

## Monique Potts

Hi everyone. And welcome back to the ride podcast. I'm Michaela and I'm Nichole. And this week, our guest is Monique Potts. And she's a super interesting girl who Nichole and I know very, very well. You'll see her a lot with an upcoming issue of horse and rider online. You know, this podcast, hopefully doing some video work.

We have a lot of great things lined up with Monique. Yeah. Monique is really great because she, uh, she likes to. Focused on the natural horsemanship aspect, but she also has a background showing cow horses and she does some dressage. And, and so she has a pretty large background and has worked with some of the top cow horse guys in the country and, and some of the top dressage riders in the country.

And, and she manages to take those elements that she's learned and turn it into her own program and, and kind of add a touch of the natural horsemanship stuff and help people with their horses. Yeah, that's what she does really well is be able to help the human help, the horse, and, you know, the welfare of the horse is super important to her program and what she does.

Yeah. Her you'll hear it a couple of times within the podcast, but she always says that, you know, she's an advocate for the horse and, and she wants to make sure that every horse has. The best possible outcome. And, and sometimes that means selling a horse and finding a different one because the rider doesn't get along with them.

And, you know, just making sure that you're doing best by the horse, whether you're trail riding, horse, showing just, you know, owning a horse, all of it. Yeah, absolutely. And kind of tying into our current events is kind of a cool tie in this episode because you know, Monique, because you ride cow horses with her mom and just this past week, you went to a cow horse show and did absolutely amazing.

And I was so pumped for you. Yeah, no, it was a lot of fun. It was my first. Um, NRCA outing and it would take place in McCook, Nebraska. I met a lot of really great trainers that live in the Colorado area that hopefully we're going to work with a little bit in the magazine throughout the year, especially during these COVID times where we're kind of limited with how much we can travel, um, and how many people we can see.

So. It was really great. Um, yeah, like you said, Jamie Joel and Bill, and have been so wonderful. And let me show one of their old, uh, horses that they've had since he was born. And, um, but yeah, it was, it was a lot of fun. We did really well. And looking forward to the next one. Yeah. Well, I know I'm like your biggest fan on Facebook.

I like post all the gifts that I'm like. Yeah, go Nicole. And I'm super pumped. She sent me the videos and. It's just so cool to watch, you know, one of your friends go from not really knowing how to ride a cow horse. I mean, Nicole is a phenomenal writer, so she was able to hop on shining little Nick, when we did our video shoot with Brad Barca Meyer and made it look effortless.

But. You know, she got into this, not really knowing a whole lot about the cow horse event. And now, I mean, you won your class, so that's pretty cool. Yeah, no, I was really thrilled with how everything did. I mean, I, the horse that I wrote it, he's absolutely wonderful. And he, um, you know, he has, uh, a pretty large history in the cow horse.

So it was really nice having a partner that can kind of help me. When I'm in, you know, I don't know what's going on or, you know, I can help him when he needs the support. So it was really good, but yeah, we marked, uh, One 45 and a half on a cow, which was more than I could have asked for. I was just going in there to stay on pattern and stay out of my horses way.

That was the goal. So, well, I think you've more than accomplished your goal. And I mean, while you're able to show some shows are still getting canceled because of COVID we have, the Congress is now canceled. Yeah. A couple of weeks back, the all American quarter horse Congress announced that they're officially canceled for 2020.

Um, I have a huge, you know, background with the quarter horse Congress. I grew up going there. So it was really sad to hear, but, um, it is a very busy horse show and people fly in from all over the country, all over the world. Actually it's an internationally attended event. And so I can understand how they would, um, be a little fearful of having that many people in one spot.

And so, um, I don't know if this is the first time that's been canceled. I don't know, but, um, it is. Pretty historical that it's not going on. Yeah. I mean, it seems like a lot of the larger events of that caliber, or just really going to have to be put in between a rock and a hard place, because it's not like it's a singular event show like a cow horse event or a barrel race.

I mean, you have all of the events and all of the people, so it's huge. And that's a huge liability. Yeah. And like the, you know, there's a saying that goes on at the Congress that you always get the Congress crud. Um, and it, I mean, it always happens. It doesn't matter if it's hot out, if it doesn't, it, you know, if it's snowing, whatever, like I always came home with the Congress crud.

And so I can only imagine how much COVID could spread it in that environment. So I, I understand that we're very sad to see that it's not going on, but it sounds like there's a couple of other horror shows that we'll be trying to. Um, take place around the same time. And hopefully some of those exhibitors who are going to be at the Congress can, you know, decide if they're going to go to those shows.

Um, the Arizona, uh, fall championships is going to be going on in Scottsdale. So I know a lot of people have decided that they're going to go there instead. Yeah. It's nice to have some options at least to go to, because I know as horse people, especially competitive horse people, it's hard to just sit back and.

Watch a year ago buy because sometimes it's your last year with a horse and you just really want to get that last year in. And even if it's a couple shows, it's nice to just be able to go somewhere and be competitive. Speaking of horse shows that have had to be rescheduled,

um, because of COVID the NRBC, which has the national reigning breeders classic is currently going on in Tulsa.

And normally that goes on in the earlier part of the year in Katy, Texas. So. Um, not only did they have to change dates, they had to change, um, venues. So it's taking place in Tulsa for the first time. And it sounds like it's going really well. I know, um, it can get a little hot in Katy, Texas. So I think the exhibitors are enjoying the air conditioned arenas, but, um, I have a couple of friends who were there and it sounds like it's been going on really well.

So I'm really glad to hear that. Um, the show was still a success after it was originally pushed back and then they canceled it and then they were able to push it back until right now and have it go on. So that was good too. Well, also kind of going off of the Katy, Texas, we have hurricane Laura that is, you know, kind of sweeping both Texas and Louisiana right now.

And one kind of cool thing. That's horse related. I mean, we're really upset that. A lot of horse people are having to evacuate. And we're really thankful for Northern people to be taking a lot of those horse owners in, but the foundation for the horse is awarding \$5,000 to veterinary groups providing equine relief for hurricane Laura.

So I think that's really awesome that we're being able to fund the vets that are. In a crisis right now. Yeah, that's huge. And I think we should also make note that it's really important to have an evacuation plan put into place. Um, you know, we don't have to worry about hurricanes in Colorado, but we're currently going through wildfires and the same kind of thing goes into play.

We have to have an evacuation plan. What do you do if you have to turn your horses loose, what do you do? You know? Why, how can you prepare for it so where you can get your horses out safely. So, um, horse and rider.com has a lot of really good. Great articles that we've worked with, um, that talk about, you know, having an evacuation plan, making sure that you have your health papers make, I mean, all this important stuff that you don't think about until you're running out the door literally for your life.

So, um, yeah, we. Yeah, we have a lot of great articles that talk about, you know, hurricanes and how to prepare and, uh, flooding and wildfires. And so we have all that information available online. And I think right now would actually be a really great time to, to think about if you have an evacuation plan.

And if you don't sit down and create one it's, it's a lot easier to have a plan than it is to be running around at last minute. Yeah. I mean, I think it's so important. I lived in the Midwest where, I mean, our biggest threat was tornadoes, but I mean, it was always nice to have a plan for what to do. So moving to Colorado was a bit different to have to establish a plan.

I mean, we live in an area where I feel like we're pretty safe from fires, but that's not always the case. So it's nice to have horse and rider as a resource too. Make a plan and you should always have a plan far enough in advance that way. When you get the notification that there is a natural disaster of some sort, you're prepared to take your horses and go on that note.

Um, I think it is a really good time for us to jump into the interview. I hope you guys really enjoy this interview and we'll be back next time.

today's guest on the ride podcast is Moni pots and Nicole and I are very familiar with Monique, uh, Nicole actually rides at Monique's mom's barn. And. You're probably have also seen her on the cover of our most recent issue of, and rider the fall issue. And then I have also shot some photos with Monique and we are working on digital content.

So. Thank you so much for joining us today. Money. Yeah. Thank you. Having me. Yeah, we, we had the opportunity to become friends with Monique and her, her mom, Janie, Jill, last year when we did the video shoot with Brad Barker Meyer. And ever since we've just been able, you know, you guys are so close. I mean, you're down the street from McKayla's house.

