

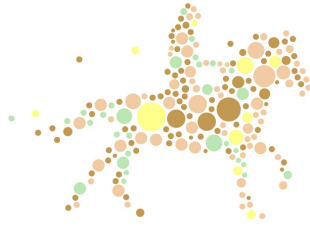
A photograph showing the rear view of a person riding a brown horse through a field of tall, green grass. The rider is wearing a blue top and dark sandals. The horse's tail is dark and hangs down.

Confident Rider

FEAR LESS. RIDE MORE.

YOUR SOUL-DRIVEN
ACTION PLAN
TO
RIDING WITH
CONFIDENCE &
JOY

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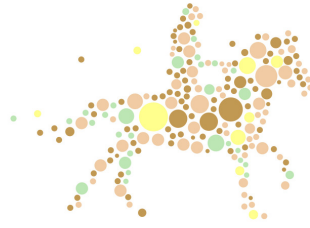


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“Promise me you’ll always remember that you’re braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

- Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh



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I. IT STARTS WITH A DREAM.

I see you. I know you dream about horses every day. I understand how the thought of achieving a seemingly effortless partnership with your horse makes you burn with desire. I feel your pain when you can't quite summon the courage to do that thing that you want more than anything else.

This is our starting place. We're only going to dwell here momentarily because sometimes we're so caught up in what we don't want that we give more energy to it than what we really do want. Trust me, I know how destructive that spiral of negativity can become. Constantly bemoaning your lack of confidence around horses is really limiting. It's what causes us to label ourselves as "nervous riders" and sets ourselves up for negative consequences.

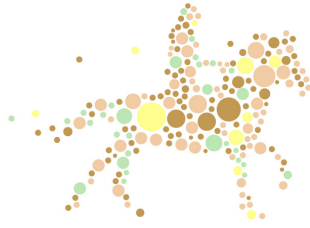
You know what? Fear didn't bring you here. The way you *want* to feel with horses brought you here. Your dreams with horses brought you here. Your heart's longing brought you here. Something really positive, joyous and attainable brought you here.

So, let's define it.

What do you dream about when you allow yourself to think about handling and riding horses without fear? Be honest with yourself about what you really want. Don't be limited by what you think others want you to do, or by how talented you think you are, or by what your horse has been trained to do. Really think about that driving force that fills you with joy and pride when you imagine yourself achieving it.

Some ideas:

- Cantering bareback along the beach
- Effortlessly completing a cross-country course
- Riding precise movements with the lightest of aids
- Having your horse greet you every day at the paddock gate
- Winning a specific competition
- Working at liberty in a challenging environment
- Enjoying all the sights and sounds of your local trails
- Addressing spookiness and exuberance with tact and ease
- Being asked to ride someone else's horse
- Having your horse trust you in an unfamiliar environment



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Spend some time defining your dreams with horses. Create a picture in your head. Then turn it into a documentary and pay attention to all the breathtaking details your mind creates. What does your horse look like? What are you wearing? Where are you? How fast are you moving? What is the colour of the sky? Who else is there? Are you smiling? Are you laughing? Is this the best feeling ever? How will you feel when your dream becomes your reality?

It should feel overwhelmingly good to visualise yourself and your horse achieving your dream. This is the starting point for your journey to riding with confidence and joy.

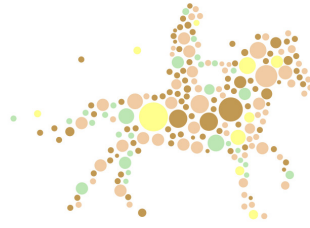
DECLARE IT!

My big, beautiful dream with horses is:

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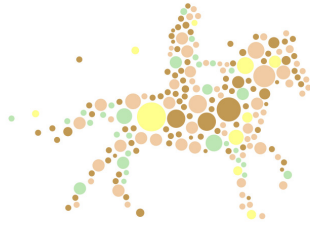
2. YOU ARE UNIQUE. OWN YOUR GIFTS.

The next step is to really own your strengths with horses. If you're anything like me, when you get to this stage you might drift into negativity, putting more emphasis on your weaknesses than your strengths. Just because something about horses might make you feel scared, it doesn't give you permission to write off your positive qualities. You have them! It's important to remind yourself that you do have skills. If you're having trouble with this exercise, ask yourself these questions:

- How do you know you have had a positive experience with horses?
- When I have ridden well it is because...?
- What is your most memorable achievement with horses?
- If I asked my instructor or friends what my strengths are, what would they say?
- The last time I felt good with my horse was when...?

