

Confident Horsemanship Workbook:

How to Overcome Fear & Build Confidence with Horses & Riding

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#### *INTRODUCTION*

This book is a guide for anyone who is experiencing fear or loss of confidence around horses or in horse related activities. Fear and loss of confidence can happen at any time and to anyone regardless of their experience level – from beginner to professional.

Fear is my friend. But it wasn't always so. In the summer of 2006, I was bucked off one of my own horses. A horse I had bred, raised, trained and trusted. I had been self-employed as a horse trainer and riding coach for several years at this point. As a horsewoman with over 30 years of experience working with horses, I had come off horses many times before this event. For some reason, this one really shook my confidence and self doubt began creeping in. I would get nervous about getting on any horse. But, I had to get on clients horses. I would get on, but it took a great deal of mental preparation, and if at all possible, I would avoid riding. The fear was getting worse and was often irrational. Fear had become my adversary. If I wasn't able to rebuild my confidence and control my fear, I would have to give up my profession and my passion and look for another way to make a living. I chose to learn how to overcome the fear. And that, really, is the first step for anyone dealing with fear or loss of confidence – making the choice to overcome it.

The information in this book is based on lessons I have learned through my journey to regain my confidence and overcome my fear. The old adage about just getting back on after a fall doesn't always work and sometimes is neither possible nor sensible. I share with you the tools that I have personally used and now teach to my private students and in my workshops.

Overcoming fear and building confidence is primarily a mental battle. You need to take control of your thoughts, change beliefs that no longer serve you and stop your negative self talk – those tapes in your head that are so hard on you. This journey requires self reflection, determination, persistence and support.

I recommend that you set aside quiet, private time where you will be uninterrupted to do the exercises outlined in this book. Some exercises may take more than one session and you may find that answers come to you at unexpected times. I also encourage you to keep a journal to record your thoughts, feelings and insights and as a record of your progress.

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You may find, as I did, that as you build or regain your confidence around horses, you also develop more confidence in other areas of your life. I have developed a level of self-confidence that has given me the courage to pursue dreams I once thought were beyond my reach. Okay for someone else but not for me. Conducting the Women, Horses and Fear workshops was the first dream. Writing this book was the next!

It is a journey worth taking as you will become a better, stronger person for it. Our horses need us to be the best we can be – to become the rider our horse deserves.

*Anxiety, intimidation, fear; whatever you call it ...*

*you can overcome it.*