
How a horse taught me partnership: College Admission Essay Sample

The first ride I had on Gnocchi was awful. He was a project horse who didn't "listen" to my leg, seat, or hand; aids that help me communicate with a horse. He wouldn't stand still for me to tack him up or mount him. When I actually rode him, he trotted in circles so quickly that my knuckles went white from gripping the reins. Gnocchi would get spooked at normal barn sounds, like a stall door being opened. It made riding him quite a challenging task. I didn't give up on him.

Giving up isn't in my genes. When my family is faced with a problem, we work through it no matter what hurdles stand in our way. I spent hours grooming Gnocchi until he learned to stand still for me. I figured out a way to move the mounting block so Gnocchi would not step back when I got on him. I rode him consistently until he didn't get spooked anymore.

One beautiful, unusually hot September day I went to the barn after school. As I walked towards the gate to get Gnocchi from the field, he trotted over to me, whinnying. I brought him inside and he stood very still while I groomed him and got ready. Because he was being so good, I decided to push the limits and ride outside instead of in the indoor arena. We normally rode in the indoor because there are fewer distractions and things that frighten him. If we rode outside he would spook at cars passing on the street, large winds, or literally anything that moved. I got on Gnocchi and cautiously walked him around the outdoor arena so that he could look at everything, and he didn't spook at all. I introduced a new concept to him, leg yields. Leg yielding is where you push the horse off your outside leg and catch him in your inside rein so he moves sideways off the rail. I expected to hit a wall and have a frustrating ride trying to get him to understand, but instead, he listened to my hand and leg and did everything correctly. I truly felt like we were a six-legged team.

Creating a bond with a horse is so much more than just putting in hours of riding. It's being able to communicate with a thousand pound animal who doesn't speak your language. The task is daunting, even terrifying at times. You can't tell what they're thinking. You can't tell them to be good. They could kill you with a stomp of their foot. Instead, you have to trust them, you have to put your life in their hands and hope that they listen to the commands you give them. I think that because of the risk us riders face every day it makes the amazing bonds we have with our partners even more rewarding. Through all of the hard moments where I wanted to give up, and through all the amazing experiences when I truly feel the connection with Gnocchi, I appreciate the value of my partnership with him and how we have grown together.

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Working with Gnocchi has made me learn the true worth of perseverance. I now know how to work as a team and overcome obstacles that originally seemed daunting and impossible. I've learned how to solve interesting problems with unique solutions, like moving the mounting block, and learned not to be afraid to take on intimidating tasks, like training Gnocchi. As I write this, I think about the days where I get to drive thirty minutes out to the barn after school to see my friend. Working with him has become the best part of my day, and I'm truly proud to know Gnocchi has become the horse he is today because of me. But, more importantly, I have become the person I am today because of Gnocchi.

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