

A successful clinic is one where the participants acquire the tools to assist them in realizing their goals. This session will explain how to make this happen, from the perspectives of both the clinician and the student.

***Dee Butterfield** has been instructing barrel racing and horsemanship clinics for 40 years across Western Canada, Australia and Hawaii. Teaching the fundamentals of the exciting sport of barrel racing, inspiring training and riding skills with emphasis on the importance of developing a winning attitude, Dee's students have gone on to win at all levels including provincial, state and national champions.*

### THE TAKE

#### How to Get the Most Out of Attending a Clinic

- a) Research the clinician. Get an idea of what the instructor is about and decide if that is where you want to go. If there are conflicting ideas from your present program, you may want to audit the clinic rather than participating. You don't want to be changing everything in your program after every clinic you attend. If there are areas that you want to improve on, focus on them.
- b) Look at the student teacher ratio. If there are too many in the clinic the instructor may not be able to meet the needs of all the students.
- c) Be prepared for the clinic. Is your horse in appropriate condition? Are you positive and open to learn?

- d) Listen and be respectful of others. “If you’re talking you’re not learning”.
  
- e) Know the concepts behind the exercises. If you know the reasons why you are doing them, it will stay with you.
  
- f) If you don’t understand ask questions!!
  
- g) It can be helpful to take notes that can be reviewed later.
  
- h) Be open when learning new concepts. Remember there are very few absolutes in the world.
  
- i) A good clinic should be a positive experience. You can’t learn under the stress of fear.
  
- j) Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Mistakes are a means to an end. It is what we do with these mistakes and how we overcome them that matters. That is where success and learning truly start.

Sometimes it may feel like you are overwhelmed with so much information and you can only absorb so much. When you are ready, a lot of it will come back to you.

If you can come out of a clinic with even one piece of new information/one new idea that you can apply to your program and it helps you along the way – it is worth it.

Above all – HAVE FUN!

THE GIVE

### Communicating Effectively to a Diverse Group of Students

People learn in different ways. No one has a better learning style than anyone else. Some experts say there are as many as 7 or 8 different learning styles, but it is easier to narrow it down to 3 types of learning.

Listening or hearing learners – auditory learners are those who learn best when hearing information – i.e. face to face or through group discussions. They will use figure of speech “I hear what you are saying”.

Seeing learners – visual learners do well when they see pictures, read handouts, watch videos or view demonstrations. They will use “I see what you are talking about”

Touch or doing learners – kinesthetic learners want to touch and do. This includes performing hands on activities as well as taking notes. They will use the figure of speech “This feels right to me”.

A good example is Mother’s lesson about not touching a hot stove and how each group learns. Listeners believed mother and never touched the stove. The seeing learners saw brother touch stove and never touched it. The Kinesthetic learners touched the stove, but only once.

Most people will combine the styles of learning.

Over the years I have been very fortunate to have a lot of repeat students, so it has been a great opportunity to see how lessons are preserved. You can tell the same thing to a group of people and it is amazing how they can come away with different ideas.

It is important to keep it simple for the rider and the horse. Why make it harder? It doesn’t have to be.

I like the statement made by Charles Harris “The important theory in equestrian science is not so much the gleaming of new facts, but to discover new ways of teaching about existing ones”.

The basis of my journey as a student, teacher and trainer has been continually searching for the simplest way to get the job done efficiently. Making it simpler to understand, breaking it down to concepts that can be understood and comprehended by the students. Keep it easy to get the message across the horse. Create a step-by-step program. It is important that the student leaves with a clear understanding of the lesson intended.

It is a real asset to have the ability to read the students and the horses. Everyone is an individual and what is good for one may not be ideal for the next. Some students need continual encouragement in order for them to build their own self confidence, while others have the ability but haven't challenged themselves to step outside their comfort zone, and they need to be pushed to reach the next level.

Asking too much from a student or horse that is not yet physically or mentally ready can cause a setback, and not asking enough of those that are ready will not help them reach their potential.

Keys to making a student's attendance at a clinic successful:

- Make sure you can be heard. Have a good PA system
- Have a positive energy – it is empowering for the students
- Be willing to give 100% no matter the level or the attitude of the student
- Be open minded, respectful and patient
- Have a step by step program that is easy for the students to comprehend
- Communicate to the level of the student
- Assess the rider and horse comfort zone
- Be aware of the students expectations and goals
- Remember it is the most difficult students and horses that you will learn the most from
- The students should leave with more confidence, knowledge and understanding after attending your clinic
- Help the students realize there are no short cuts but there are easier ways of getting the job done
- Have FUN!