



***Sensitivity tops an amateur rider's long list of reasons for riding with Anne Howard.***

Constance Broz was stumped by the request for a brief summary of what she likes most about working with Anne Howard – only by the “brief” part, though.

“There are so many facets to her practice,” says the amateur dressage rider who came to Anne for physical therapy and later moved her horse to Anne’s barn to enter full training. “In a word, it’s the ‘sensitivity’ to read where the horse and rider are at.”

“Once I was at her barn, what really struck me was her deep knowledge of horse behavior,” says Constance. “She really can read how the horse feels physically, and what’s going on with them mentally and emotionally. That is very important if you want to do dressage. Her deep concern for the horse is truly remarkable. First and foremost, I love how she is with the horses. So caring, loving, understanding and emphasizing that it’s all about your relationship with your horse.”

Anne’s understanding of the physical imbalances the human body brings to a student’s riding is a wonderful addition to her sensitivity for the horse, Constance continues. “In dressage, even more than in other disciplines, that has a huge impact. You need to take care of that.” Constance continues to receive physical therapy from Anne out of the saddle and appreciates how Anne incorporates her specific left/right imbalances into her lesson instruction. “I find that extraordinarily helpful.”

Anne and Constance both believe that the rider should learn to ride their own horse and not rely on the trainer for constant tune-ups. At a show earlier this summer, they made an exception when Constance came down with a bad flu and it made sense for Anne to warm up her horse before the test. It was a first that triggered a “huge learning” opportunity for the student. “I thought, ‘Oh, so that’s how it should be!’ Which, in itself, is a wonderful experience: to know what I am striving for.”

As the mother of accomplished young hunter/jumper rider Elisa Broz, Constance also values Anne’s understanding of how physical traumas in the body can cause worse problems long after the initial injury. “Like most riders, I had horse related accidents that I never took care of, and that created issues with balance that I’m encountering now. It takes a lot of work to undue that. To the extent that I can, I’d like to have my own daughter not go through that. If you can address it pretty quickly, it’s much easier to undo the damage and return to natural balance than if you wait a couple of years.”

Constance accepts that riding involves falling off on occasion. When it’s a relatively rough one, she has her 15-year-old daughter Elisa visit Anne. “I think it has allowed my daughter to become very strong and balanced, which I have no doubt is a result of the work she’s done with Anne.”

Constance also loves the frequent clinician visits at Anne’s facility, American Sporthorse. She’s ridden most of her life but had never had anybody tell her what Mary Wanless did: “Find your bones.”

“That really made sense to me,” Constance explains. “That dressage requires you to connect with all parts of the body and that we use our seat to talk to the horse.”