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TEC Spring Recap

I rounded out another successful spring in the Southwest including clinics, horse shopping trips, and much more. The CA group where I regularly offer clinics in Descanso asked me to do a “Demo Day” as an opportunity to not only see me work five different horses, but to also hear the “running commentary” as I did so. The group seemed to enjoy the finite breaking down/interpreting of what I was doing, why I was doing it, and in “real time.” They’ve suggested we do another one!

The journey home from AZ to ID was uneventful besides some weather such as snow, wind, hail and ice, and although I’d been warned, I wasn’t quite prepared for just how much standing water was at the property. To say it has been an adventuresome spring return is an understatement. In the 14 years The Equestrian Center has been based at its current location, NEVER has it been as flooded/saturated (literally) as this spring. From the main entrance to the rear jumping field, acres of the property were submerged under feet of water. I had ducks galore, splashing, playing and causing havoc.

But alas things seem to be drying out finally. Horses have been arriving for training from Canada, the Dakotas, and Oregon. Weekly students have begun with both returning and new folks. I’ve been trying to take advantage of the warmer weather drying things out and attempting to catch up on the delayed start to the season has meant for long days.

A reminder that there will be TWO Full Immersion Clinics this year, one in July and one in August. These are not designed to be “hours in the saddle” but rather an opportunity to fine tune the how’s, why’s and when’s you communicate and work with your horse. After every clinic participants over and over comment that having had the opportunity to slow down and prioritize quality vs. task accomplishment created a complete shift in their outlook and partnership with their horses. There are so many aspects involved to create that ideal ride,

whether in or out of the competitive arena, most of the time I find people don’t even realize how much they can “ask” of their horse without creating defensiveness, dramatic riding, or otherwise. Often the human needs refining in order to better support their horse. So if you’ve been curious, this is the summer! Check out the clinic info further in the newsletter.

Working students will be arriving from both the USA and this year Africa, which will add another dimension to the diversity TEC tries to offer.

I hope you are enjoying quality time with your horse and I look forward to working with you in the future!
Sam



Don’t miss out on the NEW hats! Click [HERE](#)



Exploring the use of a round pen: An alternative perspective

A FB friend posted an article on anti-round pen usage...
Here was my in depth perspective/answer:

I find 95% of folks misuse a round pen, whether under the guise of "exercising" or teaching conditioned responses, such as the lesser of two evils is to turn, face the human and be caught; which is a bullying tactic. The problem with teaching conditioned responses and patterns is the day you change the routine, you get a fire breathing dragon instead of your docile horse.

So what happened? Most horses learn the pattern in order to get the human to leave them alone. There's not a lot of thought or clarity, it is just a form of "escaping" the pressure created by the human. The human in turn incorrectly assumes that because the horse is being so "helpful" by automatically doing something they might ask of their horse, that the horse is okay. More times than not, he is not.

For me the round pen allows an opportunity in a safe place where the horse and I can have open two way communication. It is an opportunity to assess if the horse is mentally available to physically participate with me. If any sort of fast movement or continuous movement occurs, there's typically a brainless-ness and flee to it.

Most horses that arrive with "behavioral issues" (which is often a symptom, not the issue) is a direct result of constant mental and emotional stress. The horse is rarely considered when the human has an agenda. So often the horses are bullied into doing things that really bother them and "all of a sudden" they act dramatic, resistant and dangerous. No, it wasn't all of a sudden. Most folks do not notice, put value to or address if their horse is asking for help, until the person can no longer ignore the escalating dramatic behavior displayed by the horse.

So as I start a colt, re-educate an older horse or fine tune a finished one, the round pen can be a tool. Could the same conversation happen while in the pasture, being led or tacked? Yes. It is not about location, shape of fence or teaching a patternized response. It is about a quality conversation that sets you and your horse up to be successful. But folks are looking for patterns and conditioned brainless responses.

