

Yeah, but do you trust me?

Written by Jason Heath



As a mentor, sometimes you have to help your student push through an uncomfortable situation to help them **become stronger**.

I have been working with a young man named Forester for the last several years. For the first couple of years, he had been riding Jac, one of our go-to, totally broke, bomb-proof horses. Since he was advancing so much in his riding skills, I believed it was time for him to transition to one of our intermediate horses named Buttercup. But **change can be difficult**.

Buttercup, also known as “the Barbie horse,” is a beautiful palomino that is well-trained, but she can give you a run for your money until you gain her respect. You see, Buttercup is the alpha mare in her paddock and is used to getting her own way. She can be **pushy and bossy**, but when you show her who is boss, she will do anything for you and make you look good doing it.

When we started working with Buttercup, true to form, she was being a real pill. Forester was feeling like Buttercup didn’t like him, and he even admitted that she scared him a little. It wasn’t going very well, and he just wanted to give up. I could tell that discouragement was setting in, so I had two choices. I could let him go back to what was comfortable or **push him to overcome** his fear and frustration.

I decided to have a talk with him off to the side. Getting down on his level, I said, “I know things aren’t going very well right now, but I know **Buttercup is the horse for you**.” He looked at me with an uncomfortable expression, unsure if he believed me. “Why can’t I just go back to Jac? Jac likes me, and I like him.” Even though that would have been the easy thing to do, I looked him in the eye and told him, “Yes, I know that would be the easy thing to do, but I don’t think it’s the best thing for you.”

Continuing, I asked, **“Have I ever let anything hurt you? Have I always told you the truth and had your best interest at heart?”**

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“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” – Proverbs 3:5-6

After giving it some thought, Forester responded, “Yes. I guess so.” I went on, “**Yeah, but do you trust me?** I know that if we can earn Buttercup’s respect, she will make you a better horseman and rider. Let’s work with her for two more weeks and see if things turn around.”

Looking back on that day a couple of years ago, it’s amazing to see the **beautiful connection** that has developed between Forester and Buttercup when they’re riding. It’s like he’s learned how to speak her language. With soft, gentle cues, he can control her every move, her speed, and her direction. Now he thanks me every time for making him **push through the hard stuff** so that he could experience something even greater.

I’m guessing many of you can relate to the emotions of **discouragement and anxiety** Forester was feeling at that pivotal crossroads in his horsemanship career. 2022 has been chock full of hard things; volatile stock markets which make my job as a financial advisor significantly more stressful, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, soaring gas prices, crazy high inflation causing your money to not stretch as far as it once did, cold, dreary, rainy spring weather in Minnesota creating tons of boot sucking mud at the ranch, and to top it off, COVID won’t go away!

In light of all these things, I also have found myself struggling with feeling discouraged and having **difficulty seeing the light** at the end of the tunnel. Facing a mound of frustration the other day, I was spending some time crying out to God, and I felt the Lord remind me of my interaction with Forester. I could hear Him saying, “Yeah, Jason, but do you trust Me?” It was as though God brought to my remembrance all the times **He has taken care of things** even in the bleakest of times, and nothing has changed. **He is still in control.** I began recounting the many blessings I have in my life. My bills have all been paid on time. I have a wonderful family and relationship with my wife. I’m privileged to have a career that gives me both time and money. It was as though the Lord was saying, “**The sun will come out soon,** and instead of slopping through the mud, you will be mowing and maintaining the property because of all the beautiful growth that has occurred as a result of the spring rains.” So, today, I’m thanking God for pushing me through the hard stuff because ultimately it will make me into the best man of God I can be and **bring Him more glory.**



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