

HI Kate,

I would like to say a big thank you to you for hosting our 3 days of residential training at Kandoo Equine. It's been an absolute joy for my daughter and I, staying in your comfortable cottage and then wandering down the hill in the morning to feed the horses their breakfast before starting a day of no fuss, engaging and confidence building training. A kind of heaven on earth for horsey types really.

I actually came across your training while looking for a farm stay to book for a weekend get-together with a friend from Sydney (before I found out that they had no intention of leaving the city!).

After coming across your website, I watched some of your excellently made training videos. What really appealed to me was your simplified and practical approach and your willingness to pass on your knowledge. Your techniques are "Practical horsemanship" in action. Apart from more "traditional" horse training techniques that can be somewhat harsh, "natural horsemanship" seems to be a very popular way for horse owners who are concerned about their horse's welfare, to learn about training. However when I was introduced to Equitation Science, I learnt that ideas of "whispering" and "dominance" are all actually just the handler's conscious or unconscious use of pressure and release. It was light bulb moment for me. However I have found Equitation Science somewhat "academic", rigid and putting their theory into practice has been tricky with apparently no room at all for mistakes, which doesn't do much for a novice trainer's confidence. I have a horse that stands still perfectly and can do trot-halt transitions with light rein aids, but I don't have any tools to get my young horse moving, in a balanced canter, with a good, top line muscle development so I can actually ride her (and you have seen this in her tendency to rear and go backwards)

Of course, as you say all of your training is negative reinforcement and this makes so much sense. Your techniques are so practical. You demonstrate and share the gentle, no fuss training techniques that people seek in "natural horsemanship" but with a better understanding of pressure-release and how a horse learns.

In terms of Matilda's time here: she has been able to take your techniques and use them to feel more confident with handling her pony as well as understand her responsibilities for giving clear messages to her pony with well-timed pressure and release. She

is planning to use her new long-lining skills and I'm afraid poor Toy Boy will get lots of time being driven around the yard, but luckily for him it's hard to do for too long. It was obvious that give to the bit on the ground, shoulder control and the long line work were able to highlight any issues with Toy Boy and also re-enforce to us the things that are possible to train and to work on with Matilda in the saddle. We also have somewhere to go if we hit a problem - go back to the things that they can both do - hips to the fence, give to bit on the ground etc.

Oh - and Matilda is so relieved that she doesn't have to sit to a fast trot with legs flailing to get canter anymore - and if he forgets what that kiss means - its back to the long rein! She is very lucky for an 11 year old to have had the benefit of her time here to set her up for many years of enjoyable riding ahead of her.

Ditto all the above for me. Long reining is a great skill that we would not have had the chance to use without your teaching.

Maddi felt just superb during our short ride today, and it was great to see her come along in her training, as the possibilities for us are now are much bigger. It was helpful to watch how you trained her with the long line especially when she was kicking at the lines. You stayed really true to the idea of training for short sessions. It worked so fantastically having 3 horses and rotating their session, letting them rest and take things in before trying again and the difference that each session brings is amazing. It has reinforced to me the importance of teaching small things and being confident to move a small way, while intensively training and ending before the horse is tired.

I would like to be able to send a video to you sometime in the future of Matilda riding Toy in relaxed light rein pressure in frame at a canter, and saying that - of Maddi and I doing the same. You have been able to raise ours expectations of what to expect from our riding and training in a fantastic environment (gorgeous views).