

Unwavering Self-Belief

Recognize Common Self-Doubt Mind Traps to Replace
Self-Doubt with Self-Belief (and Self-Confidence!)





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Remember that your brain's #1 goal at all times is to keep you alive. It does this by constantly being on the look out for anything that could possibly hurt you and responding with fear, hesitation, and doing everything it can to avoid situations where you cannot be 100% certain that the outcome will be favorable.

The way your brain protects you from uncertain situations is to get you stuck in your head, over-thinking, in order to prevent you from taking any action that it deems risky or uncertain, such as risk of getting hurt, failure, discomfort, embarrassment. And horse activities are inherently risky! There is no possible way to make these activities 100% safe, so it is very common for horsewomen to over-think and have self-doubts.

The good news is that you can counteract your brain's instincts by understanding that this resistance and avoidance is simply a habit of thought and action, well, really, inaction. Self-Doubt becomes a habit loop, a cycle. When your brain hesitates and gets you to start over-thinking, it stops you from taking action when you need to. Then, because you didn't take action, you doubt your ability to take action. And, because you didn't take action, you weren't successful with whatever you wanted to do, and so you develop self-doubt. Add in the actions of your horse to the mix, who is at best slightly confused by your mixed signals, and at worst, responds to your doubts and hesitation with dangerous behaviors. This, of course, leads to more over-thinking the next time something comes up. It's a circle that spins around and around until you break the cycle. And until you break the cycle of self-doubt, you can't achieve self-belief (which leads to self-confidence).

Today you will learn how to recognize, and overcome, common self-doubt mind traps so that you can banish self-doubt and ride with confidence.

Let's get started!

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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #1: Hesitating

Hesitating is triggered by uncertainty. When you don't know 100% what the outcome will be, it is easy to procrastinate and say "it is rainy/snowy today, I will ride tomorrow." It is easy to over think and imagine everything that could go wrong, to picture your horse misbehaving, bucking, bolting, spooking, etc. It is easy to put off taking action, to not try for something until you feel it will go perfectly, until you know that you can do that complicated maneuver perfectly. It is easy to get busy with unrelated tasks like cleaning tack so that you can avoid riding and working towards your goals.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #1: Hesitating Worksheet

The first step in overcoming hesitation to awareness. What behaviors do you use when you are feeling self-doubt and hesitating? What do you tell yourself? What do you overthink? What are you waiting to do until you feel more confident?

Then take baby steps! Focus on the little actions that you can do today. List one baby step that you can complete today to get closer to achieving your goal:

So get out there and do it! Action is the antidote to fear. Hesitation allows self-doubt to grow and fester. Take back your confidence, and go after your dreams, one baby step at a time.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #2: Hiding

Hiding is triggered by fear of others and overwhelm. Hiding can occur when our horsemanship goals start to feel too big, leading to feeling overwhelmed and unable to take steps towards our dreams. It is easy to avoid taking action, procrastinating and shrinking back from our goals. It is easy to let the fears of being judged by others, of looking foolish, or letting fear of disappointing others cause us to hide behind the scenes and holding ourselves back. Hiding can also appear as playing it small, staying in your comfort zone and shrinking back from opportunities to step up to the next level.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #2: Hiding Worksheet

The first step in overcoming hiding is to clearly identify what you are afraid of. What thoughts do you notice when you start talking yourself out of taking action?

Then minimize the fear by asking yourself some tough questions. Why does this fear matter to you? If it is fear of what others might think or say, ask yourself, why does their opinion matter?

The next step in overcoming hiding is awareness. What do you do when you are hiding from your goals? What do you do instead of working with your horse?

Then, when you notice yourself hiding you can replace it with action. List below what action you can take when you notice yourself hiding.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #3: Hypercritical Thinking

Hypercritical thinking is triggered by fear of being hurt, disappointed, or failing. Hypercritical thinking shows up as complaining, arguing against your horsemanship dreams, and being very self-critical. It is easy to spot as "being negative," when you look for and find flaws and reasons why your horsemanship dreams are achievable. You might find yourself fixating on what can go wrong. At its worst, hypercritical thinking can cause you to know what actions you need to take to achieve your goals, but you believing that you can't, that it isn't possible, and you only see excuses as to why your dreams aren't possible.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #3: Hypercritical Thinking Worksheet

The first step to overcoming hypercritical thinking is to identify the excuses you're using to hold yourself back. What excuses do you tend to use?

Then, identify what negative outcome do you believe is going to happen.

Next, eliminate the excuse. What can you do to eliminate this obstacle or negative outcome?

Then make a DECISION that you're going to commit to giving it your all, giving yourself a chance to prove yourself wrong.

The key to overcoming being hypercritical is to find a solution instead of just complaining. Remove the excuse and take action!



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #4: Helplessness

Helplessness is triggered by insecurity or low self-worth. Helplessness can appear as blaming, thinking that nothing ever goes my way, and blaming others for all outcomes in life. The helplessness mind trap can cause dependency on others. They won't do the work for themselves, expecting others to do the work for them. This can then lead to a false sense of incompetence, and a lack of self-trust. Some might even fear success, fearing that if they were to succeed that they might lose the support of others.



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Self-Doubt Mind Trap #4: Helplessness Worksheet

The first step in overcoming helplessness is to identify what areas you feel helpless and what beliefs support the feeling. What do you believe about yourself that makes you feel helpless?

Then, identify who you are dependent on.

Next, identify what you are afraid of that leads you to stay helpless. What are you afraid of losing (or other negative consequence) if you were to be more self-sufficient? In what way can you see that the OPPOSITE is true, that by taking responsibility that you will gain self-confidence?

Ask yourself-what steps can you take next to be more self-sufficient and build trust in yourself and your horsemanship journey?

Along the way, celebrate your progress. Remember, actions of confidence come before feelings of confidence! Get into your grit zone!