



MUST READ GUIDE FOR PARENTS

A daughter growing up with horses – the why

Because My Daughter Grew Up With Horses ©

11/15/12 - By Tracy Meisenbach

Every so often, we come across an article about horses and why we love them that we want to share. This is one of those articles. We loved what the author said, and the values it embraces. Since we are all horse lovers at heart, we think you will agree! A big thank you to Tracy for allowing us to share her beautiful words with our fans. Tracy originally wrote this article for her daughter, Amy, on her 16th birthday!

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While watching my daughter ride today, I took time to reflect on the young woman my daughter had become and the choices she would face in the future. As I looked at her I could see the athlete she was, and the determined woman she would soon be.

I started thinking about some the girls we knew in our town who were already pregnant, pierced in several places, hair every color under the sun, drop outs, drug addicts and on the fast track to no where, seeking surface identities because they had no inner self esteem. The parents of these same girls have asked me why I "waste" the money on horses so my daughter can ride. I'm told she will grow out of it, lose interest, discover boys and all kinds of things that try to pin the current generation's "slacker" label on my child. I don't think it will happen, I think she will love and have horses all her life.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has compassion. She knows that we must take special care of the very young and the very old. We must make sure those without voices to speak of their pain are still cared for.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned responsibility for others than herself. She learned that regardless of the weather you must still care for those you have the stewardship of. There are no "days off" just because you don't feel like being a horse owner that day. She learned that for every hour of fun you have there are days of hard slogging work you must do first.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned not to be afraid of getting dirty and that appearances don't matter to most of the breathing things in the world we live in. Horses do not care about designer clothes, jewellery, pretty hairdos or anything else we put on our bodies to try to impress others. What a horse cares about are your abilities to work within his natural world, he doesn't care if you're wearing \$80.00 jeans while you do it.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned about sex and how it can both enrich and complicate lives. She learned that it only takes one time to produce a baby, and the only way to ensure babies aren't produced is not to breed. She learned how babies are planned, made, born and, sadly, sometimes die before reaching their potential. She learned how sleepless nights and trying to outsmart a crafty old broodmare could result in getting to see, as non-horse owning people rarely do, the birth of a true miracle.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she understands the value of money. Every dollar can be translated into bales of hay, bags of feed or farrier visits. Purchasing non-

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necessities during lean times can mean the difference between feed and good care, or neglect and starvation. She has learned to judge the level of her care against the care she sees provided by others and to make sure her standards never lower, and only increase as her knowledge grows.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned to learn on her own. She has had teachers that cannot speak, nor write, nor communicate beyond body language and reactions. She has had to learn to "read" her surroundings for both safe and unsafe objects, to look for hazards where others might only see a pretty meadow. She has learned to judge people as she judges horses. She looks beyond appearances and trappings to see what is within.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned sportsmanship to a high degree. Everyone that competes fairly is a winner. Trophies and ribbons may prove someone a winner, but they do not prove someone is a horseman. She has also learned that some people will do anything to win, regardless of who it hurts. She knows that those who will cheat in the show ring will also cheat in every other aspect of their life and are not to be trusted.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has self-esteem and an engaging personality. She can talk to anyone she meets with confidence, because she has to express herself to her horse with more than words. She knows the satisfaction of controlling and teaching a 1000 pound animal that will yield willingly to her gentle touch and ignore the more forceful and inept handling of those stronger than she is. She holds herself with poise and professionalism in the company of those far older than herself.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned to plan ahead. She knows that choices made today can effect what happens five years down the road. She knows that you cannot care for and protect your investments without savings to fall back on. She knows the value of land and buildings. And that caring for your vehicle can mean the difference between easy travel or being stranded on the side of the road with a four horse trailer on a hot day.

Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned that color, sex, and age do not establish a horse's, or a person's, intelligence, ability or value. She has learned that only personal actions can tell you the merit of each individual, all other labels are put on things because of snobbery or fear by narrow minded people. A good horse has no set color, or age, or sex, neither does a good person.

When I look at what she has learned and what it will help her become, I can honestly say that I haven't "wasted" a penny on providing her with horses. I only wish that all children had the same opportunities to learn these lessons from horses before setting out on the road to adulthood.

