

Random Thoughts

1. Being a rider is more than just learning to control the horse.
2. When we ride, we must first learn to control ourselves. It is a wasted opportunity not to include this concept in the lessons.
3. Being a rider is a state of mind. It requires clarity and focus as do all things important in life.
4. Being a rider means you have learned to put the needs of someone else ahead of yours.
5. Being a rider means seeking solutions that help you communicate.
6. Being a rider means specializing in non-verbal communications.
7. Being a rider requires humility and the understanding that you are not the first person who has encountered a particular situation.

8. *Being a rider means seeking out advice from those who have come before.*
9. *It is of great benefit in the training of our horses if we stand on the shoulders of giants.*
10. *Being a rider means we understand that the horse did not necessarily seek us out.*
11. *One need only look at the equipment which has been used in the past to understand that the horse's willing cooperation has not always been a priority.*
12. *Being a rider means we understand that as willing as the horse is, much of what we ask him to do goes against his nature.*
13. *Being a rider means striving to help the horse enjoy his work.*
14. *A rider must strive to explain what he wants his horse to do in ways that the horse can understand.*
15. *A rider must learn more than just to ride in order to ride well.*

16. *There are few things in life as refreshing as the honesty of horses.*
17. *Horses make us strive to be leaders.*
18. *There is a certain euphoria when a 1200 pound animal says 'yes, I understand'.*
19. *Horses can teach us to act in a way that gains their respect. The benefits of this are many.*
20. *Horses teach us that our success is based on partnership not bullying.*
21. *Horses help us learn a second language.*
22. *If we approach the horse as his teacher rather than his master, things will seem easier.*
23. *Punishing a frightened horse makes no more sense than punishing a frightened child.*

24. Horses, like people, learn at different rates and in different styles. A good trainer recognizes this.
25. When the horse thinks of you as someone he can trust, he will be more likely to trust the situations you put him in.
26. Before your foot steps in the stirrup, there is so much else to know.
27. The word “pull” should be eliminated from any conversation about the use of the reins.
28. Evolution caused the horses jaw bone to elongate, increasing the distance from his eye to his mouth. It helped him see all around while grazing and gave humans a convenient gap in which to place the bit.
29. A horse can kick and bite to defend himself but he is much more helpless if something jumps on his back. This is a primal truth for the horse and we should be honoured that the horse allows us to be in this vulnerable place.
30. We should be honoured that a horse accepts us on his back. We should never abuse this trust.

31. *If you want to make friends with your horse, scratch his itchy spots for him.*
32. *Watching a huge horse carefully carry a tiny child can be a very moving experience.*
33. *We should strive to cultivate, through kindness, empathy, discipline, and education, an appreciation for the gift that is the HORSE.*
34. *Much about riding and working with horses has the potential to make us better people.*
35. *Riding requires the rider to find courage that will come in handy in other aspects of his life.*
36. *To understand a horse is to eliminate a lot of the clutter that our other relationships can have.*
37. *All horses, but perhaps especially riding school horses, deserve a good end to life.*

38. *A good riding school horse is the best assistant instructor you will ever have.*
39. *The students who work the hardest to improve their riding usually benefit the most in the rest of their life.*
40. *The skills learned while working with horses are transferable.*
41. *It is difficult not to be moved by the generosity of the horse.*
42. *The longer you teach people to ride, the more you come to respect your four-legged colleagues.*
43. *The good school horse never tires of telling his student they have gotten it wrong.*
44. *Riding should make us humble.*
45. *Horses teach us to be aware of messages we may accidentally be sending to others.*
46. *Horses teach us to see past what someone might be saying.*

47. Horses teach us to forgive.
48. The mythical aspect of the horse makes humans admire the straining, wild eyed horse. But as riders we should aspire to create a bond of calmness and cooperation.
49. The horse offers a gentle invitation to connection.
50. Horses encourage us to go deeper within ourselves.
51. There is something almost mystical about being around horses.
52. Although designed for movement, it is sometimes in the stillness that the horse touches our soul.
53. The willing cooperation of an animal with primal fears and hair trigger flight responses is a gift that should never be taken for granted.
54. The horse helps us develop our ability to focus.