So much fun to be able to come together. And Mikayla and Monique were doing some really fun photo shoots. The last couple of weeks, you'll start seeing those on our Instagram account, but, um, Monique, you have a huge background. You grew up showing you've done the cow horse. You've gotten into the dressage recently, but you also.

Are known to work with, you know, not, I don't want to say like problem horses, but horses that may have not been given a chance to, to do what they can do. And you've been able to take some horses that have run into some issues in their life and turn them around and have really great careers with them.

Um, I'm thinking of your dressage horse, particularly. Yeah, so I grew up watching my mom. Fix problem horses. Um, so I grew up learning from buck really, and I spent years at bucks clinics with my mom and she fixed problem horses for years. And then she married my stepdad bill and they decided they want to do the cow horse.

And so I took over the lessons at that point because they wanted to be amateur. And so I took over and that's kind of how I got into the position of. Teaching and kind of taking over what my mom did. And yeah, I ended up with my dressage horse, I guess a year ago now. Um, he was imported from Germany and he just wasn't, he wasn't quite getting along with everybody, but I got along with him really well.

He just kinda needed you to understand that he was feely. And as soon as you kind of understood how he worked, he was like, Oh, I'll do whatever you ask me to do. But you could have gotten into quite a bit of trouble with him, not, not setting them up correctly. And I just treated him like a real horse and took him down the road and just made it a successful experience for him.

And that's, it's been really fun to be able to do both. Um, you know, and I didn't spend as much time showing early on because. I, since I took over all the lessons, I was like really intimidated to go in as a pro and be like, I didn't spend most of my life showing up until my mom and bill started showing that wasn't actually much of my life.

Most of it was going to clinics and just learning and the horsemanship aspect of it. So it's been a really amazing journey. And then having my mom and bill have, you know, babies

every year, I got that experience of actually. Working in starting our own, but then also dealing with problems that people have put in.

So I feel like that's kind of been my really amazing experience is the ability to take the knowledge of, okay, this is how this horse actually came out and no human did anything to it yet. And understanding kind of the nature versus nurture piece. And then, okay, now this horse over here really. Had a bad experience with the human and the human set them up really crummy.

Um, so my kind of ability to be able to tell, Hey, this is, this is the problem that the horse has. This is the problem that the human has. Um, and that's kind of been the angle that I've really tried to help people understand. Um, you know, and just having a lot of people that have horses that. Actually really aren't even problem horses, but they just didn't understand how the horse works.

And that's been, my biggest piece is just, Hey, your horse is really sensitive and you are treating it like it's not, or yours, isn't sensitive enough. And that's why you're not getting the reactions that you need. We need to create some more sensitivity, you know, and just helping people better understand horses as much as possible.

Um, that's kind of been. You know, where I've tried to take my experience. There was a long time where I just did beginner lessons and that wasn't, that didn't do it for me. So there was quite a few years where I was like, I don't know if I really want to do the horse thing, but growing up doing it. There's a lot of stuff that comes easy.

I don't want to say easy because nothing about verses is easy, but there's just things that I did my whole life, you know, that I think a lot of people don't. No, that I kind of almost didn't realize that they didn't know because it comes so natural to me. I can look out in the pasture and be like, Oh, that something looks wrong.

Not one doesn't usually lay down like that. Or, you know, I can read a lot of things that just I've done it my whole entire life. I can read what the mums or the babies or the studs, or are going to do or kind of that whole interaction. And I think that's the other really amazing thing is I grew up. Being able to watch the herd dynamic.

So few people get to see true herd dynamic. So back, I don't know, 10 years ago, my mom had another stud that the stud lived out in the pasture with the mums. And so we got to watch all the babies full and it was kind of before cellphones really had cameras and like really easy accessibility to just take pictures and videos.

So you. Got to see it, but we didn't have a ton recorded that we could share, but it was so amazing because you got to watch our stud take care of the mums and take care of all of his babies. And you got to really watch interactions that I, other than in the wild, I don't think there's very many places says that allow the horses to do that kind of interaction.

So that was kind of the really cool piece. That I also got to have as part of my learning along the way that I feel like Sophie people get to be around. You know, I think there's a lot of people that get to handle quite a few horses, but to really get to watch that herd dynamic.

And for me, that's something I'm really passionate about being able to show my clients and help them.

Learn a better understanding because I hear trainers even all the time that I work with. Describe behaviors that I'm like, I don't know if that's how I would describe that behavior. Um, you know, I see a lot of people say that horse is scared when I'm like, I'm not sure I would consider that scared or they're being rude when I'm like, no, that one is scared.

Um, you know, I kind of just see a lot of mixed up ideals or ideas around. What horse behavior is that I kind of have a different belief sometimes, I think because of being around the herd. And so that's kind of been a little bit of what, where I got started and how, how that's happened for me. Yeah, I think that's what I really love about.

Um, the, your mom's places that you guys, it is a show barn and these are show horses, but they're you still have the herd mentality. You still have the, these horses are horses and it's really cool to get to see that because you're so right. Coming from somebody who had a strict horse show background, like that's, it's so different because those horses live installs, you know, when they're in paddocks or pastures, they're monitored, they don't just live out there.

And, and it's. It is, it's so different and, but it's so good. Totally. I got to see happy horses and I think it's been fun to be able to see the show piece. Right? So you have a destination because I grew up around a lot of people that maybe just did the clinic and wanted to be a better horseman. But then I think sometimes I see people get stuck because then you don't have a full on destination of, Oh, I need to be able to go in the Chopin.

I need to lead change. I need these things. So to kind of feel like I get both worlds is pretty amazing because there's definitely that piece where you're like, Oh, well, okay. I need to slow down and refine my horsemanship because I'm getting a little too amped to just go show or. Hey, I've been spent too much time staying really slow and I need to figure out, well, I need to actually use the scale for a purpose.

We have talked, you know, numerous times before about your clients and how you're able to break things down. And I think having the client mentality along with, you know, the idea and knowing that, you know, there's a difference between the people who just don't horses. And there's a difference between the people who.

Do go show and being able to combine both of those ideas yourself, I think is what makes you such a great coach and trainer and teacher all in one, because you're able to work with the horse and you're able to work with the human on an individual basis. And the human is just as important as the horses are.

Well, and I think it grew up learning from. Some teachers that weren't as good at breaking things down sometimes. And I was able to figure some of the things out because I got so much experience, you know, I realized like buck taught me so many things that clicked later on that I'm like, Oh, that's what he meant.

But I don't know if I hadn't had as many experiences, if it would have clicked for me that way. And so I just try to figure out. Is many ways to break things down, to try to help the human get things sooner so that the horse has a better outcome earlier on in their life. You know? So they don't, they don't suffer because we have bad timing or we don't understand a concept.

Uh, and that's, that's kind of, my biggest goal is how can I break it down so that people. People get it so that the horse has a fair deal. Right? And well morning even we were taking photos and working with babies and we had your farrier out there, you know, picking up their feet and getting them used to all of that.

And there were just some things that you were doing that I don't raise babies. So, you know, I don't see that every day. And you and Steve were both talking about how doing this and doing all of it from such a young age is just. You know, essentially molding clay and setting them up for a successful life down the road.

And if a lot of people would realize that that not everything that you do has to be so soft and subtle, especially with babies because babies are clay and they're learning. So I think that, you know, you're not too soft and you're not too hard on horses. You are right in the middle and you have it figured out.

What works for each individual horse and truly set them up for success. Well, and the stuff with the babies for me, it's just, it's so fun because every time I work with them, I kind of go, okay, how can I get better with my timing? And how can I be a better horseman? And you learn so much, so much stuff from the babies so quickly.

Um, And I think that's one of the hard things when I'm teaching people is sometimes you just don't have that experience of one that's never been handled, you know, when they've never been handled the feel and the timing that you have to have compared to one that's been overly handled and has, you know, had humans do things the wrong way.

I think that's, that's an experience that it, for me is such a blessing and to be around other horse men and horse women, that really kind of strive to have good feeling, good timing. But then yeah, I have the ability to have good boundaries and that I think is the bridging piece for me with a lot of my clients is helping them understand, Hey, you got to have really good timing and gonna have to have really good field, but.

I also have a lot of people that really struggle with the boundary piece. And, and so that's, I think the babies have really taught that for me. Yeah. And I love the idea of working with the babies because you're a part of their career for a really long time. And it's really cool to just like, see what kind of potential they have when they're young and then being able to help them reach that.

