



## UNDERSTANDING & BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE (PART 1)

# CONFIDENCE SERIES

by John Haime

IN THE FIRST OF OUR THREE-PART SERIES ON BUILDING CONFIDENCE, **WORLD-CLASS HUMAN PERFORMANCE COACH AND SPORT PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTANT JOHN HAIME EXPLAINS WHY CONFIDENCE IS A MUST FOR THE SUCCESS IN THE PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR HORSE.**

*“The mental and emotional muscle development that took all elite riders to the top, he says, is within your reach with the right mindset and some key steps.”*

Welcome to your 3-part series to help begin your understanding and building of your confidence.

Equestrian sport and life are about patterns and cycles. Sometimes you *“have it”* and other times you don’t. No exceptions. So, a rider must work on important areas like confidence: First, understand it and second, learn how to build it. The mental and emotional aspect of your equestrian performance is like your physical training—prepare, do some work to build your skills and if your training is done well, it will translate to the show ring.

Working on your confidence is an investment in yourself as a rider, but this skillset is more than that. Confidence is a must and transferable to everything you do in life—business, career, relationships and any other “performance” activity you engage in. Consider it an investment in your future. Confidence may be the single greatest asset for you as an equestrian athlete.

At every high-level show class we see wonderful displays of skill and grace—riders handling their partners with precision and efficiency,

taking calculated risks to gain advantage and expressing their riding abilities and those of their horses. It’s part of what makes elite riders so good—making it look effortless and easy. Being courageous in this way takes confidence, which is something many amateur riders lack, but that doesn’t have to be the case. The good news is there’s plenty you can learn from these elite equestrian athletes to make yourself a better rider.

A key area for any rider—whatever their skill level—is confidence. Confidence is your bullet-proof vest. World-class riders know it. If you want to be like them, you have to understand it and learn how to develop it.

### WHAT IS CONFIDENCE, ANYWAY?

Well . . . it really boils down to knowing. Knowing in your heart you can do it under the pressures of competition. You know the feeling: You’re riding well, your horse feels great and everything is going right for you. There is an easy belief in what you are doing, and you just know you can do it.

You undoubtedly also know the other feeling: You just don’t have it, you and your horse don’t feel “on,” and nothing is going right. There’s lowered belief in what you are doing, and you’re not quite sure what’s wrong. That’s when you

have to be able to trust and believe in your abilities and decisions, and express them in challenging circumstances.

#### "I'VE LOST MY CONFIDENCE"

When my phone rings, it's often a rider, coach or parent on the other end, voice panicked, telling me a rider has "lost his confidence." The rider may be struggling to perform when it counts, is very anxious before and during show classes and often not enjoying playing the experience of equestrian sport.

I always ask these riders or their supporters where they think their confidence has gone. Some may be up-and-coming riders and some have risen near the top of the sport. It's funny that these riders don't really know where their

confidence has gone. Something small has triggered some initial doubts, and the spiral downwards begins from there. This scenario can seemingly happen overnight. One poor show or even show class and the rider declares that they have lost their confidence and the difficulties begin.

This is where riders get confused. Confidence requires some understanding—and some work.

**NEXT IN PART 2:** John Haime explains that confidence is proactive: It's a choice you can make, not something you simply have or don't have. Learn about the role of challenge in sustained success and read Haime's formula for achieving and maintaining it.

#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*John Haime is President of John Haime Performance and a renowned global Human Performance Coach who is trusted by some of the world's leading riders and coaches. His world-class approach to elevate equestrians is a winning formula from performance psychology, emotional intelligence, neuroscience, sport psychology, business planning, communication and executive coaching. He is the author of the acclaimed new book Ride Big - The Ultimate Guide to Building Equestrian Confidence published by Trafalgar Square Books (May 2021). John is based in Ottawa, Canada.*

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**PROFESSIONAL RIDING GEAR**



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