

Student Responsibility

(This was originally written in 2009 in response to a discussion on the WWHD Yahoo Forum.)

These are among the things that I believe are a student's responsibility in the learning environment:

- Come prepared mentally. We naturally focus a lot on the tack, the manure fork, the supplements, the water buckets, etc. That preparation can squeeze out the need to get our heads on about what we getting ready to do. We race around preparing for the trip and our mind is filled with worries about people watching us and will I do something stupid, everyone knows more than I do, will the kids/husband/wife do x and so while I'm gone, etc, etc. SO ... mentally preparing ourselves, I think, is maybe the most important part of a student's responsibility. Think POSITIVE things. Force yourself to do this. <grin> Thinking about a couple of key areas that you can summarize in a sentence or two is a good idea. Not just for the clinician (if he or she asks) but for ourselves.
- Respect the clinician's expertise. If we have done our homework, then we should feel **reasonably comfortable** with the approach, format, and teaching style of the clinician. So, now that we've thought of our couple of areas, it's time to acknowledge that what WE think is important may not, it turns out, be where we have to start. If we are paying someone to help us, we should be willing to go along with the format and the suggestions and do our best to apply those.
- Be a proactive participant. If we have a question about anything -- whether it's a concept, a maneuver, or a concern about how it will affect us or our horse -- it is the student's responsibility to speak up at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner. For some, this can take some courage because clinics (or even lessons) can be an intimidating atmosphere even when they're not. <grin> For others, there needs to be care to not interrupt. Which brings me to ...
- Students shall not impede the learning of any other student. There are many ways to do this and, frankly, we all do it accidentally from time to time. I'm talking about real, ongoing dysfunction.
- Work to have an open heart. It is definitely a scary thing to put ourselves in the vulnerable position of not knowing something. At some point, we just have to let go of that andenjoy it. Find ways to laugh, to dig in and explore more, to see the fun in the environment and the people. Some might call it an attitude of gratitude.
- Be supportive of the other students. Believe me, you will reap the benefits of this in more ways than you can imagine. Find something you saw as positive and TELL that person and be specific. "Good job" is fine but feedback is more meaningful (for both the giver and the receiver) if it is clearer: "You really seemed to be getting that turn on the haunches stuff. Good for you." or "You and your horse seem to have such a strong connection. I love that you were having such a good time." or "This new stuff can feel so frustrating, huh? I really saw you were putting the pieces together out there, though "
- Spend a little quiet time each day and definitely at the end of the clinic processing THE GOOD STUFF and making a plan on how to work on the areas that need improvement. It's just not that productive to hang on to the moment our horse displayed horsey behavior that we somehow think is a reflection on us as good moms or dads -- even if it is. Clinics

are a place to learn and everyone is or should be there to learn. Believe me, folks are not nearly as focused on the other people. We are all thinking mostly about ourselves or how a situation relates to us or how it might orit's all about me, me, me. LOL

- Two weeks, a month later, and several months later, revisit any notes or thoughts you had on the clinic experience. What did you like/not like about the format, the environment ... what was helpful to your horse ...what was helpful to you ... how can that be repeated ... did you work on the things you thought you'd work on ... if it changed, how has that evolved now ... what are you doing differently ... how is that working out ... identify three areas of improvement you've seen since the clinic, even if they are teeeeeeeny. Focus on the progress. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

Alright, that's it for now. I'm off to save the planet or something. Hahahahaha.

~linda

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