And potential and you know, it's so right though, like you were saying with the molding of the clay, like the earlier that you teach these good habits and good horsemanship and just timing and feel the easier it's going to be in the long run. That's the really big piece for me, especially with some of the dressage horses that I work with that come over from Europe.

And my opinion on some of that is like, they just live in a certain. Structure, right? Like they live in a stall and they live like it's very routine for them. And so some of the stuff is just helping the horses move, how they would more naturally move. And, and I find that sometimes some of the ways that we get things done.

So let's say like today where we were kind of roping and altering horses, You know, I find that a lot of people maybe use a butt rope or they use different tools that I don't want to say a wrong, but sometimes you're setting up using a tool that gets the job done, but doesn't actually teach the horse the things that then benefit them overall.

Like you've got them to lead, but so much of like when we're altering or we're doing any work, everything from the beginning is how to connect everything to the feet so that then I can control and influence what their feet do. From every step forward and then everything to the horse is so clear and understandable, right?

Like, Hey, you need to get in the trailer. Hey, you need to cross a ditch. All these things, I can influence their feet. And it's so simple because the word already understands the concept opposed to, I think so often things are taught to horses as compartmentalize things like, Oh, we're getting in the trailer now opposed to, Hey, I, I can ask her feet to go wherever I want them to go.

And that's the thing is when we helped her from the very second, we start handling them as the thought of, Hey, this is connected to your feet. If you let me put your feet where I ask you to put your feet, there's pressure and release. And it's really just an easy concept for the horse. So, you know, a few times held during them and we can usually lead them into the trailer or tie them up or do things because the horse is like, Oh, I understand the concept where, so often I work with horses that are.

Five years old that don't even have that concept at all. And then the problems come because of that. Hey, I can't load in the horse trailer. I can't get in the wash right back, wash pay, sorry. Um, you know, all these things that we all need, people can't get done. And if you just start it way over here, it becomes.

It's just not a problem. Well, and I mean, I'm an experienced horse person, but I mean, I'm always willing to learn each and every day and spending time with you has definitely taught me a lot, but I mean, you just said, you know, we compartmentalize different things and I mean yeah, in my brain, I think, you know, okay.

My horses speak can move, but I guess some people do think, okay, I can get my horse in the trailer. But he also won't do this and I don't get why you won't do this, but really it's just all in their feet. And you do so much groundwork in everything that you do that. I mean, you have so many different drill drills per se, that you do that.

I think really shows step-by-step and an easy, clear way. Whereas a lot of trainers have a struggle breaking things down to where the everyday horse owner can really. Understand exactly what you're saying, because it's really hard when you don't 100% know horses and you're just maybe starting out in it or anything like that to know.



Well, why does my horse do this? Why are his feet so important? And how does controlling his feet? You know, I'm trying to, you know, move his front end or something. And how does this feet correlate with that? So I think that you do such a great job with every aspect of that and breaking it down well, and I think that's a big thing that I really, really tried to have my clients understand.

I left a client today. Just kind of thinking about the concept that. I ride my dressage horse, probably less than the average person, maybe even rides their dressage horse. You know, I may ride them some weeks where I only read them one time that week, but so much of it is that I have control of what the feet do.

So when I ask for a new concept, it's not. Even riding, it's not a new carpet, compartmentalized thing. It's not just a new movement. That's not correlated to everything else that I already do. So if my groundwork over here, my horse understands, Hey, you move your, your hip this way. Hey, you move your shoulders this way.

Then when I want to do other things, my horse is just like, Oh, well, yeah, I know how to do that. And it's not so confusing for them. And, you know, I think that's one of the biggest things that. I really try to help people understand, because I can't tell you the number of people that I do. I, they can't get the horse in the trailer.

They can't get the horse to back up or they can't get their horse to jump over a jump or, you know, whatever, or you can't get your horse to spin, or what half of it is, you just don't have the ability to control or, you know, like I said, influence what the feet are doing. I kind of have been trying to lately really talk.

To people about like the exchange of energy, you know? And so for me, I've really tried to explain it to people that it's like turning on a light switch. And so from the time that you turn the light switch on until the energy transfers down to the feet, you know, if there's a delay, then I'm telling people, then you still have a lot to work on that.

It should be seamless. You should be partners and it should be the second you ask for something it's right there. You know? So I find a lot of my. Clients, they get things from their horse, like, Oh my horse backs up, but it's not like, you're one, whether it's on the ground or on their back, there's still this kind of delay, you know?

And so that's kind of one of the big things that I've been really trying to hit home for a lot of my clients, because I think that it makes it so they can do everything no matter what you want to do. Yeah. And we've, we've talked about this before, especially with like my background of coming from like the showmanship and all that stuff where the groundwork, I mean, essentially that's what it is, is groundwork.

We want to move their bodies. We want to be able to keep their body straight. We want it back. We want to, you know, I, I look at a certain foot and they're picking it up because they just sense what I'm asking. And, um, but I, you know, I come from that background, but I forget that a lot of people don't take the time to do that stuff on the ground because in my head like showmanship, like teaching a horse, To like, you know, do that kind of stuff was just like part of the job, but you know, you and I were talking about, you know, getting

loading on a trailer and I've never even thought about the fact, like you have to be able to move the feet because all my horses move their feet.

And so I've never had that issue, but it makes so much sense when you said it like that. Yeah. Well, and I think that is one of the hard parts is when you've done it for so long. I think sometimes it becomes difficult. If you don't really try to break it down for people, you know, because some of us can just do it.

It just come. Like, for me, most of my groundwork really is just in my leading, right? Like, Hey, if you're stuck, I'm going to fix it. If you're not backing up, if you're not coming forward, if you're not moving left and right. I'm fixing it right there. So I don't have to do a ton of groundwork with my own horses because every interaction, if there's something that's not feeling good, I fix it in that moment.

And. It's taken me the time though, to be able to be like, okay, well, someone doesn't understand this angle. Someone doesn't understand. If I step in front of my horse here, that's going to turn it the other way. Or if I want to move the hip, I can still be standing in front of my horse and still move the hip.

But that's an angle and they, you still have to understand, or, Hey, I tried to stop my horse and they got all cattywampus and their hips swung out. Well, your body angle changed and you encourage the hip to swing that way. So many things that when you've done it your whole life, you just don't think about it.

Like I just stopped in my horse stops or I just go with my horse goes, but trying to find the ways to break that down for people is kind of my passion of like, I want, like I said, I want the horse to have a good deal because. When the human doesn't get it. The horse is like, neither do I, where are we doing this?

Right. Well, and like, like you said, the hip goes out sideways and people don't realize like, Oh, that's probably because you just walked into your horse and he's trying to get out of your space. Like, we don't think about these things when we're doing them. And then we're wondering, why are horses responding the way they're responding?

It's normally because of what we are, we aren't doing it well. And I think that's sometimes the really hard part is that. There's actually a lot of times that I create things in a horse that then people try to take out of there, right? Like he keeps stepping away from me while I'm trying to get on him.

Well, you have too much energy. You have to, you have to be able to regulate when you're stepping towards your horses, your energy too much. And I think that's the thing with the babies. You can't get away with having incorrect energy, right? You have to be able to soften and get firm. In a split second and know which one that you need.

And I think that's sometimes the difficult part. When you have a really forgiving horse, you learn bad habits. And there's a lot of those things that I think people just don't understand because. You know, well, like horse doesn't step away. Well, I, now I want, I want you to have your horse step away. We need to control your feet.

You've spent so much time trying to be like, don't move now. We need it to move for something. And you've gotten yourself into a bind or vice versa, you know? And so I think that's the piece is just helping people understand. And like I said, for me, the blessing was the babies you can't get away with. You have to be able to have a very centered energy and be like, Okay.

I know you're scared and I'm, I'm here to provide you some support, but also you can't run over the top of me and you can't jerk me over there and Hey, when you find the good deal, I'll give you a good deal. Yeah. And I mean, kind of switching gears into a new direction because I mean, we could all chat all day long.

I mean, we have talked for hours on training in different things, but. So you ride English and Western. And how do you feel that that plays a part in your horsemanship? Because I think that, you know, I love riding Western and that's what I prefer, but I think writing English gives you such a great foundation that I just want to kind of hear your perspective on all of that.

