

It was a privilege to work with [Cliff Schadt Jr.](#) a few times this year. His wisdom was so helpful getting the 3-year-olds started under saddle and I have gained tools that will benefit horses of all stages in their training. The first clinic I took my mare Zoe to this spring I had only been on her back about 10 times. In addition to new tools to introduce horses to yielding to pressure on the ground we cantered for the first time which resulted in a bit of bronking. I was surprised by this as the saddling and backing had not phased her. Cliff wasn't surprised by this however as the canter has always been the most challenging gait for Zoe with her big stride and she had to figure out her balance with a rider on her back for the first time. Part of why I love working with young horses is seeing how quickly they progress once they trust people and understand what is expected of them. It was a rewarding moment to ride Zoe a few months later with Cliff at the walk, trot, and canter in the big indoor at Riveredge showing confidence and focus on one of her first off property adventures. Thank you Dressage 4 Kids for providing the Training 4 Teaching scholarship, I am so inspired to share what I have learned and continue my passion for working with young horses. It was so inspiring to see that regardless of the discipline, good horsemanship is good horsemanship. If we can learn to better understand horses; their natural instincts and their learning patterns for example, we can become better trainers. Here are a few notes from the last clinic that I thought were worth sharing.

Do less more often. For example, if your horse is difficult on the trailer, even having them stand on the ramp a few minutes a day is better than waiting till the day of a show.

You must reward the try, not just the end result. Ask for 1 step or one question at a time. Otherwise, you may miss the right moment to release the pressure and reward.

Horses are creatures of habit and choose the path of least resistance...we as their leaders are responsible for what that is.

Don't sacrifice things falling apart in training for it to get better. Sometimes you have to pull things apart and put them back together even more solid than they were before.

If you know where the horse's feet are and can manage them you can get him to do anything.

With young horses bucking or bolting often comes from not knowing where their feet are. That scares them, feeling unbalanced goes against a flight animals instinct.

Horses have to learn to deal with a little bit of pressure. Sometimes you have to push things to the edge to see what is in there and get it out. Otherwise, horse will not learn how to manage themselves in new or stressful situations.

The worst thing you can do is tip toe around young horses when backing them or working on the ground in attempt to not scare them. The horse sees your tentative stalking energy as that of a predator.

If you fix it on the ground it will be fixed under saddle. Groundwork doesn't just benefit young and problem horses. Every horse should learn to respect their handler's space, Yield to pressure

on the halter and bit, and easily move their shoulders and haunches from the ground to name a few.

The reason ranch horses get so broke is they have a job. Make sure your horse understands what their job is...20 meter circles can get boring.

Yielding should not be negotiable. You wouldn't drive a car that stops sometimes. Even the strongest bit won't stop a horse that has not been taught to correctly give to pressure and bend.