

2010 FEI Level Training Symposium with Lilo Fore

My name is Nikki Nobles, and I have been training with Lendon Gray for two years. After receiving a scholarship from Dressage4Kids, I was able to attend the training symposium for FEI trainers with Lilo Fore.

In the symposium we focused on developing horses and riders competing in the upper levels or working toward this. As a participating instructor I was able to sit with a “panel” of other participants. The clinic was stretched over three days, and we were allowed to discuss with Lendon as Lilo taught. During breaks in the lessons Lilo would answer any questions that we might have. We were able to see Lilo work with a variety of horses and riders with varying skill levels.

I was most impressed with Lilo’s style of teaching. She was never ruffled and approached each horse and rider differently. Lilo even commented on the first day that she usually likes to get a rider to a place of comfort with her. On the second and third days of the clinic I could see a bit more push from her as she got to know the rider’s skill level and goals. She ran into typical problems like balky horses and late changes. Her confidence with these situations really seemed to influence the riders in a positive way and always produced the desired result. One thing that stuck with me that Lilo said was “don’t allow the horse to dictate your options.”

In terms of training tools I learned a bit about dealing with late changes. With one rider Lilo used a bit of renvers in counter canter. The rider then straightened the horse and asked for a change on the long side. This really seemed to help get the horse out of the new inside rein. There were also some simple things that can be applied to most of my students such as using a bit of shoulder in on a diagonal to keep the horse from drifting to the new wall. A typical problem also seen in the shoulder in was an overbent neck. Lilo had several riders ride their shoulder in on the second track bending toward the wall.

We also talked a bit about introducing new things to a horse. Lilo mentioned that when she starts half passes she rides a little shoulder in and then haunches in on a diagonal first. In counter canter she likes a rider to be able to put a little leg on the horse without creating tension before they change. This is also another reason she allows the horses to do a little renvers in counter canter.

Overall it was a really great learning experience. Each evening we had discussions over dinner. We discussed everything from different bits to the new dressage tests. Lendon and Lilo are hoping to do this again in February and to add a sporthorse judging section to the program.

This clinic has given me some practical lessons that I can apply to my regular students and also some great training tools to add to my toolbox. I am very grateful to Dressage4Kids for helping me with this opportunity!