

YODER SAYS...

Hi readers! Yoder here writing on the theme for this issue: Ahem, My Tool Box. I am still new in my job but the more tools I add, the better I serve my people. Also, good service often results in carrots...and I am all about the carrots. My tool box features three major categories: 1) Health. 2) Fun. 3) Love.

1. Health

If you haven't got your health, you haven't got anything. This is my favorite line from *The Princess Bride* (I do watch movies). The following "tools" help me care for my health.

The stop and plop. Yes, it seems all therapy horses know that even mid-session you may stop everything for a short break to relive yourself. Extra groaning, splashing, or making a big move out promptly following the unload usually gets a laugh and that's a win. Also, I am certain I have helped toilet train a few of my people. Sure, pelvic floor and all that, but really, it's my action that gets them going.

The roll. After a session it's important to let go of any lingering energy or discomfort. Request that your handler dismantle your equipment and let you roll freely in the sand arena. This releases energy, provides chiropractic-worthy adjustment, and puts just enough crud in your coat to get you some extra grooming time.

Warm sleep. This is a favorite of mine for the cold winter months in Minnesota. I shower my stall with an ample stream of urine and then lay down. This sensory experience soothes me like no other.

2. Fun

Get outdoors! I love the snow, the rain, the wind, and the opportunity to play with my friends in the mud. Outdoor sessions going up and down hills near the trees puts and extra pep in my step. That is unless there are turkeys in the trees. I do not like turkeys. Turkeys are not fun.



Play games. I like to knock over bowling pins, pick up bean bags, and look for clues on a scavenger hunt. I also love to count with my feet. We play a lot of games where people count my steps and I try extra hard to make every footfall count.

Make people laugh. People can be so serious. Sometimes I put my mustache very close to their ears, or gently pull the zipper on their coat or just stand in the cross ties doing my best Olaf impression (yes, another movie reference). The sound of people laughing is good.

3. Love

I give it freely. I drop my head for a scratch, nicker to my favorite people, and stand patiently while a child steadies themselves to brush my tail. It feels good to give love and receive it. I can feel my heart has grown since I started this job. I didn't know it would feel so good to be cared for and care for others. So most of all, make sure your tool box is filled with love. We always need more.

Thanks for reading and I wish you a good transition into the next season.

~Cheers, Yoder



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