I think it's really funny because. The number of people that are like, Oh my gosh, isn't that so difficult? And I'm like, it's the same things we need the same things. Um, and I think it's also interesting because so much of it is what buck taught me. Right? Like you just need overall body control or the overall feet control, like we just talked about.

So for me, it's. I don't want to say it's easy. It's not easy again. Um, but it's not a hard transition in the sense of it's the same concepts and the English does, I think really helped me because it's refining a lot of the things it's kind of going, Oh my body's a little funky. That's why I'm struggling with getting this hip to move or that hip to move or, you know, whatever.

Um, so I think that that's been. A really, really huge beneficial thing for me overall. But it is funny because I can't tell you the number of times that people are like, well, is it so different? And I'm like, get some of the verbiage maybe is different, but overall, no, it's not different at all, in a sense.

I mean, yes, I've also done it my whole life. So there's certain things that I can decipher and kind of go, this tool is not going to work over here or this tool. Well, actually benefit me a ton over here. Um, but I also think the cow horse is so much like dressage. You need all the body parts, you know, you, you need all the same things.

You just happen to have a lot more speed with it. So for me, I think it's, it's really beneficial, but it's funny because I really didn't have a desire to use your size until I fell in love with my horse. Um, I, it just. It did. I think I didn't ride a lot of horses that I really loved the feeling. And he was the first horse that I wrote that I was like, okay, this is cool.

Um, you know, and so for me, I think that's, uh, a huge piece and I've written with some really amazing trainers on both sides. You know, I've written with some of the top trainers really on English world and Western world. So it's fun when you get to ride with the best, no matter what it is. Um, so yeah, I think it's.

I think it's helped me a ton, especially in the last couple of years. Well, and I think it really helps with, um, being a soft rider, you know, like the, the English, cause I grew up, I, you know, I, I think McKayla also, we both grew up writing English as well as Western and yeah, I think that you can take a lot from the English world and apply it into the Western, especially with how soft they sit and.

And all of that, but yeah, you and I had talked about in the past about like, you know, it's, it is so similar. Like we might not use the same hand leg combinations or whatever to get that end result, but we essentially get the same end result. We all want to be able to move the body parts and the different ways and, and all of that.

So it's, well, for me, it's been really interesting because there's a lot of things that apply to like the bridle horse that I'm like, that's the same thing that you're trying to create. In your dressage horse, right? You're trying to get the inside leg outside rein. Nobody talks about that really in the Western world, when you're getting your bridle horse.

Cause it's just, Hey, don't let your horse look to the outside. Right. But that's what you're doing. You're working towards having a bridle horse. When you ride a circle, you want a horse looking to the inside, not counter flexed and your inside rein is technically loose when you're riding a bridle horse and you're outside.

Rain is on. And you have them shaped to the end. Like, so for me, there's so many correlations that I'm like, how do you guys not see that? Where, where do people get to thinking that that's so incredibly different? Because there's been, I was struggling, I dunno, going to the left on my dressage horse. And I ended up putting him in one hand because I wanted to be handsy on my inside rein.

And I was like, Oh, I'm just going to try this. And I was like, Oh, well that worked, you know, or the number of times I. I've used more of my Western exercises on my dressage horse that have benefited him. Sometimes he's been more than vice versa, you know, because we do, you have to get so much from a young horse.

You have to, you have to have a lot of exercises in your toolbox to get a three-year-old horse, to have lead changes, to spend to, you know, so, and not to rag under sized. It's just, you have so much longer to. Require those things. So I think sometimes there's just less exercises of like, Oh, I'm going to try this.

And a lot of times I'm like, Oh, that worked great. That fixed the problem that I was trying to fix, you know? And there's, there's some the other way too. Um, I definitely think the understanding of the body mechanics in dressage have helped me in the Western too. You know, nobody in the Western world talks.

No one that I've taken a lot of lessons with. Talk about like how the horse's body work so much. It's just kind of, Hey, run down there. You do this. This is how they need to stop. This is what the look needs to be opposed to, Hey, if, if this is an engaging this way, this is why this isn't working. So that's definitely really helped.

Yeah. Well, they, they both play off of one another, so I mean, it really just compliments each other essentially. And that's. You know what makes a great horse person? I think we, Nicole and myself, I've talked to a lot of, you know, contributors to horse and rider and just horse people in general that have written both English and Western.

I mean the two of us ourselves have, so it just shows. It can make you a better horseman. And that, I feel like a lot of people who ride one or the other have a problem, you know, like trying to learn from one another because we can easily learn from Oh, totally. Well, and it's funny too, cause I've, I think I've gotten into the English world around here, at least because the things I do work.

But it's still like, Hey, call that cowgirl, you know? And so I think like, I love it. I love being able to get the stuff that I do done and, but it's definitely, always fascinating to me. To see sometimes the disconnect, especially when people are newer to things, right? Like, Oh, well, those Western writers use that harsh bit.

Or, and it's like, Whoa, Whoa, we actually follow similar steps to you guys. Right? Like we start in the snaffle too. We ride in a hackamore, the hackamore has nothing. Right. So you have to be really handy to be able to do that, you know? And so. There's just certain stigmas that I, for me, I want to break and be like, no, that's, that's not what this world is.

And maybe, yeah, there is things that are a little bit, like I said, you got to do things quicker. Things are faster, physically riding your horse down the fence is way faster than riding your horse down the center line. You know? So there's times where things may be look a little bit harsher, but I've written a lot of the top horses.

In the cow horse and those things are some of the softest horses I've ever felt and they're feely and they're responsive off your leg. You know, it's not this, Oh, well you just beat on them and you, you know, and I know that's very stereotypical, but it's, it definitely is very interesting to kind of see that disconnect between the two worlds, because it's, it's really not that different.

It's not. And like you were saying with like, they see a spade that maybe that a bridle horse is going to be in and they automatically are like, Oh my gosh, it's so harsh. I can't believe you're putting this in your horse's mouth. But in reality, like just, just like, I mean, for ju dressage, for example, you know, it takes a long progression to get those horses to where they're at the top level that they can compete in.

And the same is like, with this, you're not putting a spade bit in a three-year-old, you know, you're going through all these other steps to the point to where they can ride around in a spade bit. And like, you just. Twitch your pinky and something's going to happen. There's not a lot of connection between your hand in that bit.

No. Well, and it's no different than writing a double bridle. You know, we just, I think there's just this stigma where people kind of banter back and forth, like one side is better than the other. And I think there's so much to be learned from both really. And so I, I have to say it's been really fun for me and it's been a really good experience and I hope.

That I can really successfully show on both sides and show people that it, you know, you don't have to just do one and stuff does correlate, you know, and there's, there's definitely certain things that are different, right? Like we're not ever looking for the same carriage, you know, or collection in a Western horse, but we do get them collected up.

You know, I remember Don Murphy came, you know, and was talking about the cutters and talking about how. Really good cutters. They trot to be able to get that really smooth movement. Right. You want to trot rather than canter out. Cause when they can or they kind of want a pop up. Right. And it was that realization of, yeah, you need a really big, strong, powerful trot to be able to catch that cow.

And keep up. That's the same thing they need to be coming from behind and striding and be able to catch that cow, you know? So I've actually found that so many of my dressage ladies have a really fun time working cows, because then you have a purpose. So when I'm like, Hey, you got to make your horse go, then they have something to go get.

So rather than just being like, come on, come on, come on. I think that's one of the things is it gets really easy to be naggy when you're in a situation of that methodical tight movement, which it's so beneficial for you to learn that. But sometimes when you only get stuck in that opposed to kind of having that faster, like, Hey, come on, come on, come on.

Then I think that's where sometimes I see people get a little stuck because then you're like my horse isn't really getting off my leg. Well, when the cows leaving yet, you're really clear on whether your horse is getting off your leg or not. So I found that to be really fun for a lot of my ladies and they love, love coming over and playing with the cows.

Cause I think it gives them some of those feelings that they've been trying to learn for years, but they didn't have a purpose. Like you eat, don't get me wrong. You have a purpose to go show, but. It's just a little different when you're actually choosing something that's leaving you well, right. And I mean, we talked about this earlier, you know, with having a purpose, to go and show and just being a person that just wants to be a better horseman, but that's a totally different kind of.

