

Lendon Gray Scholarship Committee,

I participated in two clinics taught by the talented British horseman, Moray Nicholson. I have had several clinics with Moray in the past. Because of this he knows my lovely Friesian, Cirinity very well. Cirinity is a very lazy yet talented lower level dressage horse who has competed up to second level with the help of professional rider Krista Tycho Noone.

I am intermediate level rider who has been riding dressage for the past seven years. I have been riding Cirin for the the past year and a half.

I had been stuck in a rut leading up to the clinic, and had become very frustrated with our lack progress. Cirin and I had been dealing with the same issues for a while and I had run out of clever ways to fix them and the patience to do so.

During the first clinic we worked on a variety of things, they ranged from attempting shoulder in to capturing Cirin`s attention. To my surprise, Moray saw a bit of an improvement in Cirin`s desire to move forward since our last clinic, so we did not work on forward movement as much as I had anticipated. Instead, we worked on techniques intended to sharpen Cirin`s reactions to the aides. Moray had us preform a turn on the haunches when Cirin seemed to be zoning out or losing interest. This movement proved to wake her up and make her attentive. Moray also pointed out that when Cirin is behind the leg and is not listening to my leg aides it is better to tap with the whip once on her side, near my leg, where she is more inclined to feel it rather than tapping her several times on her hind end. He explained that the constant tapping on her hind end is far less effective because of her very thick skin, therefor she is more inclined to ignore the repetitive action. During the clinic we also did a little bit of work concerning shoulder in. Moray helped me better understand the movement and pointed out that much like the rest of my riding, I

overthink it far too much.

We did a bit of cross training on the second day of the clinic. During this lesson we focused a lot more on forward movement as it very important to arrive at a fence with a gait that is going somewhere. During this lesson Moray had us canter to a pole which was one stride away from a two fence in and out. If Cirin cantered to the pole with a powerful stride she would be set up to jump the two fences correctly and make the distance between the fences a three stride, rather than a three stride with a very short choppy stride right before the jump. When motivated and set up correctly, Cirin made the three stride nicely. Unfortunately, this did not happen more than once and my frustration level was at an all time high.

I am an absolute perfectionist when it comes to riding and tend to judge myself far more than any dressage judge would. I ended up getting off at the end of the ride disappointed. Hating this feeling, I decided to find the cause of it. I came to the realization that chasing perfection was self-destructive and did nothing for myself or Cirin. It wasn't fair to put that stress on myself or her.

Because of this, I later got back on Cirin with a different attitude. I decided to focus on the positive things that occurred during the ride rather than dwelling on the bad parts. This mind set has done wonders for me and ever since then I have consistently had amazing rides.

I would like to thank Lendon Gray and the rest of the amazing people at Dressage4Kids for helping me make this incredible realization and for changing the way I look at both riding and life.

Sincerely,

Allison Salt