The Horse-person-ship Plan is about recognizing personal growth edges in our Equine related knowledge and skills, and looking at what steps we can take to develop in those areas over the next 12 months.

What areas could you learn more about that would be of benefit to you and your horse and what steps can you begin to take toward that?

Some suggested focus areas are I-Thou Horse-person-ship, Liberty, Groundwork, Riding and Equine studies and horsemanship knowledge (includes horse care). (Refer to Assessment item 2 in the Equine Studies Final Assessment document for more details on each topic). Horse care can extend to things like nutrition, hoof care or even managing the land they live on.

*Brief example of a goal:*

*Goal: To further develop my understanding of horse body language, so that I can more accurately interpret my horse’s signs and signals. This will enable me to improve my ability to meet their needs (through a deeper understanding of what they are communicating) and support me to keep them in their window of tolerance in both training and EAL/P environments.*

Then you will need to describe what steps you plan to take to move towards that goal, for example:

*I plan to begin this buy purchasing X book this month and giving myself 3 months to finish reading it. I will then spend X times a week with my horses with the intention of observing their signals. I have also booked in to … X seminar (clinic/online coaching/course/webinar etc) next month.*

You can use the SMART goal acronym to support you to include enough detail.

**S**pecific- Make sure you list at least one (relevant) specific goal

**M**easurable – How will you know you have made progress?

**A**ttainable **-** Can this goal be accomplished

**R**elevant – Make sure the goal is based on expanding your own knowledge or skills in an area that is related to horsemanship or horse knowledge.

**T**ime-based – Give yourself some sort of time limit. Each step might have its own time-line. This part is for motivation to actually begin taking the steps.

Some students prefer to make a SMART goal table, others prefer to just include all the details in a few paragraphs. Either way is acceptable, as long as your goal is clear and you have steps outlined towards achieving it.

*Basic example of a table:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S** |  |
| **M** |  |
| **A** |  |
| **R** |  |
| **T** |  |

You can either go into a lot of detail for one goal or you might prefer to include a number of goals to make up your document.

Tip: If your plan includes some form of horse training (for example, maybe you intend to improve your application of I-Thou skills in your horse training, or perhaps you have a goal to try clicker training), I would recommend making the Time-based aspect around what steps you are taking and your own learning rather than what the horse can do. For example, stating that you’d like your horse to be able to perform a certain activity by a certain date can put unnecessary pressure on both yourself and your horse, can turn a session into a task oriented I-It style of relating and, in my experience, usually makes the goal take longer to achieve! I would be more inclined to say something like “I will take this Clicker training course by X date and I will practice what I learned 3x per week.” Rather than “In 6 months’ time my horse will be able to perform X”

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the EPI team!

Valence – EPI Equine Support