Purpose that is purposeful riding. You're not just riding around everyday, like fine tuning your horsemanship or, I mean, you are innocence, you know, fine tuning your horsemanship, but you're kind of having a lot more fun doing it. I know that's kind of why I gravitated towards the Western is I like to have, you know, quick thinking and I really like going fast.

I barrel race. So I like to go fast and you know, so I think. Doing all of those things just ties in well together. And I think I'm sure that's a lot of fun for your clients that come over and I've seen, you know, some of your clients in and out of the barn and they all seem really happy. And you know, I've heard you instruct a couple of times and.

You're really great at telling a person how to do something, you know, standing on the fence. You're not on the horse where a lot of people have to be on the horse tuning and riding and getting them adjusted that way. Right. Well, and I think, yeah, I mean, for me, it's just overall. I want to learn as much as I can and whatever that is, I just want to be a better porous woman.

And so for me, I'm willing to kind of put myself out there in a lot of different places to just be like, I want, I want to learn these things. And for me, I have a tendency of being fast, so I'm intense. So the dressage is good for me to be a little more like you should probably slow that down, you know?

And, and it's, it has, it's really helped my body and it's made me more. Physically aware too. Like I just started going to physical therapy cause I can definitely, like, I've always felt like, okay, when I go to Kantar my horse to right. They're like, Hmm, are you sure? And I'm like, yes, I'm sure I can, I can ride around it.

And I can. But when, when you slow it down and you're much more methodical than it's really clear, like there's something a little wonky in my hip, you know? And so it's cool. Cause a lot of. The riders that I ride around. That's kind of a big part of it too. Like I was just talking about to my physical therapist and she does clinics and she'll come and I've seen some physical therapists that will use like shirts that have aligned on the back so they can tell whether you're riding straight or not.

And they can tell where, you know, you're kind of wonky in certain places in your own physical body. And it's say the Western world doesn't do that as much because you're not. You're not trying to sit up there and look pretty. You're just kind of most, most of the Western things, at least that I've written cow horse.

It doesn't really matter how you look as long as the horse does the thing. You could be halfway hanging off your horse, but if it stops beautifully, nobody nobody's judging you, you know where innercise no you're judged for how you're looking up there. And so I think that's really helped me in a whole nother level of riding too.

Yeah, no. And like I said, I came from the, all around where it is sit pretty and all of that, and yeah, it is, it's really insane because I'd be going down the rail and they'd be like, okay, rotate your left shoulder this way, but rotate your right shoulder, your right hip this way. And I'm just like, okay.

This looks good. It feels really bad, but, but yeah, you're right. Like, I, it turns out my, my hip and my back are very wonky. And so yeah, it is, it does keep you from doing what you. Physically you're capable of doing, but it's just, I would say those the same as our horses, you know, our horses, we are constantly working with, you know, equine chiropractors, but farriers to make sure that they're in alignment and they're happy.

And, and I think we forget that we are also, I don't like to say the word athlete, but we are in a sense athletes as well. Totally. We're a hundred percent athletes. I think, I think it's, to me, I think it's one of the hardest sports you can do. Like people can argue. Yeah. I had a conversation with a friend the other day about whether golf or riding horses was more difficult.

And I think the hard part is the best horsemen. Make it look flawless. It looks fricking easy and it's not, it's not. And I told him, I'm like, no, you're working against your own physical body, your horse's physical body and the cow horse, you're working with a cow, you know? So I'm like, no, I, to me, I think courses are hands down the hardest sport.

That you can do as far as you will always be working on yourself, you will always be working on getting better. I mean, how many people have one great horse, but then never can do whatever again, right? Because that horse helps them out. And that horse was incredibly talented, but maybe they weren't really the horse men compared to someone that can do it over and over again.

I mean, there's so many levels and even if you're good at one aspect of horseback riding. I, I have no desire to jump, you know? So then there's other things that you're like, Yeah, that is zero part of my skillset. No. And, and, um, yeah, we, I get into this conversation a lot too with non, uh, horse people, especially when I was, so I was a division one athlete at Oklahoma state.

And when you're next, So the wrestlers and the football players naming, and you're talking about football players who go to the NFL and you're going, I ride horses and they're just like, that's a sport. And I'm just like, yeah, yes. But I got into this conversation recently with my boxing coach who happens to be an Olympic level boxer and a 10 time national champion.

And she watched the video of me showing, um, A couple of weeks ago. And she's like, I don't know. She's like, your sport is way more scary than my smart. And this is talking to a girl who gets her face punched in and she's just like, yeah, what you guys do is insane. I could never do that. And I'm just like, I love being around somebody who comes from a different sport, but like appreciate is the fact that what we do is not just totally for all those people.

I'm always like, come on over. Yes, exactly. Go ahead. I mean, I can't tell you the number. Of times. Well, and I, I probably am guilty of when people come for the first time kind of overloading them and being like, here's all the things, you know, because I think it is so like, Oh, will you just get on there? And you just pull them over here and you just say, Whoa, and kick them.

Or. I don't even know what the movies teach people because they're very wrong sometimes, but, you know, and just try to be like, look, they're sensitive animals and you need to be able to ebb and flow with that and have. Feel and timing, and now you have to be firm, you know, you have to kick them harder because now you've told them out and they're not listening because they had no idea what you're asking for.

Oh, now you need to be really sensitive. Don't gain on their face. You know? And people are like, Whoa, this is really hard. I'm like, yeah, I know. Well, and it's just like, They don't even think about it, but like we're communicating with, with creatures that don't speak our language. Like imagine having a teammate where you're trying to break down, like the next play and what you guys are going to do, and the person that you're talking to doesn't speak English.

And I think like one of the things that I've really been talking to people about lately is like, cause I think so many people have other animals, right? So many people have dogs, right. And a dog. When you tell the dog to sit. You're not also telling them 50 other cues, horses are so sensitive. So you might be telling them one thing, but last time your seat was here and your hands were here and this time they're here and Oh, you almost fell off there.



And so you gripped with your leg. Well, you told your horse to go in, you use your leg. Well, now it's gone and now got it. Got in trouble. Like we give them so many mixed signals, unintentionally all the time, even the best of us. And so, yeah, not only are you trying to speak another language? We're not real great at it often, you know, it's confusing.

Well, and it's, uh, so it's like mentally difficult and physically, because I mean to be at the top level, I mean, and not even exactly just the top level mid-level and above. I mean, if you try to ride lower level, I guess you don't have to be top physical condition or, you know, have the mental capacity to have to ride.

If you're going to go. Once every five years on a trail ride, but to be able to ride every day, I mean, that's mentally hard and physically hard and not a lot of sports are both. I mean, you have coaches who are doing a lot of the mental aspect where with us, we are up there. How can it be kind of, yeah. We have trainers and coaches, but.

We are having to do it kind of by ourselves because we're talking to somebody who doesn't speak our language and somebody who's 15 feet away. Can't communicate to our horse for us. We have to do it totally well. And I, I think that there's, so I think when I'm helping people that are starting, I think that's kind of the biggest thing that I try to really hit home is like, I'm constantly taking lessons.

I'm constantly learning because this is to me, the hardest sport that you can choose to do. And every horse is physically built different. So I might get on one and it's hard for them to bend to the left or it's hard, you know, and I, I think to my last couple of years of really learning is figuring out more of the horse.

On the physical level as far as like ailments, right? Like that was one thing that I struggled with in the English world for a while was a lot of behavioral issues. It felt like it got swept under the rug because it was, Oh, they're physically hurting somewhere. Right. So I've also had to be careful because I think I can override sometimes some physical issues because my timing's good enough.

That I can fix the behavioral issue, which then makes it maybe look like there's not a physical issue. So there's definitely been some of that too, around the horses is like, okay, is there something actually wrong with you? Right. Are you really sore someplace? And that's really why you don't want to bend to the left.

You know, and I do think in the, in the Western world, not like we're beating it into them, but I think a lot of us have a decent amount of timing with certain things where you're like, Oh, I can get you to bend to the left. Even if. Your stifle is sore, or even if you're, you know, whatever. So trying to, to learn that aspect with the horses, you know, like I think there's just, that's one of the big things that when people are talking about buying a horse, I've really tried to have that conversation lately of like, Hey, I don't think you realize all the pieces that go into this.

