



Never Despair

World-famous turn-of-the-century golfer Harry Vardon had a personal motto: Never Despair. It served him well, through his life journey from his beginnings of abject poverty in Jersey, England, to becoming a multiple (British) Open Champion, and a world-renowned golf celebrity. Along the way, he faced physical challenges, (tuberculosis in the prime of his career), class discrimination, (early in his career, he was not allowed to use the dressing rooms or restaurants of the country clubs in which he played against wealthy club members), and a dark, difficult marriage.

Throughout his life, he faced circumstances and events that would have led many of us to panic and be crushed by them. Yet he never lost his resolve or hope, focusing on what he knew he could do, pushing forward along a path, or return-

ing to it, after detours or set-backs, that would make him a key figure in the popularization of golf as we know it today.

I'm not a golfer, but as time goes by, I see more and more parallels between riding, and other sports and life pursuits, as well as the priceless life lessons that we can glean from the metaphors they provide.

We are now completing our final week of Summer Horsemanship Camp, here at the ranch. For the past 3 weeks, young women 9 to 18 years of age have immersed themselves in the process of working with and caring for horses. Each week ends with a performance for the campers' parents that displays some of the skills they've acquired during their stay. I am always proud of those who complete lovely horsemanship patterns with flawless transitions, and perfect trail or jump courses. However, I am equally proud of and inspired by those young women who face challenges in their demonstrations, but who never lose focus or resolve in completing them.

One young woman's horse started to drift off-course. The calm determination in her eyes was clear. She steadily corrected her horse and adapted her aids until the desired result was achieved. She remained calm, yet absolutely refused to give up as she continued and completed the pattern.

Another young woman's horse shied and sped up as it passed the audience. She maintained an inner calm, and called upon it to steady herself and her mount, even as she added corrective aids and cues to quiet her mount.

Things don't always go perfectly in riding, even with consistent training, and sufficient preparation. Before responding to any difficulty or crisis, we must call upon our inner calm, and our absolute resolve. Only then can our responses and corrections be clear, well-timed, and accurate.

Life doesn't always go perfectly, either. Despite our best planning, some parts of life are unavoidably difficult. And despite our most thorough preparation, things can happen in unpredictable ways.



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When we lose a job, or a loved one, or suffer a major disappointment, we must Never Despair. We must take a deep breath, close our eyes, and remember who we are, and what makes each of us uniquely special. Only then can we respond to each of life's challenges and chapters in the best way possible, or recognize the gifts or opportunities that may be hiding in the folds of life's rumpled fabric.

I wish each of you a happy and fulfilling rest of the Summer. In horsemanship, and in life, Always Remember to Enjoy the Ride. Dianne Lindig.

Dianne can be reached at Hill Country Equestrian Lodge where she teaches Whole Horsemanship year-round. www.hillcountryequestlodge.com, or (830) 796-7950.

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for an advertiser when we first dove into the adventure that has become Horseback Magazine.

There are a lot of folks out there who advertise with us with stories like Charlie's. All too often we are faced with the discomfiting revelation from a customer that he has to cancel his ad because he can't keep up with the business we have brought to him. As often as not, we find this success came from a small ad. Imagine that?

These are hard times. Every business we know of is angry with the dysfunctional nature of our government. We worry, and we worry a lot. Then somebody like Charlie comes along to tell us how we've helped. That goes a long way to make what we do all worthwhile. Thank you, Charlie.

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