If the horse is physically and mentally bothered, fearful, insecure or shut down, why wouldn't I want to address that and help him sort out his concerns BEFORE I get on? There's no need to "wait and see," what the ride will be like; if I see he's bothered now, it'll only get worse in the saddle.

Imagine if all these amazing athletic creatures were supported to compete without being in the continual state of stress and duress, then what might their movement look like?

By not offering a horse TIME to sort through his emotions, rather just attempting to physically exhaust him, but never address what he's bothered about, is setting up the horse to be defensive....
(cont.→)

As with everything, something that can be a safe, confidence building and supportive tool based in how it is presented by one person can also be a horrific experience for the horse if someone with ego, time limitations, and ulterior motives uses it...

Just my thoughts.
Sam

FOR SALE: 25 Bushel Manure Spreader Stored Inside- Like new [EMAIL](#)



\$1200 Located in Sandpoint

Pull with your 4 wheeler!

Corrosion resistant bed floor.

Chain driven

Lever controlled chain and rotary blades.

Tongue extends 33" in front of box frame.

Safety shields for ground drive

Recommended article

As I've mentioned before, just because you financially can "own" something, like a horse, doesn't mean you should. Here is a very well written, cut the b.s. blog post from a gal who runs a rescue in WV. So much of what she wrote has been the ongoing conversations I've had to have with folks, as they finally ask for help, after way too many things have gone wrong and accidents have occurred.

Horsemanship, the ability to read/empathize, communicate and support a horse is not a natural behavior in humans. Old knowledge has been lost and so folks don't have enough effective, respectful tools to work with horses. Buying it will be the easiest part, but then what? The problem is once the human's initial emotional, instant gratification desires, idealistic and romantic version give way to reality; it is the horse that pays the ultimate price.

Enjoy the blog <http://bit.ly/2qNsPob>

Springtime considerations: all things horse

It has been a long, snowy, wet winter and thankfully it looks like spring may be nearing soon! As the upcoming riding season approaches there are a variety of factors to consider when preparing you and your horse for safe, fun and fulfilling rides in the near future.

Life can get “busy” and sometimes folks lose track of when they did what with their horse. I suggest keeping a simple calendar that marks any veterinary work, farrier care, vaccinations/worming schedule, changes in feed, work/training program, etc. This can be a futuristic tool and a historical reference to help you assess if the horse maintenance program your horse is on is appropriate or needs to be adjusted accordingly.

All horses handle the transition from a tough winter to spring differently. Whether you've owned your horse a short time or for years, attempt to assess both his mental/emotional state and physical condition without any preconceived ideas. Make no assumptions that he'll require the same care as the previous year.

After a long winter, I suggest folks take pictures of the horse, from each side, the front and the rear. Use it as a “reference” or starting point to assess hay belly vs. muscle tone and general overall condition. Though you may have been feeding a lot of hay, it does not mean your horse's nutritional requirements are being met. Depending on his age, overall health and changes in lifestyle/exercise regime, the horse's dietary needs may have to be adjusted according to the season and riding frequency.

Especially with older horses, have the vet do an annual overall assessment in the spring for any changes in his health; addressing things like possible dental issues which can affect their entire nervous system, the ability to easily chew/break-down food, and how comfortable he is with a properly fitted bit can contribute to his well-being.

Having a quality chiropractor adjust/check your horse can help address any possible lasting physical compensation he may be carrying if he had any pasture accidents due to ice or snow. Though they appear to be strong animals, it actually takes very little for them to become physically misaligned. Other parts of their body begin to compensate and this can lead to a variety of physical issues and often pain.

With the farrier be sure to take measurements of each hoof, and pictures, (along with dates) to help assess hoof growth and condition influenced by weather, moisture and dietary changes. Be aware drastic changes in weather from super wet to hot and dry often lead to “sudden” lameness caused by things like abscesses.

Reassessing what tack you are using, why you're using it (and no, just because “it” came with the horse does not mean it is appropriate,) and if you know how to fit and use it properly. Be sure to check all of the stitching, buckles and look for any cracks in the leather. Launder any pads, material cinches, etc. but be aware to the skin sensitivities many horses have towards most mainstream detergents.