It's not any of your halfway decent rider. Can you fix problems? I mean, I, I worked with a ton of trainers that are. Kick butt in the Chopin or, you know, showing dressage and they can't, they have zero idea how to fix any problems. They can't get to the horse in the trailer.

They can't, you know, well, it's drug this or let's, you know, they don't have any solutions behaviorally because a lot of barns don't teach that you, you come in as a kid, learn how to ride the horses saddled for you.

And you walk out of the barn. And the worst is unsaddled, there may be even tack it up, but it was still caught. So you didn't learn how to lead it or any of those pieces. So I just think there's, there's so many puzzle pieces to having horses. Yeah. And I mean, kind of touching on the buying aspect, having an I, I mean, I think it's really.

For critical for people getting into horses and purchasing horses, because we talked about this way earlier in the podcast where you said, you know, you've been around horses, so you have an eye. I mean, experienced horsemen are able to look at a horse and say that horse isn't sound. That horse probably has a pain in this area.

This horse probably has a pain in this area, whereas somebody who's new and going to buy a horse. That's really challenging to say, Oh my gosh, I'm so excited because he's a Palomino and I loved him and I wanted to take him home. And it's like, you know, then you have to figure out as a trainer, what to do with a person who bought a horse, that's unsound, you know, problems.

Yeah. Problems, all sorts of things. And that's really, really difficult. And it's really. You know, another aspect of how horsemanship is so hard is gaining an eye, which, you know, saying like your eyes are so important in horse and like, Hey, that's a problem I can fix. No, that's not a problem I can fix. You know, like that's, I can usually tell within 10 minutes whether the horse is suitable for somebody, like I have the time don't even need to go through like.

You know, let's do this, this, this, and this. I'm like Nope. Or yes. You know, I have clients sometimes I think they probably get upset with me because I'm, I'm apt to early on. Not because I'm giving up on the horse, but because I'm like, Hey, I know this horses work ethic and your skillset and this horse, isn't going to want to do the job that you're wanting it to do for you.

And so, you know, it may be that I work with a horse for only a month or two, and I'm like, Hmm, this isn't going to be the horse. And you know, that's really upsetting for people, especially I think because there's a lot of trainers that are like, well, let's spend six months or a year. And again, it's not that I'm not willing to give the horse the time, but sometimes there's things that I could get through to the horse, but the horse is not going to want to tolerate.

Less optimal timing, you know? Yeah. I think that's, that's so important, especially as somebody who is a professional too, to be able to explain that to customers. Cause I feel like, you know, we look at these. Uh, Disney movies, you know, where you have this amazing relationship with your horse and everything's great.

And you have a Rocky start, but you know, there's a rainbow at the end of the road or whatever, and it, that's not how it is all the time. And some horses. You know, some horses are not beginner horses and some horses just can't handle that. And it's, you know, he might look really great when you're riding him or when the trainer's riding him, but it doesn't mean

that he's going to be a fit for, for what your customers wanting or, or is even capable of doing totally.

And, and I think the thing for me is I try really hard to be an advocate for the horse and I've made plenty of mistakes. There's plenty of things that I've done. I mean, that's partially how you get here. Right? You've. Done things that you're like, Oh, I, I didn't know that one at ulcers for the last year.

Oh gosh, I feel awful. Or, you know, whatever the thing is, but I really try to help clients see, Hey, your trainer's probably been through a lot of really bad choices when they tell you that maybe you shouldn't buy this horse. You know, I work with a lot of people that are like, well, I didn't listen to my trainer.

And I, I made this choice and it's like, well, Yeah, I think in your mind, you had such great intentions, but maybe the horse, you don't even know what skinny or fat is, you know, and, and your horse is underweight or overweight. I can't tell you the number of times that I've had to show up and I've had to have that conversation and I'm like, look, I'm not a vet, but this I have to speak up for the horse and this doesn't look right.

And I'm glad that you thought that you were rescuing this horse, but you don't have the skillset. To help this horse. And I think that's the one really hard thing. I think a lot of people come in thinking like I'm doing this horse such as service and it's so great. And I saved it from whatever slaughter or whatever the situation may be.

And it's like, yeah, but your care is almost worse than anything else because you didn't realize that they're lame and they're hopeless. Cracked. Yeah. Well, and I think ego kind of can get in the way of that because you know, they get the mindset that. I can do it. I've seen you do it so I can do it. And it's just, well, there is a lot of time and effort and training that goes into being able to work with certain horses and knowing when it's time to give up on a horse, because sometimes there are horses that.

You know, you just need to say, okay, I can't do it. Maybe somebody else can. And that's part of being, you know, having an open mindset as a trainer, anything else is being able to move on to something that suits you. And a lot of, I feel like maybe lower level people want to hang on to that one horse because it's so special.

And even though it could go be successful with somebody else, they just want to keep it totally, totally well. And the number of times I see horses that are. That are actually really great horses, but they're just like, I can't tolerate you or this, or it doesn't make sense. It's not, you know, that was the thing for me with Niguel was like, he, he was probably one of the coolest horses I'd ever written any.

He had always felt like he wanted to do everything for me, but. He got frustrated a lot in, I think his early on experience was like, I'm going to kind of force you into this frame and I'm gonna force you to be here. And I think they kind of snuck a ride on him in the beginning and just, just set it up where he wasn't really secure with a human.

Right. He didn't look to you to be like, Oh, you're supporting me. And he's really athletic and he's really big and powerful. And. You know, so as soon as I kind of set that up for him, he overall feels like he would, he would do the world for me. And that was the coolest piece about him. But I look at a horse like that and I'm like this horse could have been blown up in a heartbeat by so many people with good intentions because the number of people that would have been mad at him, Or scared of him, one of both, or one of each or both, um, because of his capabilities, he could have just ended up in such a crummy situation.

And, you know, and I don't, I don't think that that was where he was going per se, but just looking at that kind of a horse, that to me, I'm like, Oh, you're so cool because you have so much feeling, you have so much in there, you just have to know how to tap into it. And it's interesting cause there's a lot of horses that.

I've worked with it. I show up and people are ready to be done that they're like, Oh, this one's just, Oh my gosh. And I'm like, Oh no, this one's totally fixable. You just didn't understand this one. But then sometimes the ones, like you said, that people are like, no, I have to keep fluffing the pony that's and you're like, totally, the pony keeps kicking you, maybe fluffy.

The pony is not the best pony for you. You know? And it's so funny because there's a lot of times that I have to be like, No, you got to let this one go or no, we can fix this one, but everyone along the way has been like, Oh my gosh, this one's awful. And I'm like, no, you just didn't understand this one. And then the horse was like, thank you.

I just needed it. Just needed someone to get me. And usually it's great from there, you know? And, and I do have to say that's kind of the blessing of being able to, to be around other horses is I do kind of have an eye for like, Hey, this is gonna work or this is not, and I've been wrong. There's plenty of times where it's like, We, I wasn't getting along with his horse, another trainer might be better suited, right.

Or they have, you know, more patients to take it slower or, you know, and it's not that I don't, like I said, I'll take things as plenty, slow, but. There's a lot of times with the clients that I have, where I want them to feel successful and be safe, you know, I'm, I try to really advocate for the horse's wellbeing and the human safety, you know?

Yeah. And, and you do everything with your clients too. It's not just a Reno work. It's not just your Saraj. Like you have them, like you said earlier, they're working cattle. They are going out into the pastures. You live right by a reservoir. Well, you'll take them down the road and like, yeah. Make them, you know, go into the water and like learn the basics of introducing your horse to water and being around these, you know, environments with dogs and people and noises.

And, um, it's so great. And it's also, it's a lot of fun cause I ride at your parents. Your mom's barn. And, um, it's so much fun when you guys, when you bring the dressage people and we're working cattle or we're with the Buffalo and you can just see how excited they get, they get to go in there and like be around these.

Cause you're like, you get to play cowboy for a day and you get to do something fun with your horse. That's not, and don't get me wrong. Dressage is fun. It looks amazing. And like what those horses can do are cool. But sometimes it's nice to just get out of that arena and do something totally out of your element.

Well, and like it's, cause there's certain things that are like common practices. Like I am too lazy to get off my horse and get back on when I opened a gate. Right? So like all my horses can open and close the gate, but it's one of the best exercises to teach all of my students, no matter who discipline, you gotta be able to move every body part to open and close the gate.

