

## The Young Ones

By Allison Griest

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During the past few weeks I've had the opportunity to ride my friend's young horse. He's a very willing, polite little guy, but he is absolutely still a baby. I always have so much fun riding younger horses. They're anything but discreet when it comes to their thought processes. Here are a couple of my favorite "conversations."

- You want me to pick up that foot? I don't see why that's necessary. I'd rather pick up this one.
- A saddle pad?! That's the scariest thing I've ever seen. And it's going on my back? You're lying – that's not the same thing that was on my back yesterday.
- Stop putting pressure on my side. I don't know why I need to move off your leg. I'm happy to move if you just open a rein two feet to one side.
- Fine. I'm bending. I hope you're happy. You want me to change bends? I'll do it, but I'm going to stick my neck out like a giraffe.
- I'm tired. Let's stop. No really, I'm not moving.
- We're passing the gate! This is where we go when we're done! Can we be done?

I have to commend the 3 ½-year-old. Two days ago we were at a canter when the horses in the pasture decided to gallop to the fence line in anticipation of dinner. While he could have played the "I'm a green horse" card, he didn't. He calmly slowed down to a walk and kept listening to me. And when things scare him, he might bend away or try to turn around, but it's always very polite.

Yesterday I took him over a bright red ground pole and he didn't even bat an eye. I think the next time I ride him I may walk him over two or three poles. We'll just have to see what sort of conversation that initiates.

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