You may need someone to help you assess if your tack fits your horse's current physical state- especially your saddle- which may require some adjustments from the beginning of the riding season and onward depending on muscle changes or gain during the spring and summer.

If your riding abilities/experience leave you feeling unsure about getting back in the saddle this spring, look for opportunities to work with the support of a professional giving you lessons or having you AND your horse participate in a training program. If you hear that little voice in your head (yes, it is self-preservation), please listen. Even if you're unsure as to what is causing your insecurity, ask for help sooner than later.

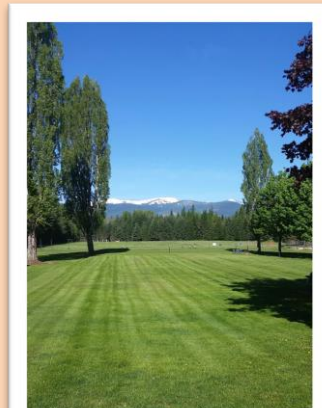
Whether you are fairly new to horses or have ridden all your life, I believe it is an ongoing learning experience. Irrelevant of whether you're a competitive or pleasure rider, there is always opportunity to refine you and your horse's communication, and his willingness to participate when ridden in a soft and quiet manner, which can then lead to the ideal ride and partnership.

Asking for help or finding an appropriate professional can be a bit overwhelming. If you find someone as a potential instructor/trainer, be sure to audit them working with a horse AND teaching a lesson to make sure their teaching approach and mannerisms will be a good fit for you and your horse. And just because one person likes a particular trainer, does not mean it'll be a good match for you.

If you're planning on hauling your horse anywhere, be sure to have a thorough inspection of both your tow vehicle and horse trailer. Checking electrical/wiring, tires (including the spare tire), brakes, floorboards, rust, possible wasp nests, etc. all can prevent unwanted trailering “adventures.” I always suggest keeping an emergency equine vet kit, human first aid kit, unexpired fire extinguisher, 5 gallon water jug and bucket, electrolytes, spare halter and lead rope, jack/tire iron, and road flares in the trailer.

Many folks each spring call me with horses that have sudden “behavioral” issues; I've often found they are experiencing an immense amount of pain due to a multitude of factors. Notice if as you begin to spend more time with your horse any odd changes in his attitude and behavior. Mark on your calendar if your horse is becoming more fidgety, antsy, and unenthusiastic about being caught, tacked or ridden. Rather than ignoring the changes, slow down and play detective. Assess for pain and the quality of the rides. The horse only has so many polite ways of telling you there is a problem, before they resort to more drastic measures.

By proactively checking all contributing factors such as the horse's health, mental and emotional state, tack and equipment, tow vehicle/trailer condition, and asking for help when necessary, you will save time, money and effort and can have more stress-free opportunities enjoying your horse. Have fun, Sam



Three Day Thrill for the Day

Rarely do I watch much Three Day Eventing anymore, for many reasons... most of the level of stresses brings back many memories. But I just watched Michael Jung of Germany, who is also a Grand Prix show jumper AND rides Grand Prix Dressage. He won the Kentucky Rolex **** last year. Here's this year's x country ride. He's not a pretty rider, but he's one of a handful that I've seen in a very long time that truly RIDES. He's riding an Olympic caliber course in a snaffle (unheard of) and he really rides every step, making intentional (rather than hopeful) adjustments. And his horse's expression and demeanor says it all. No hesitation, no fear, willingly adaptable. This is what it is supposed to be like in my opinion.

<https://youtu.be/3H7tebD75pM>

PS He won.

Looking Ahead: Scheduling Lesson, Training & Clinics

My schedule is booking fast as I'm trying to catch up from the delayed start this season due to all of the water!