You gotta be able to go forward, back up, go sideways, move the hip, move the shoulder. And. I told a client the other day, I'm like, Hey, if you had cattle that were about to get out, you'd be hurrying up. That would be not, that could be in trouble. You're moving a little too slow, you know? And so yeah, you give a purpose to it and it helps, you know, I think that's the really big piece.

Is that just mixing it up, making it fun, making horses, you know, I. I just, it's heartbreaking to me when horses don't get to be horses. Yeah. Well, I mean, I come from a place. I mean, I showed the all around in the beginning, but for the most part of my career with horses per se, like they've lived a horse life.

And I think, I think my horses are happy and are able to do that. And then I also. Don't drill it into them, that their job is just to barrel race. Like they get to go try a ride or do whatever. And, you know, they very rarely see a barrel because they know they know their job. They don't need to, you know, really.

Be seeing the same thing going in a million circles every single day and they can go do some fun stuff. And I think it's important for us as writers to remember that it's okay to go have fun and try something different. I'm always willing to try something different. I mean, watching the cow horse is something that I always wanted to do.

I think that that's so cool. Both the cow horse and the cutting art. Amazing to me. And I mean, that's something that I'm like, well, maybe one day I'll be able to, you know, branch out and do something like that. But I'm still always trying to figure out something different to do with my horses because they're bored and I don't want us to be bored well, and I, I think that's one of the things too, like when I watch horses go show, like I look, are they happy?

You know, like I see a lot of horses that do really talented things. But they're switching their tail the whole time or they're chomping and just anxiety written. And I'm like, I want to do my best to stay away from that. I've obviously written horses that have more anxiety and are a little hotter. And you, you work with what you've got and you do your best to help some of them through.

And some of them aren't meant to show because it's too much on them, but I do, I watched so many people show and I'm like, I don't care that you can do. I don't care what you can do

if your horse looks miserable. And so that's, for me, I want all my horse to be as happy as possible. And we're asking a lot of them.

Well, I mean, the whole point of this podcast is displaying, you know, everybody living their best Western horse life. I mean, granted, you ride English as well, but I think you're living your best Western horse life yet giving your horse his best life at the same time. Well, and I think I'm thankful cause that my mom.

Taught me that, you know, it was like trying to let the horses live out in the herd and trying to make it the best experience for the horse that we can in captivity, you know, and, and understanding how they move and, and do certain things. And that's the thing I think I really try and take into the w to the English world is just the understanding of like, You know, horses usually move a ton, having them in a little stall.

And the hard part is when you don't give the horses, the right setup and skillset, then a lot of times they do end up hurt, right? Because then they do lose their mind when they finally get freedom or finally get to be out in a big run or in the pasture, they don't know what to do with himself, you know?

So I am really thankful of my mom for that. Yeah, your family. I just, I love the way that all of you respect the horse and you can just tell and like even the horse that your mom's been so nice to let me show 'em, you know, he's a show horse, but he lives outside and he's in the element and he's happier outside when he was in a stall at the horse show, he was throwing things around and just making a mess.

And so I'd take him out of his stall and go walk around the fairgrounds and just like, go do stuff. But yeah, it's, I love that it. Yes, there are show horses, but the horse comes first and it's so obvious with the way that you have a connection with Niguel, which is your dressage horse. And, and your mom has, was shining little Nick, which is her, you know, the stud that has been in the magazine a ton.

And in fact, it's the one that you're on the cover with, for, um, the fall issue. But yeah, it's just, you know, they're show horses, but. It's all about the horse first. And I think that's pretty obvious because you took Niguel who I would think of safe to say would probably not do well in this environment a year ago.

And like you and I took him to swimming. Like we were full on swimming. We weren't just like little feet in the water. Like we were literally waist, deep swimming in the water. There were jet skis flying by boats, flying by and he didn't blink. I mean, he just, and then when the seaweed touched his leg, the seaweed a little bit.

But no, he, I mean, he was very fractious when I first and, and we gave him, he got to have the opportunity to live in the pasture until he lost his shoe every week for two months. So then I decided my farrier was probably going to fire me and that maybe he had to be back in the stall, but no, I think that's just it to be able to have fun.

And, and no, I couldn't have done that a year ago and he, he just couldn't have handled that. And now that he. Just to circle back to the beginning. I have control of his feet. I can say,

Hey, we're not leaving. And he goes, okay, we're not leaving. I'd really like to the, see what's touching my leg, you know? And, and I, it, then I also get to have fun.

You know, it rather than drilling all the time, it feels fun to be like, look, I get to take my big fancy show horse and take him swimming. Or when you work, as it turned back, when we're trying to do cattle, it's so funny. Cause sometimes you'll even be in your English saddle and you just walk into the pen with all the cattle and just sort them through.

And I'm like, God, that's a picture right there. Really? And he, I mean, that is not how he came. I mean, I remember the first time I sat on him and I kind of. Barely bent his head around and he saw me up there and he was like, Oh my gosh, there's someone up there. And I was like, Oh, okay. I see what we did here.

And, you know, I think it. Good bad or indifferent, you know, I think they just got on and they taught him the, the movements and the skills in Europe. And that was, I mean, he was phenomenal and he was great in those ways. And I just had to go back and be like, Hey, everything's fine. I'm I'm up here. It's all good.

If I make noises up here, we don't need to leave. You know? And he did for quite some time was like, I can't stay. And I just had to be like, you're totally fine. And he's probably the horse. I've. Ever been on it's that powerful, you know, I've written a lot of the cow horses that are really feely and quick footed, but he has a lot of gas in the tank.

That's a lot of forward power, which is a little bit, it can be scary when you don't have control of it when he's so big, too. It totally. So it does, it feels so. And so many people got to see how he was, so it makes it even more fun because then it's like, Oh, wow. You, you were able to do that. And I, so much of it was my natural horsemanship stuff and just working cows, treating them more like a Western horse in a lot of ways, really.

And just being like, Hey, we're going everywhere. We're, I'd throw them in the trailer every time I wanted to go somewhere. You know, that's the other thing that I think is so great about the Western world more is like, you just take it everywhere you do. Hey, we're going to show, throw those ones in, you know, and I.

There's just there's things that are not just not a big deal, right? Not in a big deal to the human and or the horse, because it's just like, well, that's just what we do opposed to it kind of getting to where you're like, Oh gosh, now we got to show. And I haven't been in the trailer in a year and I haven't, you know, it's just like, no, we're going here.

We're doing this. And that's what I did with him. And that's what makes him really fun for me. Well, and rewarding. I believe that's so rewarding to be able to see him. Within a year because I mean, a horse like that could take a lot longer, you know, had he not been in the correct hands or whatever, like we talked previously.

So to do that in a year to go from a horse that was scared to see you on his back to a horse. That's. Only afraid of seaweed in the town and not the, not the jet-skis zooming by him. Totally. Oh, rewarding. Because I mean, I'm proud of things that I do with my horse belt, smallest things. I'm like, Oh, that's so rewarding.

But to be able to, you know, completely one 80 a horse. Well, and I think it is horses like that, where a sink's he would have been misunderstood and. I don't think he would have gotten in trouble because he's so feely. But I think that he would have, there was definitely moments where he was just like, it's hard.

I can't do it. And you just had to be like, no, we're not doing that. And he's like, okay, fine. But you had to know those spots and had to be able to work through that. And I think just the skills that I had from. You know, my natural horsemanship, but, but then also riding the cow horse stuff, you know, to be a little gritty to be like, no, we're not doing that.

I'm not having that discussion. Come on. Let's go. And him being like, Oh, okay. I can do that. Work through it. Yeah, totally, totally. You know? Am not that good in the dressage saddle doing that. I definitely have to put my Western saddle on to do that a little bit more. Cause I just haven't spent as many hours in the dressage saddle.

So I definitely, I'm not very comfortable in this. So, you know, but I, I have, I throw, I took him for a lesson a couple of weeks ago, over to a cow horse trainer to get help on Molina changes. You know, I. I do. I understand sometimes that a little bit better. And again, I do a little bit better sometimes when it's a little faster.

Cause I just, I functioned that way. My brain is going a million miles an hour, so that's sometimes better for me. And then I come back over here and I'm riding with Shannon Peters. This weekend. So I, I get both sides of like, yeah, you went to the CalWORKs trainer right now. I'm going to top dressage trainers.