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A thankyou letter from my student – Life Skills

Thankyou Deb and Bonogin Valley Horse Retreat

Feb 2017 - By Amelia

There are no words to describe how grateful I am for the last few years, not only as a customer but as an employee. Being part of your work family has been the most amazing experience for me. I always looked forward to the weekend because it meant I got to come to one of my favourite places. The stables have become my second home, and the people (and animals) in it, my second family. You always put in the time to talk to me about anything and you are always willing to hear my ideas about things (whether they were good or bad). You trusted me to take care of your animals and your property, you trusted me to bring Monty to and from Lisa's on Saturdays, you put your trust in me to ride unsupervised occasionally during lessons if an instructor wasn't able to come (although I always enjoyed when you would come and teach for the odd lesson) and you let me help all day Saturday in exchange for lessons. You taught me skills that I will go on to use later in life, not only with animals, but with other people, you taught me to be confident in myself and how to manage other staff (although I haven't perfected that one yet). You bring ice blocks and cookies down for us (which we appreciate more than we show), you ask us how we are and how school is going, you let me go from being a helper to being a stablehand and being in charge of the younger helpers (which to me meant the world). You taught me how to work as part of a team (which I was never very good at) and how to communicate effectively with my team. You taught me to solve my own problems to the best of my ability before coming to you. I have heard people complain about their boss, but I am proud to say I am an outcast, because I had you as my boss. Your guidance has been wonderful. You never got mad at me for my mistakes, instead you turned them in to lessons to teach me how to do it properly and avoid doing it again (like when I didn't get Tank's needle in correctly the first time, oops). You praised me when I did things well (like cantering Tank bareback), you took me to Cabarita (twice!!) to ride on the beach, you let me lease Lukah for a couple months before I started university, you let me be the crash test dummy with the new horses (which I LOVED) and you took me on trail rides even when I didn't handle Lukah's excitement very well. You make me feel very special when you ask me to help out (like preparing for open day, going to the Spring Fair) and for my opinion about things. Every time you let me do something, my parents got a nice big story when I got home that always started with "Guess what Deb let me do today..." I hope someday I can be as great a boss as you. You motivate me to try my best with everything, even when I don't succeed. I am so proud to call you my boss. Not only were you my boss, but you were also my teacher, and I have loved every minute of being your student.

There is so much more I want to say, but this is already getting too long, and nothing I can say will ever express the amount of gratitude I owe you. Thank you for everything.

From Amelia

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ALONG YOUR HORSE RIDING PATHWAY

Personalised, achievement focused with a full horse experience

Horse care, handling & riding

Experience the love, passion, energy & freedom of horses!

FOUNDATION

Theory

Horse parts & saddlery

Safety tips

Horse Care & Handling

Horse sense

Confidence holding a horse

Leading

Riding Skills

Ground exercises

Mount & Dismount

Correct riding position – balance stand in stirrup

Emergency controls

Rein control at halt

Walk, stop, turn controls

Level 1 - Beginners

Theory

Horse parts & saddlery

Colours and breeds

Horse Care & Handling

Tie with Quick Release knot

Grooming basic

Riding Skills

Gear check

Mount and dismount drill

Mounted exercises

Rein control at walk

Transitions walk/halt/walk

Rider Aids

Arena circle patterns 10/20m/figure eight

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Level 2 - Trotters

Theory

Horse parts & saddlery

Gender, colours and breeds

Horse Care & Handling

Put on a halter and 2 slip knots

Grooming kit usage & front feet pick up

Observation putting on saddle & bridle

Riding Skills

Mounted exercises at walk

Arena patterns serpentine & rein changes

Transitions walk/trot/walk

Rein control at trot

Sit trot & rise trot, correct diagonal

Hand technique & leg aids

Level 3 - Canter

Theory

Worming & shoeing frequency

Horse Care & Handling

Measure and weigh a horse

Catch horse in stable and rugging

Clean out hooves

Tack up saddle & bridle

Leading at trot, to side & back

Riding Skills

Correct trot diagonal, balanced horse & rider

Sit trot serpentine

Shorten & lengthen stride at trot

Canter basics

Intro to different disciplines jump poles, sporting, dressage

Inside & outside leg aid control

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Level 4 - Advanced

Theory

Horse markings
 Paddock management
 Different types of bandages for jumping/first aid
 Grooming care after riding

Horse Care & Handling

Catch horse in the paddock
 Administer a wormer (calculated)
 Bridle & saddle any type of horse
 Put on bandages & leg boots

Riding Skills

Trail ride
 Leg yield side pass, turns forehand & hind, backup
 Flexing around circles
 Transitions between walk to trot to canter to walk
 Figure eight canter trot & walk changes / canter hand gallop
 Bareback to trot
 Dressage test
 Jumping to 30cm

Level 5 – Advanced 2 Horsemanship

Theory

Hoof care, correct shoeing
 Different bits & saddles
 First aid treatments (colic, rain scald, wounds, antibiotics)
 Feed & Nutrition, body weight score, read a brand
 Use of lunging gear (roller, side reins)

Horse Care & Handling

Pull off a shoe
 Pull apart saddler
 Making up feeds
 Floating & towing
 Lunging walk/trot/canter, square stand

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Riding Skills
Canter on request from any gait, complex changes
Leg yield spins, side pass, back up & adapt to discipline
One handed riding walk/trot/canter and open gate
Horse training and head carriage (running rein, double rein)
Riding with speed control collected & extended
Bareback to canter
Jump to 60cm (cross, double, course)
Natural Horsemanship, connection/energy work

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