55. *The horse encourages us not to be distracted.*
56. *There is a nobility about the horse that can take your breath away.*
57. *According to science, the horse was domesticated over 6000 years ago. One of our jobs as horsemen is to ensure that our equine partner does not regret the decision made by his ancestors.*
58. *Many children will learn to ride. Some might continue this endeavour in adult hood. However very few will make a career out of riding. It is important not to lose sight of this.*
59. *No doubt much can be learned from competition. While perhaps harder to measure, much can also be learned in the day to day preparation (work).*
60. *It is important to understand who your horse is when he is not with you.*
61. *The sheer athleticism of the horse astounding.*
62. *Never deny an old horse his dignity.*

63. *Whenever possible, old horses should be allowed to retire with dignity. They have earned it.*
64. *Often more is learned by losing than by winning.*
65. *A good horseman always puts his equine partners well-being above a transient win.*
66. *A horse should be introduced carefully and empathetically to the noise and excitement of a horse show.*
67. *A good horseman never loses sight of his horse's needs, especially when striving for a goal that the horse cannot understand.*
68. *In some parts of the world people have the good fortune to need the horse only for recreation. Our treatment of the horse should in some way reflect that.*
69. *There are few things as moving as when your horse puts aside his natural fears because he trusts you.*

70. Children should be taught to respect horses. This respect is easy to transfer to other aspects of their lives.
71. Horses don't respond well to bullying. In many ways they are a very effective four-legged anti bullying campaign.
72. Horses, like every living thing, respond to kindness.
73. A lot of insight can be gained by watching the way a person treats their horse.
74. I believe the horse is better off today because he is an animal we choose to engage with. When everyone needed a horse, I am sure there were some who treated their horse not unlike the way I have been known to treat my truck.
75. When everyone needed a horse, more people likely knew how to look after one. That pool of knowledge is probably shallower today.
76. When horses worked in fields, oft times their owners worked beside them, equally as hard. Now, we mostly use horses for our recreation. We should stay conscious of that.

77. As adaptable as the horse is, we should always remember that we have fundamentally changed the way he would lead his life in the wild.
78. A wild horse does not have a long-life span. Fortunately, with our help, our horses can live longer, healthier lives.
79. A horse is naturally balanced. It is we who upset that balance and we should strive to restore it.
80. Training should not create a desire in the horse to run away. To create that desire and then thwart it, is unproductive, unfair, and dangerous.
81. Training is always more effective when we listen to what the horse is trying to tell us.
82. We have a very limited amount of moments in our lifetime to be in the saddle. We should not waste them.
83. The horse's trust, once lost, can sometimes be impossible to restore.

84. I believe that 80% of our ride should be spent in harmony, with the horse doing his work willingly. If we spend more than 20% of our ride correcting the horse, it is possible we have asked too much.
85. When riders take a break, the horse should be allowed to stretch.
86. We should feel a sense of shame if we violate a horse's trust.
87. Students losing their temper with a horse should not be tolerated. It is unfair to the horse and does nothing to build character in the rider.
88. Young riders that are encouraged to maintain a high standard of conduct will find this a useful skill in the rest of their lives.
89. A horse can be forced to obey, but there is no joy in that for the horse...or the rider.
90. Many things in life reward disciplined consistency. The horse just rewards this more immediately than perhaps the violin.

91. *Young children who spend time caring for horses develop a sense of responsibility and maturity that is often at odds with their physical age.*
92. *Not all partnerships progress at the same speed.*
93. *Our activity of choice is not always the same as the horse's. We should make the effort to remember this.*
94. *The horse definitely judges us but only based on the way we interact with him.*
95. *The horse has an incredible memory and this can work for us and against us. In training, we should recognize this.*
96. *Archeological records suggest the horse was ridden before he was driven. It could be said that deciding to ride a wild horse was as heroic and dangerous as trying to get to the moon.*
97. *The horse is hard wired to flee from perceived danger. He should be forgiven for believing that the garbage can is a lion.*
98. *I have often wondered if perpetually spooky horses would benefit from having glasses.*

99. Horses seem to enjoy the sound of laughter. Perhaps it is because it signals to them the mood of the person they are dealing with.
100. There is much to learn when we start to ride a horse. Learning correct things is no harder than learning incorrect things.
101. “Blind horse. Had him for 29 years. Free to a good home.” Ads like that can make me weep.
102. Competitiveness and desire to win are both excellent qualities. When the horse is involved in the venture however, his needs must be considered as well.
103. With great age can come great wisdom.
104. Horses form lasting friendships with each other and with us when we earn it.