I think it's great because I think that we have so much to offer in both English and the Western. And in fact, a lot of the Western guys that we work with have a background in either the, all around or the hunt seat or the dressage. And I think that, yeah, like we, like, we kind of touched on earlier. It's just, there's a disconnect and it's so nice that you're able to reach across.

The, you know, the line a little bit and, and get help from everybody. Because I think that there's so much that I could learn from Azure Satish trainer or whatever, you know, I think there's a lot that they could learn from, you know, a Don Murphy or a buck total. So it's, it's really cool that you get to see all of that and then kind of create it into what works for you.

Well, and I think I'm thankful too, that my brain works in a way that I can. Ride with a lot of people. I think that doesn't work for everyone. I definitely have to tell some of my clients when they're first starting, because to them, it's like, everyone's speaking a different language where for me, I'm kind of like, Oh, take that and that, and that, and that works great here.

And it all kind of blends together and it's really kind of like, Oh, that makes sense here. And Hey, that's what I was struggling with over here. But the number of people that I think it really does feel like foreign languages, everyone's talking. So different. And I'm like, no, it's all the same stuff, but that's not how everyone interprets it.



So I am also really thankful that my brain can just wrap around some of that and be able to go from here to here and not get too, too wound up and be like, ah, I don't understand it. But I also think one of the things I try and teach people is I think one of the biggest things I learned early on is. It kinda know who I'm going to work with and the thing that they're good at.

And I try to pull that piece from them when you go and try and learn someone's whole program and you try and do that every time you go learn from someone, I think that's where people get confused, opposed to this. Guy's awesome at lead changes. This guy's awesome. It spins or, you know, and then knowing the people like, okay, I can buy into your whole entire program and not be confused because it's close enough to what I do, or I'm willing to throw out my program because your program is working way better.

But I think that's sometimes where people get a little lost is they buy too much in, and then it's too different from their program, as opposed to just, Hey, I'm going for this one skill that they're awesome at and not, not get yourself too confused. That's kind of the word advice for it. Well, and I think that like, you know, we kind of have to think of it as school kids.

I mean, school kids, aren't learning from the same person. I mean, unless you're homeschooled, you're not learning from one person, your whole entire school career. You're learning from a math teacher, a social studies teacher, a science teacher, and a different teacher, each grade level. So, you know, you're trying to piece everything like, okay, well, this teacher taught me this and that's how I remember that.

And I remember it from last year because of that. And it's the same exact thing with working with different horsemen and women. Totally. And I've. I found trainers that you're like, Oh my gosh, you can break every detail down. This is incredible. And then other ones that aren't very good at breaking things down, but they can get a ton done with the horse.

They're just like, go do this, go do that. And I think that's where I kind of got to the place where I was like, I wanted to be one of those people that can break it down because. Then you can hopefully help a bigger, broader group of people. Um, but I mean, the number of amazing horsemen that are like, just run down there, pull a little bit harder on that rein.

And you're like, Whoa, that fixed everything. You know? So that's the piece. You have to be able to kind of absorb and take all those different things. And I, I so blessed. I've gotten to ride with some of the people I've gotten. The opportunity because of my mom and bill or, you know, just. People am around it.

It's pretty amazing. And I'm so thankful for that. Yeah. And what you said with like, pulling from different trainers and you know, you like this about their program and I I've noticed like in McKayla, you might, you might think the same, you might not. Um, but working for the magazine and doing so much training content, I'm able to like, you know, like if I see somebody who I think I'm like, wow, that guy like.

He can get that horse turned around better than anyone else I've ever seen. I'm going to go to him and be like, let's do an article about how you do that. And I've, I've been so thankful

for that because it's opened the door to so many things. I'm like, okay, I like how he did this over this. I like how he did this.

And like, it really helps like me think about the way that I want to ride my horse. And so, yeah, that's, it's, it's super rewarding. Totally. Totally one. You know, when we were talking about people first getting into horses, I think that's the really challenging part is there's this really fine line of getting too much information at the beginning, right?

Like, well, five different vets told me to, you know, 20 different things and all these trainers told me different, well, they said this was the problem. And I'm saying, that's the problem. And it. It's really hard when you don't have your own base of knowledge to pull from, to go, Oh, I can take this or that.

And I think that's one of the most challenging pieces when you first get into horses is I'm so confused because everyone is saying something completely different, you know? And I even sometimes get frustrated as a trainer where that goes and says something opposite behavioral wise, maybe, you know, and I'm like, gosh, darn it.

I don't think that's going to help you, you know? And. And then you're telling your student, Hey, can you not listen to the thing that the vet said, even though I really, really value that vet it, you know, that's, I think the confusing part of getting into it, but then you hit this kind of base knowledge where then it feels kind of like.

Oh, I can go here, there and ask these questions. I can ask this person that and decipher between things. But I think when you're first beginning, that's so hard information and sometimes too much information is, is not good. And, um, yeah, like you said, you need to. I personally would recommend that, you know, if you're just starting in the horse industry, you find somebody that you can really, um, you know, look to for advice, you know, a professional like yourself, who, who works with people like this a lot and, and be able to trust their opinion because everybody's going to tell you something different, especially if you go on the internet.

Oh, I know. I know. It's true. Well, and. Find someone that you trust. I think too, that's willing to ask for help where they need to. That's one of the biggest things that I tell people is it's like find someone who goes, I have no idea. I can't, don't let your ego get in the way of totally, totally. You know, and we all have one it's, it's hard.

I there's times where I'm like, okay, I have to let go of, am I just trying to be right in this situation about this horse that I think is not a good fit for this person or. You know, and now some other trainers doing good with it, you know, whatever it is. There's definitely things we all have an ego, but trying your best as a trainer and trying to find a trainer when you're looking that does their best to put the ego aside to be like, Hey, there's, let's, let's ask that.

Let's ask farrier let's and it's hard because so many of the people in the industry sell you something that makes sense. Well, this farrier told me that I needed to put their Huff on upside down, like some craziest, you know, and you're like, huh, that's interesting. But then they give you this whole story that you're like, Oh, that makes sense.

It's you know, and I think that's the hard part when you don't have something to base things off. You're like, well, maybe, maybe I should try that. So yeah, I think when you're looking to be in the horse world, find someone that. Someone that's open to, to other people's opinions and someone that's got enough different base knowledge to know when they don't know something too.

Right. And so kind of to wrap things up and in sort of, you know, finding a trainer, where can our audience and listeners find you on social media? So I go by money, corpsmen ship. Um, I just started a new Instagram, just separate from my regular one money horsemanship. And then Facebook, I have a private group that people can be on that.

I try to share content. Um, and then I have a website when he corpsmen ship. Dot com and I'm going to be adding new blog posts and trying to kind of update all of my content. I also have a Marco polo. Um, it's. Not good edited videos. It's kind of just real, real working videos. Um, but I've been just trying to share up-to-date content and things that are happening as they're happening with people and ideas that comes to my head as they're happening, because I think people just need to hear things over and over again.

Cause we forget like you leave your lesson and you're like, what did, what was that thing? Um, so yeah, feel free to kinda jump on any of those and. I'd be happy to, to help anybody out. Yeah. And Monique is also going to be very accessible on horse and rider.com. Um, she's in the magazine, we're working on a new department where she's going to be the department, uh, expert and yeah.

And so we have a lot of really cool things that are coming, you know, through the pipeline with Monique. And we're so excited that she has become one of our horse and rider contributors, because we think that, you know, you have so much to offer because you bring the natural horsemanship aspect to the horse show aspect, to the, the English versus Western aspect.

You have a very well-rounded. Um, history with horses that I think is going to be so beneficial to our readers and our listeners and, you know, hopefully, maybe doing some video in the future. So please be sure to, you know, keep an eye out on our, for our, in our website too. Thank you guys for tuning in to the ride podcast.

We hope you enjoyed this episode and please be sure to subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts, follow horse and rider magazine, and on social media and [kindness@horseandrider.com](mailto:kindness@horseandrider.com). If you guys have any questions or comments, please be sure to hit us up [up@horseandriderataimmedia.com](mailto:up@horseandriderataimmedia.com). We want to hear from you guys, and if you, why put you're listening to be sure to leave us a review on iTunes.

How many stars, Mikayla, five stars, please.