



## Welcome to your free 5 step guide to building your rider confidence

### STEP 1 – Positive Focus

Think about what you do want not what you don't want!

We get what we think about. Rather than focusing on the negative find the positives, if you want to get a nice trot what are you looking for?

Ideally, a good rhythm and a consistent pace that's easy to sit or rise to. Forward energy - you need to feel as though you are moving forward actively, but this should be within your comfort zone.

What else would you like?.....write your own objectives.

### STEP 2 – Avoid Failure

Do not set yourself up to fail. Positive thought will help to prevent negative experiences, negative thought will lead to negative outcomes. Have you ever heard someone say "well I knew that wouldn't go well"?

If you know something isn't going to go well then don't do it!

Different factors can affect the objective we had planned with our horse that day such as time limitations, daily chores and things that have already happened that day.

For example, a new horse has arrived, as a result, all the other horses including your horse are excited. You have planned all week to have a calm relaxing hack on that day. This plan will now need to change! If hacking causes you anxiety, then you may have already start to play-out your 'bad movie' before you even get tacked up.

I would suggest that you do not hack. Instead do something that you are already confident with, such as schooling, long reining, grooming and just taking him off for some nice grass.

Do not set yourself up to fail! Change the outcome and be in control. Add to the positive experience not the negative, by doing this we help to maintain your confidence and you can successfully hack another day.

### **STEP 3 – Know Your Tool Belt**

If we assemble a tool belt it will be ready to use when needed.

Get your tool belt as well equipped as you can. Practice using these tools regularly so when you need them in an emergency you can use them instinctively, for example practising right flexion (shoulder-in) could help you safely move yourself and your horse out of the way of traffic.

What is in your tool belt right now?

What would you like to add to your tool belt?

### **Step 4 – Stay Within Your Comfort Zone**

Run your own race! Ride your own ride!

Peer pressure can be debilitating, sometimes it can make us push on too quickly and make us do things we just do not feel ready for and are simply not ready for. This can make us feel anxious and inadequate.

I would say that this is a big factor in the equestrian world and we need to be aware that not everyone wants to do what the next person is doing. If your goal is to happily ride your horse in walk or groom and simply lead it around the block then do so. If you want to canter around the woods or jump then do so. This is your time, your horse, your money and your energy that have been invested in this.

You may have been riding for a number of years and others think that by now you should be happily cantering around the school. But why should you? If you do not want to or do not like to, then don't!

If you would like to do some of these things but you do not feel you are capable of them, then work on the tool belt. Invest in regular lessons or ride an experienced horse that gives you more confidence and helps you to get the 'feel' of shoulder-in, etc.

Confidence is a feeling built on developing competence, a belief of being certain.

## Step 5 – Set Realistic Goals

Set small goals and feel good about them and keep these goals within your comfort zone. As each goal is achieved, it becomes part of your skill-set and you can move on to your next goal.

Top tip - break down each main goal into smaller goals.

For example, your ultimate goal is to jump a 2ft double fence.

Start by working on pole work and add this to your tool belt.

Begin with three poles set a trotting distance, ride over these on both reins concentrating on rhythm and straightness.

Then set another three poles out at trotting pole distance at the intended jump area.

The second set can then be changed into a jump.

When you are happily trotting over the poles followed by the jump, the first set of poles can then become a jump. You now have your double fence.

What is your goal? How can you break into down into smaller goals?

