



ASK MONTY

March 20, 2013

Greetings!,

A horse enthusiast wants to ride again after a 20-year break from the world of horses and horsemanship. Do you think she should? Monty says: "Go for it, girl!" Enjoy Monty's road map for a safe and successful partnership between adult riders and horses in Monty's question and answer column below.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

This Week's Question:

Do you think with age come limitations in being able to become a better rider/ handler? I ask this because **I am 46 years old and up until I bought Honey 5 years ago I hadn't ridden or handled a horse in more than 20 years.** I always think there is so much more to learn about horses but **I wonder if I have left it all too late.** I came to see Monty at a demo recently and it made me realize that it has taken him a lifetime to get where he is today and you too have had a wealth of experience.

Monty's Answer, Part 2:

[Go to Monty's blog to read the entire article: <http://www.montyroberts.com/latest-news/are-you-too-old-for-horses/>]

As a realtor, Charlotte placed business at the peak of her interest and while she rode it was not her primary activity. Charlotte lives near our property in California and I watched in the past two years as she moved back into the area of serious horsemanship. **Charlotte is now well over 50 and I watched her riding high-level dressage today.** She is now riding five top class dressage prospects each day and having a lot of fun with it. Charlotte emphasized the fact that **she worked hard at getting fit again** and I can attest to the fact that she is in fantastic shape now, feels well and is having the time of her life with her favorite past time. It is a pleasure to watch Charlotte ride.

The second example that I am choosing to bring to you is an acquaintance that, to me, demonstrates amazingly well the answer to your question. The subject lady is 76 years of age at this writing. She rode occasionally through her teens and then took up, principally, Western pleasure riding in her 20s. She rode occasionally until 1970. At the age of 34 she launched a successful career as an artist. Our subject remained a popular artist and is to this day. In 2009 at the age of 73, she decided not only to ride again, but also to ride in Western competition. She did get herself in **good physical condition** and **acquired a horse that was appropriate** for her. She **enlisted top notch coaching** as well.

This past year with three years completed in her reentry into riding our subject vintage lady won a year-end championship in the Western division of nonprofessional "Working Cow Horse." This means that she was working cattle at top speed and under conditions that would be considered challenging for anyone including riders in their 20s. She stated to me that she feels **she is riding better now than she ever did** in those early years of her horsemanship. She told me that she was now able to actually think things through more clearly and learn at a greater pace than she ever could in those early years. She respects her need for safety and has competed without negative incident.

It is important for me to state that these are two extreme examples. I am not suggesting

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Fergus Asks Monty

**THE SHINY & NEW
EQUUS HILARIOUS COLUMN!**



Dear Mr. Roberts,

I know most of your questions are from people, but I'd like to ask you something too, if that's OK, because I've heard, and read, that you know some things about horses.

You see, there's a big human word that I'm having a great deal of trouble with:

"Desensitize". My people don't say it to me, they say it to each other. What they say to me is: "Easy, does, it Fergus, it's OK." But it's not OK!

Because when they come to me saying that, they are tense and nervous, and **I know they are**

that anyone, man or woman, needs to include competition with their riding, whether it is the beginning of their career or, as in this case, a reentry later in life. One may choose to ride strictly for pleasure or enter into activities that are slightly competitive, or, in fact, full on competition and as long as it is safe and enjoyable, I am all for it. In England, one of the slightly competitive activities is BHS Trek. There are many more fun elements of horsemanship, which are only slightly competitive. Probably the most often activity chosen is to simply ride with friends for the fun of it.

At 77 I can say that I feel myself still learning and I still ride. It is my opinion that while I can't physically do many of the things that I did in my early professional career, I can understand the mental processes of learning better now than I ever could. Someone coined the phrase, "Use it or lose it" and I think that this is a fair statement to make. Your question gives me the chance to advise many individuals in that mid-life range that horses and riding can be a part of extending life and causing our vintage years to be more enjoyable if we choose to treat it with respect. I gave you two examples but believe me there are thousands out there, "Go for it, girl."

From Our Readers

I could write a long email explaining how I came late into horses after a lifetime of trying to get over my fear, but I won't! All I will say is:

Yes, **I wish I had been able to start when I was young but it didn't happen**; it took till I was over 40 and now, aged 47 I have a very small business as a horse and dog trainer. So all I can say is, you are NEVER too old to wish, it is NEVER too late to chase your dreams, **we are NEVER too old to stop learning** so go for it. If you reach for the moon you may not get there but you will have fun dancing over rainbows and catching stars on the way :-)

Good luck,

Vicci Holbrook-Hughes

Nobody is old at forty-six, by God! I'll be sixty-six in a few days and I'm eager to learn more and more about horses, about Math and about Chess!

Thank you very much,

Gustavo Silva

 Forward to a Friend

THIS WEEK IN MONTY'S EQUUS ONLINE UNI



Monty shows you how to gently train a foal in this week's video lesson on [Equus Online University](http://www.montyrobertsuniversity.com) as the youngster's mother looks on.

Current students log in here: www.montyrobertsuniversity.com

going to show me something horrifying! It is going to be something that moves, makes suspicious noises, and wants to touch me.

I'd rather leave, but I cannot because of **the lead-rope that they've named "relationship"**. Often, "relationship" is strained. I really want to relax and be an "Easy does it, Fergus..." but it is impossible because they themselves are not relaxed, and **they want to "desensitize" me every day with something new and dreadful**. I dream about it at night. This is really hard.

