

CONGRATULATIONS YOU FAILED!

By Sandie Robertson



FEAR OF FAILURE IS A BEHAVIOUR THAT DRIVES US, ALL HUMAN BEINGS NOT JUST EQUESTRIANS. BUT WHY ARE WE SO TERRIFIED OF FAILURE, WHY DO WE FIND IT SO HARD TO ADMIT WHEN SOMETHING JUST ISN'T WORKING?

As an equestrian performance coach I see a lot of energy being burnt, poor form and poor results coming from situations that, when all is said and done, should have been thrown in the garbage bin at the beginning of the road rather than months or even years down it.

I was lucky enough to gain insight from some of the best trainers, producers and riders in the world, and one thing that is very apparent is that the **KEY TO SUCCESS** is that those who, regardless of what level of competition they are at, possess the ability and are smart enough to **FAIL FAST**, taking a note of what pieces of the puzzle worked and *quickly moving in another direction from the pieces that didn't*.

They start again with a fresh plan be it a new trainer, fitness regime, piece of tack or indeed a new horse.

It is a **MYTH** that confidence is something that we automatically have; in fact, it is something that we cultivate, create and on occasion fake until it is real and it is a very precious resource that should be looked after as such. The problem is that we usually don't recognise that we had built it up quite nicely until something gives it a good hard knock.

Being really aware of what you are thinking and when is crucial to building confidence. If we are busy teaching our subconscious mind that jumping is dangerous and Dressage is petrifying, it can't come as a surprise on the day it matters, that **when your mind "sees" what you are about to do**, it gives you a very unhelpful stress response to get you the heck out of there and back to its perceived safety!!

The addiction that is the horse is quite unlike anything else.

What other hobby, sport or profession requires the same investment of time, emotions and finances whilst at the same time having so many variables that are outside our control?

This is part of the reason I often see clients who are "stuck" in a negative spiral, with the "investment" far heavier than the "return".

We all know that horses can very quickly become super stressed when things aren't going right, and often at that point - the point where we should seek help - we do the opposite and internalise the issue, lying to ourselves and often our families about what is **REALLY** going on?

Sound familiar?



Here are my TOP 5 Tips to failing FAST and getting QUICK RESULTS

1. **If it is too hard**, it is too hard for a reason. Where horses are concerned there is always something around the corner to test our emotional resilience to the maximum. Even with the best horse husbandry we will all still encounter **disappointing times of lameness or injury** that are completely out of our control. To balance this, the good times need to be **GOOD TIMES**, so if something is just hard all of the time then the likelihood is that you are doing it wrong. Stress, anxiety and nerves are all a sign that we are not achieving something that we truly desire, so look in the mirror and be honest. *It has to be FUN to balance all those tough times.*

2. **Trust** - a huge amount of the work I do is building trust both of the person and their ability to trust the horse. I often hear people say "I didn't want to do it" or "I knew it was a bad idea but they told me to". Whilst we all have trainers or peers we look up to, never put yourself in a situation that is dangerous to you. **TRUST your gut!** The division between progress and downright dangerous is vast. So surround yourself with people whom you trust and value their opinion and method.

3. **Never be scared to walk away.** I am as much as an equestrian addict as the next person but I also genuinely believe that **the right horse is there for you**. However, more often than not, we stick with the wrong ones for such a long time that we forget how much pleasure is to be had when you get the match right. If you are not happy with the horse, the chances are it's not happy with you either, so moving on is the morally right thing to do **for both of you**.

4. **Be honest with yourself about what you actually want to achieve.** Perhaps endurance or Show jumping or maybe you are happy being a leisure rider. Do not let anyone else **dictate your goals**. When you know what you're aiming for, it's much easier to build the right path to take you there.

5. **Give yourself some credit.** It is all too easy to focus on everything that you feel you are not doing well and ignore all of the achievements along the way. Writing down your plan for the month ahead, not only means that there is a much greater chance that you will stick to it but it also gives you some measurability so when frustration kicks in you can take a breath, look back and **see just how far you have come**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: EQUESTRIAN MIND AND PERFORMANCE COACH

Sandie Robertson is an experienced equestrian enthusiast whose relationship with horses has spanned decades and crossed most disciplines. She is a BHS II and has competed up to 1.30m BSJA.

"After an accident in which I broke my back I trained as a personal trainer and sports therapist to heal my body, this helped but I soon realized that I had to heal my mind. I am a licensed Hypnotherapy, NLP and Sports performance coach and it is my passion to be able to help you learn about the power of the mind and the skills and techniques we can use to make it work for our benefit instead of against us."

She works with riders from novice/ amateurs to professional and European Squad members – there is no experience restriction to qualifying for this program.

She explains, "*Whether you are looking to GET RID OF FEAR and really enjoy your riding again or overcome DEBILITATING PERFORMANCE NERVES so you can deliver your OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE when it counts, or FINE tune your performance so you CAN HAVE THE EDGE ON YOUR COMPETITORS, or overcome a past incident and FEEL CONFIDENT AGAIN, then I can help, using a combination of techniques I will help you crush those limiting belief and unhelpful negative thought and patterns, so that you are free to go on and DO YOUR BEST AND HAVE FUN.*"

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