If you haven't browsed the website recently, here are a few basic pages for info on the following:

Lessons Private Instruction

<http://learnhorses.com/Lessons/>

Training Individualized Programs

<http://learnhorses.com/Training-Programs/>

Clinics: Individual and Full Immersion

<http://learnhorses.com/Clinics-with-Sam/>

Don't wait until the end of the riding season for ideas, suggestions or an assessment! Please see the "How to host a clinic" for details or [email](#) me with other inquiries.

Why read the blog?

Enjoy browsing the blog with my thoughts, theories and some funny stories. I've added an option (scroll the right hand column near the top of the homepage) and you'll find the option to "Follow by email." You'll automatically be notified via email of any new entry I make. Please click [HERE](#)

How to host a clinic with Sam!

Typically clinics are booked months in advance, but I do occasionally have last minute openings. It can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months to get a clinic organized. Once you have six to nine people committed to participate I will be happy to schedule a clinic.

Host's responsibilities: Don't be scared! It's quite easy and a fun way to gather like-minded horse people for a fun filled, safe and supportive clinic.

- Determine at least two date options, times, length of clinic (3-5 days) and clinic content/focus
- Secure a suitable facility to hold the clinic (see requirements below)
- Distribute and collect all paperwork (see below) related to clinic registration and liability waivers
- Collect fees from participants one month PRIOR to the clinic
- Mail participant's registration, liability waiver and fees and submit to Sam one month prior to clinic
- Organize accommodation/meals for Sam
- On-site" organizer during the clinic

Why should you host a clinic?

- Opportunity to bring Sam to your area
- Meet other likeminded horse people
- Host discount of 30% off clinic fee

Participant Requirements:

Clinic Size- Smaller, personalized clinics designed to address the individual participant's needs. A minimum of six and maximum of eight participants is necessary to hold a clinic. All ages, riding levels and disciplines welcome.

Clinic Format- Flexible according to the needs and focus of the participants. Most include individualized groundwork sessions and both individual and group riding sessions.

For details on [hosting a clinic](#)

Consultation Call

What is it? Don't let distance hinder your learning experience! You have the option of a private half hour or a one hour phone consultation. I will address any equine related questions, videos or pictures previously submitted by you.

How much is it? You can choose from a half hour session (\$40 fee) or an hour session (\$60 fee), payable via PayPal; click here to [register](#).

Once you make a payment, an emailed confirmation will be sent. We will then schedule a day and time to for the consultation.

How do you sign up? Please click the [link](#)

Pressures from others: Making appropriate choices for you and your equine partner

The initial romanticized idea of what equine ownership can be, inspires many people to commit to buying a horse, but it can quickly diminish with the realities and learning curve they experience. I've found that there is a preliminary assumption, that because someone is able to financially "buy" a horse, there is an expectation that horse is "waiting" to do whatever the person asks of him.

If the focus is solely on what the new owner wants to do, regardless of the horse's needs or abilities, a novice owner may unwittingly be creating a "problem" with their horse. By not recognizing a problem or resistance in the horse until the animal displays enough dangerous, insecure or fearful behavior, the new "owner" may not realize that something needs to be done. And this is where "it" all gets complicated.



You and your horse are who will wind up having the most one-on-one experiences together, learn together, and endure the "journey" of horsemanship together. It can be an incredibly rewarding experience, though difficult to navigate due to ALL of the many, many, MANY opinions of those (trainers, horse friends, boarders, vets, farriers, etc.) involved in the horse world around you.

As a novice, when any sign of conflict arises, there tends to be a LOT of unasked for opinions pushed upon new owners. If a horse is kept at the owner's home, there seems to be less outside "intrusion," but if kept at a public facility... Well, it is a bit like flies on manure.

The horse world can be a harsh, critical and judgmental world- whether or not in the competitive arena. As with most things in life, there can be amazing folks and those whose sole purpose seems to make everyone miserable around them. Unfortunately, in many cases with folks who attempt to help, due to their own personal issues, they tend to "project" onto the horse; the animal is a mirror to human's emotions, energy, stress, confidence, etc. (cont'd →)

Though it may be with the idea that "they" can help, I've found the folks who want to push "their way" onto the novice horse person, tend to be quite dramatic and harsh in the "methods" they offer as "solutions". And the uneducated owner is either bullied (YES, it happens all the time) or their horse is bullied with whatever the "helpful advice" is.

