but you were nervous also fine! How can you make it easier next time? Could you ask for someone to be there? Could you make the step smaller? Could you work your horse from the ground first?

**I'M VERY EXCITED FOR YOU THAT YOU'VE TAKEN THIS FIRST STEP. REMEMBER IF YOU LEARN SOMETHING BUT DO NOTHING IT IS AS GOOD AS NOT LEARNING IT! SO PICK THE ONE THING FROM THIS LIST THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU - AND START WITH THAT!**

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