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HORSE LISTENING BLOG AND BOOK
COLLECTION!



GOAL SETTING FOR THE EQUESTRIAN

– A Personal Workbook –

KATHY FARROKHZAD



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Dream
Plan
Do
Evaluate

*"A dream written down with a date becomes a goal.
A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan.
A plan backed by action makes
your dreams come true."
- Greg S. Reid*

GOAL SETTING FOR THE EQUESTRIAN

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How to Use This Book

This is not an ordinary equestrian book.

It was borne from the need to have a structured, organized, but individualized goal-setting guide for the equestrian rider and/or trainer. We frequently discuss the value of setting riding goals but there are not many books that help you put your thoughts down on paper where you can see them, evaluate them, re-visit them and let them help you make progress over the long term. This workbook is a long-term reflection and documentation of your progress and experiences with your horse.

Your goals can be anything related to horses. You might want to do ground work. You might want to think of riding goals. Maybe you're interested in teaching your horse some tricks.

You might also be interested in setting goals for yourself. These can be skill specific (using your inside leg to outside rein) or they might be physical (breathe every second stride at the canter). You might have emotional goals (stay calm and release your lower back when your horse tenses up) or maybe you want to work on specific patterns (be completely familiar with Level 1, Test 1).

Maybe you can think of other types of goals as they relate to horses.

The purpose of this book is not to tell you what goals you would like to aspire to. In fact, as you work through the book, you might choose to change the format. There is no one telling you that you *have* to stick to the ten goals that are included in Chapter 6 (although I think that is a good starting place and fairly possible to be successful at).

However, the structure is planned deliberately for horse and riding goals. The information presented at the beginning is there to help you formulate your own goals. It gives you some understanding of where to start and how to be purposeful with each step. The idea is to guide but not dictate.

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You are encouraged to use this book throughout the year (or whatever time frame you set). Even though you will begin with a set of specific goals in mind, chances are that your plans will change as time goes by. You might not meet the goals, or your horse might need additional practice for certain skills. In any case, come back to this book regularly to re-evaluate where you are at particular times.

Using this book, you start the planning process with defining your specific overarching goals. These are the goals you want to accomplish within a year's time frame. These are your "dream" goals – there will be many smaller steps required to reach these goals.

Next, you will take a look at the whole calendar year and plug in the goals. When will you be working on them? In any case, the yearly calendar will give you an idea of how you predict the timeline will work.

Add in any special events as they arise. These will likely be points in time throughout the year when you will be accomplishing something more than just your daily training: a competition, a riding trip, a performance, a schooling date at your friend's farm.

The monthly calendars are to be used to break down your annual plans into smaller time frame. Here, you can slot in your rides, lessons, and ground work – anything you do day-to-day. You can decide what you want to do a month ahead, or a week ahead, or even come to the calendar after the fact to document what you did.

The weekly reflection sheets give you space to document your thoughts. You can evaluate how things went and what you'd like to do next!

Come back to your goals once a week and document your results. This way, you can look ahead but also look back to evaluate what changes need to be made for the future. Hopefully, you will document all your initial goals, but then write over, scratch out, mark up, and write notes in the margins. Make this a working document of your riding journey over the year (or season) and let it help you pave out a path for your riding progress.

One note to keep in mind about goal-setting when horses are involved: *you might need to change your goals time and again, reflecting your and your horse's needs.* The

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horses will always tell you how you're doing. Listen carefully and you'll get plenty of information from your equine friend, and/or from your instructor.

Don't be too concerned if you thought you could do something only to discover that your horse wasn't nearly prepared enough for it. Instead, think of how you can take a few steps back to develop the basics before moving on to more advanced skills.

This is an excellent book for the horse owner, rider, riding instructor, horse trainer, and riding student. You can apply this format to any aspect of horses - so take a few moments to read Chapters 1, 2 and 3, then write in what you'd like to see happen for you and your horse over the course of the next year, or months.

Good luck, and happy Horse Listening!