Is there anything you can say to my people about "desensitize"?

Respectfully,



See Monty's Answer here next week!
[facebook.com /FergusTheHorse](https://www.facebook.com/FergusTheHorse)
by Jean Abernethy

 Forward to a Friend

Monty on HRTV



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BE A LEADER

What I Wish I'd Known Then

By Charlotte Bredahl-Baker on Clarity and Leadership

One of the most important things I wish I'd known then is to always give the horse the benefit of the doubt. I have been ballroom dancing for years and it has given me a lot more empathy for the horse. When I dance with somebody really good (usually a professional teacher), I feel like a good dancer, and I have no trouble figuring out what my partner wants me to do.

The reason is that his lead (aids) are very clear. On the other hand, when I dance with somebody much less experienced, I find myself constantly second guessing what he wants me to do. I feel like I don't know what I am doing and I lose my confidence. I can only imagine what a horse goes through.

Now, in my riding, I always try to make sure I give very clear aids and if I have mistakes I take responsibility instead of blaming the horse. If a horse is anticipating movements, it is usually because the rider's aids aren't clear enough and the horse doesn't have confidence in the rider. Whenever a horse gives me trouble I try to figure out what I am doing wrong, instead of assuming the horse is trying to be bad. My goal is to be a good leader (in dance terms), one that my horse can have total confidence in.

Charlotte Bredahl-Baker is a USEF "S" judge. She has represented the U.S. in many international competitions. In 1992 she and her horse Monsieur were part of the Bronze medal winning Olympic Team in Barcelona. In 1997 she and her horse Lugano were part of the Silver medal winning U.S. Team at the North American Championship in Maryland. In 2005 Charlotte and Komo won the CDS and the USDF regional Championship at Grand Prix. In 2005 Charlotte also won the CDS and the USDF regional Championship at Prix St. George on Eskada.

Please share your thoughts on leadership by emailing us:
askmonty@montyroberson.com

FREE CLINIC FOR WAR HEROES

Horse Sense and Soldiers: **Monty invites veterans with stress injuries to his next complimentary clinic** on March 22-24 at Flag Is Up Farms. [Click here to download the flyer](#) for more details.

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WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MONTY?

WILD OPEN SPACES

I have just signed up to your [Equus Online Uni](#) and needless to say, the site is great and you guys do amazing work.

I am from South Africa and am currently in Brazil living in an area I am totally passionate about called the Pantanal; horses, Cowboys and wild open spaces. I have been coming here on an off for the past twenty years doing guiding and wildlife research in the area. A lot of my time was spent on horseback due to the inaccessibility of the areas I worked in.

A long time ago I read your book and thought, "Some day..." Five years ago Natural Horsemanship was starting to become known in the Pantanal with a tourist lodge - Bahia das Pedras hosting I think, one of [your certified instructors](#).

I was unable to attend but a seed was born that I would like to come back to the Pantanal and promote natural horsemanship. My idea was to do a certified course, train up a young cowboy to help me and with my trusted field worker who has been accompanying me on many field trips; we would embark on a journey through the Pantanal going to remote farms that have little access to Internet and courses.

The reason being **I have witnessed many harsh forms of "breaking" the spirit of the beautiful Pantaneiro horses**. It is also one way I can give back something to the Pantanal people for all their kindness and hospitality they have shown me over the years and one way I can give back to my faithful companions for many hours that they safety carried me through the back waters of the Pantanal helping me in my work and also indicating the presence of tracks, scents and other animals.

Once in an interview I was asked what was my greatest moment in the Pantanal. I think the reporter was expecting me to say an encounter with a Jaguar as I was busy researching them at the time - My response was - One day out riding with the local ranch hands, a really rough looking cowboy approached me and said that he had encountered a Jaguar that morning, I feared the worst as they



March 22-24, 2013: Another FREE 3-day clinic for war veterans with Monty at Flag Is Up Farms! Contact: maya@join-up.org or admin@montyroberts.com for info.

April 6, 2013: [Monty Roberts Jubileums Show](#), Flyinge Equestrian Center, Sweden

May 3, 2013: [Tour Date in Germany](#), Neustadt/Dosse

For information about Monty's worldwide demos and the courses held at Monty's farm in California go to:

http://www.montyroberts.com/ab_about_monty_calendar/see-monty/

KEEP IN TOUCH

Let us know what you are looking for in content from these emails. Send your comments and requests to askmonty@montyroberts.com.

Never miss an e-mail from Monty: To ensure you receive this email in the future, add askmonty@montyroberts.com to your list of approved senders or select the Add/Save to Address Book function in your email browser and follow the appropriate instructions.



Sincerely,

Monty Roberts



were and still are hunted and often shot on site! He looked at me and smiled and said Marion, **my first instinct was to shoot it, and then I remembered you** and how they were your animals.... It still brings tears to my eyes.

By just changing one mindset, all the hard groundwork I did was all worthwhile. And I feel the same about promoting natural horsemanship, I know I have touched some lives both human and horses, showing by example a gentler way, but there is so much more I could do.

Marion Marcondes

Horse & Country in the UK



Watch Monty Roberts on Horse & Country TV (Sky channel 280) in the UK and

Ireland. See:

<http://www.horseandcountry.tv/monty>

for more info.

Photo Credits

Christopher Dydyk