I've seen more damage done in five to 10 minutes of "good" intention, than if things had been left alone. Most novice horse folks have no idea how to "navigate" the horse world, and do not realize they have to really 'vet' where and from whom they are learning from.

But what I wanted to talk about is the amount of stress and pressure that can be induced by dominant, "experienced" horse folks. Even if they have good intention, they often create such a "chaos" or "frantic" energy about them that it tends to affect others around them- human and horse alike. In extreme cases, with an insecure novice owner, the "stress" of other boarders ideas and opinions starts to psych them out before they've even arrived at the barn. It can cause so much distraction and defensiveness and a feeling of "invasion" into the inexperienced owner, that it can negatively overwhelm them to the point where they are dysfunctional towards being their horse's partner.

There are many situations that could be handled with a respectful suggestion or idea, and offered in a way that the person on the receiving end can either "take or leave it." Sadly that doesn't happen too often.

So this blog is written for both those inexperienced folks; YES, it is okay for you to politely say "no" to, reject or ignore "advice" from those folks you feel unsure about. And for you EXPERIENCED folks, please, unless you see a major safety issue (and you can offer a polite suggestion), please, please, please go about your own business.

Part of the learning curve also involves the inexperienced owner wanting to learn from others. I've been in many situations (trailer loading is the prime example,) where I might be at a facility to work with someone else. And in the background someone is having issues loading. (And as a side note- most "issues" are dramatic moments/ resistance/ etc. are a symptom, rather than the underlying issue. So with trailer loading, often there is a lack of clarity in communication, (cont'd →)

a lack of understanding or defensiveness towards “pressure” from the horse, an inability to change or redirect the horse’s thought, etc. which all then affects trailer loading. IT ISN’T ABOUT GETTING IN THE TRAILER.) Anyways, whomever I’m working with will inevitably ask, “Why don’t you go and help that person and horse?” And my answer is, “Until someone is ready to ‘hear’ me, and ask for help, I won’t offer it.”

So if you find yourself in any of the situations above, please, for the sake of your horse, feel confident enough to say “No” when the voice in your head is telling you the “advice” sounds inappropriate for you/your horse, or put in the effort to seek out quality HELP to improve your understanding, abilities and communication with your horse.

You don’t need to “do it” like everyone else. You don’t need to compare what you can do with your horse versus what someone else can do with their horse. You don’t need to “rush” as you learn, and you certainly don’t need to put self-induced pressures or be bullied into doing things with your horse that you are unsure about. Sometimes it might take just a nice comment and folks will get the message to back off. Other times, it may take a very direct “No thank you,” to get folks to quit offering the suggestions, and other times, it may take moving to another facility with your horse.

Though you may have limited experience, you can still trust your “gut instinct” if something doesn’t seem right about a situation with your horse. Trust that voice in your head and be the voice for your horse, you’re responsible for his well-being. Trust me, though it may make you a bit uncomfortable initially, it’ll get easier to navigate the opinions, ideas and personalities of the equine world. The more pressure you feel alleviated by doing right by your horse, the more comfortable you’ll be to make better choices in the future.

Good luck,
Sam

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Sam’s Summer Schedule 2017



May
TEC re-opened Season

June
Private Clinic
Sandpoint, ID
June 4-9

Equine Retreat
Coeur d’Alene, ID
June 18-22

July
Full Immersion Clinic #1 [INFO](#)
TEC
Sandpoint, ID
July 14-16

August
Private Clinic
TEC
Sandpoint, ID
August 12-13

Full Immersion Clinic #2 [INFO](#)
TEC
Sandpoint, ID
August 18-20

To stay current please visit the [Calendar](#) page

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