



Winners - Race Horses and You

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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This Week was the multi-million-dollar Kentucky Derby has been held annually in Louisville Kentucky for one hundred forty-five years. Fans not only attend these races at Churchill Downs dressed in finery but also set up parties throughout the world. The Kentucky Derby event is big business!

I was thinking about the horses and what factors are accredited with contributing to a win:

1. Breeding - Most horses that are in the running have parents or grandparents who have had major wins. Considerable research and thought are invested into choosing the two horses with the best genes and characteristics that hopefully, when bred, will produce a winner.
2. Stables - It is extremely expensive to feed house and take care of race horses. In some cases, it even requires flying the horse to another country in order to compete.
3. Training - Getting to know a horse takes time, preparation and expertise. A trainer needs to understand the weaknesses of the animal and develop strategies to help overcome these. A good trainer not only builds on strength but also builds confidence in the horse.
4. Jockeying - The horse's rider has to be in good physical and mental shape in order to be a good partner during the race. He also must understand how and when the horse performs best. Timing is very important. The jockey must know when to push and when to hold back.
5. Equipment - It is interesting to see the different aids used for the horses. Besides saddles and silks some have blinders or unique head coverings. Jockeys each have a whip but use of it varies.
6. Conditions - You certainly can't change the weather and sometimes the horses face a sloppy terrain, cold temperatures and pouring rain. Wind can also be an uncontrollable variable.
7. Health - Even if the horse has had excellent care and is at the right weight, he just might not feel well on the day of the race. Veterinarians and owners can do their best but there are some things that just can't be controlled. An unexpected injury or other problem can, at the last-minute result in the entry being scratched.
8. Focus - The Kentucky Derby race is only two minutes long but there are so many distractions that might interfere with the outcome. Just the noise of one hundred and fifty thousand screaming fans can rattle the horse. Mud in the face or crowding on the track can also cause problems.
9. Luck - Even when everything seems to be absolutely perfect, there can be uncontrollable factors that interfere. Sometimes a replay will indicate that there was a foul which couldn't have been prevented.
10. Character - A horse has to have the desire to run and if you listen to experts in horse racing, you will hear them state that some horses just figure out how to win!

If we want to succeed in our own lives, we need to consider what needs to be done. We didn't choose our parents or the environment that we were in as children, but we can make choices in other areas.

As adults, we can ensure that our environment and self-care are positive. We can secure mentors and take training courses to develop our skills and improve our weaknesses. We can partner with others who bring out the best in us and make sure we have equipment that strengthens us. We cannot control all the conditions in society that might impede our progress or stop the distractions that would get us off track, but we can learn how to focus on the goals and steps to accomplish them.

The most important thing to remember is that you and your character will ultimately determine your success. If you have passion, steadfastness and tenacity you will do what it takes to succeed!