Some examples of strengths could be:

- Being fit and healthy
- Taking care with grooming and tacking up
- Having a stable leg position
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Being balanced on the horse
- Having light hands
- Prioritising your horse's wellbeing
- Moving with the horse fluidly
- Applying clear aids
- Being passionate and caring
- Ability to create respect on the ground
- Having a good understanding of horse behaviour
- Being motivated to keep improving
- Having sound technical or theoretical knowledge
- Being naturally athletic



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Identifying your strengths is a great place from which to start your journey. Self-acceptance, gentleness and having faith in those qualities that make you unique is super important. What you believe about yourself becomes your truth and keeps you progressing positively towards your dreams.

DECLARE IT!

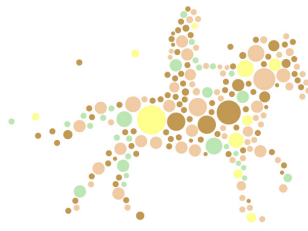
The journey to achieve my dream in a great place starts here because I am:

{insert strengths here!}

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3. TAKE UP MODELLING.

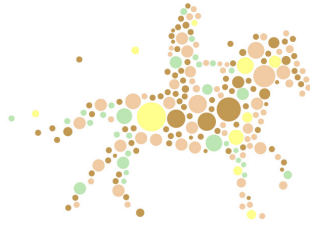
Another excellent way to make progress towards your dreams is to model yourself on a horse person you admire. This could be a friend, a coach, a horse trainer or an elite rider. It might even be someone you observed working with horses for just a few moments – don't underestimate the power of your heart to remember qualities you respect.

Modelling is a key concept in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), an incredibly powerful discipline that is used by many elite athletes and successful entrepreneurs to transform the way they think and act. NLP techniques can be used to improve your behaviours and beliefs, bringing you so much closer to achieving your dreams.

Even if you believe that some people have a natural gift with horses, there is so much to learn by paying close attention to how good riders become one with their horse. They are able to achieve the results you dream about because they have certain skills, strategies and beliefs that enable them to do so. Now, the important point to focus upon here is that it is a combination of ability *and* attitude that helps these individuals to excel. While there is no doubt that certain physical traits may fast track your success as a rider (think of long legs for instance), there are just as many examples of horse riders competing at the top of their field with physical disabilities. How's that for proof that you don't need to be a "gifted rider" in order to excel?

What you do need is to be motivated enough to really study how those equestrians you admire manage to enjoy the art of riding. The key is to find out what it is that makes them special. If you can, spend as much time as you can watching this person handling, riding and training horses. To dig down even deeper, you might like to ask yourself these questions when you are studying the skills and mindset of your chosen role model:

- Where and when does this person work with horses?
- If they were going to teach you how to do what they do, what is the first thing they would tell you?
- How did your role model learn to be a great horse person?
- What does this person believe about themselves and their horse when they are riding?



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After a while, you'll have a strong mental image of the way your role model trusts and relates to horses. There will be a sequence of actions you can commit to memory, as well as specific beliefs this person has about how they achieve the results they do.

Imagine if you could simply step inside their boots? The more familiar you become with how your role model thinks, feels and acts, the easier it will become to shape your own behaviour around horses to improve your confidence.

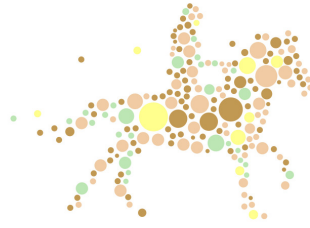
DECLARE IT!

When I think about my role model riding her/his horse, I notice:

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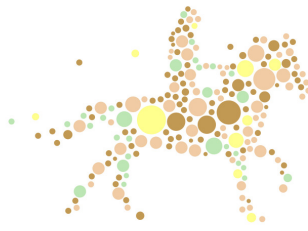
4. READY, SET, GOAL!

So, by this stage you should have identified what you want to do with your equine partner that will make your heart sing. You've got some ideas about what you're already good at, and you've studied someone who inspires you, to the point that you've just begun to be able to see the world through the eyes of "someone who can". It's time to recognise that you're feeling really motivated to take a big, positive step towards letting go of fear and moving joyfully towards your dream. It's OK if that beautiful aspiration still feels too far away to touch. The important part is that you're opening yourself up to believing you're on the right path.

There is nothing to be gained from hanging onto limiting beliefs like "I'm a nervous rider" or "I'm not brave enough to jump". These words will continue to trap you in your fear, undermining the pleasure you get from being around horses. I'm not saying you should deny your nerves exist, just to be more careful about the way you talk about your fears. Rather than reinforcing to yourself that jumping is scary, you could try saying, "It's going to be completely amazing when I am confident enough to jump." Ain't that the truth?!

Time to take a deep breathe, relax, and enjoy the feeling of anticipation. Note how excitement about something you love can actually feel a little similar to fear? This is the part where you need to bite off a small piece of the pie and take some action. Keep close the feelings of joy and empowerment you have already conjured up and start to map out the baby steps you'll need to take to bring you closer to your dreams with horses. Be kind and gentle with yourself as you do this. The first goal can be as small as you like, the only important thing is that you commit to having one.

