

## Positive Riding

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Over the last year, I have tried to learn more about using active positive thinking in my riding. Because dressage is such a precise sport/art that requires a lot of thought, precision, and athletic coordination, there seems to be endless opportunities for amateur riders to be (too) hard on themselves. In my experience, it's very easy to go down that path, but I also realized that it is absolutely unproductive and therefore wanted to learn how to improve my riding through positive thinking.

I read somewhere online about how the Dutch Olympic dressage team has extensive coaching in the area of sports psychology and realized it was an area of the sport that I never really considered. So.... I read several of Jane Savoie 's books and audited a clinic of hers last year in NC. Her books were fantastic and I have used the visual exercises numerous times to good effect. I also found Laura King 's recorded tapes for equestrians very helpful and have listened to them too.

I have a tendency to be skeptical about talk surrounding the psychological aspects of training and do think some of it can sound really silly. On the other hand, I've benefitted from the messages like those by Savoie and King and appreciate the guidance for staying in the moment and simply riding. That message is really the big take-away for me from these sports coaches -- not to overthink one's riding so that you don't get in the way of yourself. Much easier said than done, of course, and especially for a sport/art like dressage.

I haven't watched the new Jane Savoie videos that are available for free on YouTube, but they are now on my summer "training" list. The videos can be found at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/janesavoie>