Sticking with the jumping example, if your big, burning desire is to one day gallop around a cross country course, perhaps a good short-term goal might be to have fun cantering around an empty paddock? Remember, nobody expects that you'll be out there achieving this tomorrow, so don't put that pressure on yourself either. Instead, think about what skills and safety measures you could work on over the next six months so that you are bursting with enthusiasm to burn around the paddock in unison with your equine partner.



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Here are some ideas:

- Sign up for some lessons on a gentle schoolmaster under the guidance of a sympathetic coach
- Make time to simply hang out with your horse without expectations
- Do a stocktake of your safety equipment – do you always ride with a helmet, for example?
- Enrol in a horsemanship clinic to get a better understanding of horse behaviour
- Take a yoga or meditation class
- Write a comprehensive list of everything you love about your horse or pony – appreciate them!
- Find a like-minded riding partner and make a regular date to do horsey activities
- Expect and request manners from your horse while on the ground – seek help if you need to
- Invest in some lunge lessons to help work on your position in the saddle
- Take your horse out on some outings in-hand – they could be shows, clinics or just a leisurely stroll around the property

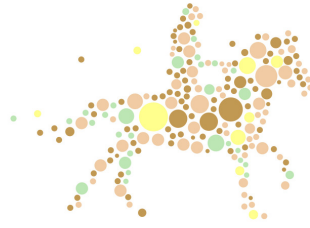
DECLARE IT!

I'm going to start working on my relationship with my horse by:

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5. START TODAY.

You've set the stage. It's time to enter.

What are you going to do today, right now, this very moment to kick-start your Action Plan and boost your confidence with horses?

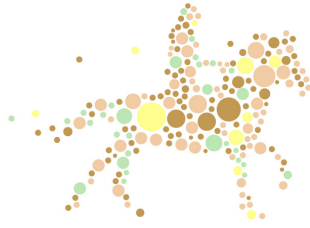
You're clear about your dreams. You've mapped out a path to your most sacred desires. Ignite yourself into action and go for it!

Today, you might want to:

- Decide upon a coach
- Pick up your phone and book in a lesson
- Listen to a meditation CD
- Go and tell your horse how excited you are about the future
- Mark up some horsey-time dates into your calendar
- Pull together all your declarations from this Action Plan into one inspirational paragraph – Your Big Beautiful Dream Declaration!

EXAMPLE: MY BIG BEAUTIFUL DREAM DECLARATION

My big, beautiful dream with horses is to gallop my horse bareback along Tim's Thicket beach. I'm starting my journey to achieving my dream in a great place because I am really motivated and I am a soft and balanced rider. When I think about my friend Shay riding her horse bareback at high speeds, I notice that she follows the movement of the horse, with her eyes looking up and ahead. Her riding looks effortless; there is no fighting for control. I'm going to start working on my relationship with my horse by being more consistent with how I handle her on the ground. At the same time, I'm going to have regular lunge lessons on a schoolmaster with an instructor who can help me improve my seat and reprogram my desire to pull against the horse in order to feel in control. Today I am going to book my first lesson. I'm so ready to let go, release my fears and enjoy every moment of horse time I have. I'm exhilarated to be on my way to achieving my sacred dream.



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DECLARE IT!

Today I am going to:

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MY BIG BEAUTIFUL DREAM DECLARATION

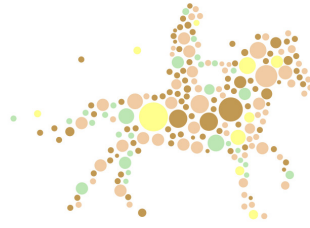
My big, beautiful dream with horses is...

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I'm so ready to let go, release my fears and enjoy every moment of horse time I have. I'm exhilarated to be on my way to achieving my sacred dream.



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6. DECLARE, SHARE & SHINE.

There's one last thing I'd like to encourage you to do. Believe me, this is really powerful stuff! Now that you've given yourself permission to go for what you really, really want, you've got to share your dream with others.

Something magical happens when you declare your intentions to the world. It's like all the dots line up and some magical manifesting mojo gets busy clearing a path to your dream. So, tell your friends, share it on the internet, create an image and save it to your desktop, whatever feels right to you!

I'd love for you to reveal your Big, Beautiful Dream Declaration and all your achievements on the Confident Rider Facebook page – come and join us at <http://www.facebook.com/theconfidentrider>. You can also use the #fearlessridemore hashtag on Instagram and your photos will feature on the Confident Rider website.

Confidence is here! Now all we need is you.

A toast to your dreams,

Jade ✕

Jade Salpietro
Publisher – Confident Rider

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