

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. I have a serious soft spot for horses. In fact, they were the very thing that actually launched us into homesteading many, many years ago. Now, that being said, I really haven't talked about them much online because I never have felt like they were officially a farm animal or a homestead animal. However, I have seen more and more of you either get horses for your homestead or ask questions about getting a horse in the future, so I thought it would be fun to dedicate an episode to the equine side of our homestead. I'll tell you a bit more of our horse journey and then share some tips. If you're thinking about adding horses to your little farm as well. I'm your host Jill winger. This is the podcast for people who are disenchanting with conformity, the ones who swim upstream.

Speaker 1 ([01:02](#)):

While the societal herd rides the river of least resistance, the ones who grow and shepherd nurture and produce, need and craft rather than consume. The ones who are old fashioned on-purpose and choose to truly live, not merely exist. If you're a trailblazer, a Maverick, a homesteader, a modern pioneer or a backyard farmer, you have found your tribe. All right. So if you've listened to episode number one of this podcast, you heard our story of how we got into homesteading and you kind of heard the horse theme flowing through that episode. So I'm not going to go into a ton of detail, but I thought it would be fun to kind of expound on the horse side of myself or our homestead cause I had a number of you ask about it and I've posted occasionally a picture of me riding or me showing or my horses and I've got a lot of interest.

Speaker 1 ([02:04](#)):

So I just thought it would be fun to throw some of this out there and see how many of you are also into this horse part of, I guess it's a homestead thing and that's honestly why I haven't shared a lot about it online. Cause I've always had this hesitation that a horse is not technically a homestead animal. They don't have a purpose, you know, like they don't produce food on the homestead necessarily. So it felt like a stretch for me. But, they actually do fit right. They're a barnyard animal. A lot of folks are adding them in to their goats or their cows. And so I thought it would be fun to dive in a little more deeply into our horse story. So in a nutshell, some of you know, I was, I've been a horse girl since I was like preschool, age of three. I was obsessed.

Speaker 1 ([02:55](#)):

And when I get obsessed with things, I'm really obsessed with it. So I'm a very intense personality that started when I was two or three years old and I never outgrew it. You know, a lot of my friends at the time thought horses were cool, but they, you know, went on to other things when they hit their teenage years and my horse obsession actually only got worse. So it's kind of funny when you're little, the adults around you think it's cute for a while and then it's kind of like, Oh wow, Jill, like, you're still doing this. Okay, now what? So that was me. Always been the weird horse girl. It never went away. Still has it. Probably never will. And that is what drove me to move from my hometown in Idaho to Wyoming when I was 18 years old because I found a small community college that had a good equine program.

Speaker 1 ([03:48](#)):

And at that point I didn't, I just couldn't get into any of the other college degrees that were, you know, here you could do this, you could do this, you could do that. And I'm like, no, I'm not interested in any of that. The only thing that was peaking my interest was horses. So I decided to come to Wyoming. I did

two years at the community college. I got two different associates of science degrees in equine stuff. And after that I went in and worked for a couple of different horse trainers in the area, cleaning stalls and warming up horses and working with Colts and all of those fun things. So when I got married to Christian, I've had horses like since I was 14. So I've never been without a horse since then. So we had our personal horses, we were newlyweds, we were looking for our property or our first home.

Speaker 1 ([04:43](#)):

And we knew we needed the property, not because we wanted to homestead at that point. I didn't even know what homesteading was. I really couldn't even cook. I really wasn't into chickens or milk cows, was not in my conscious consciousness at that point. But we had horses, we didn't want to board them at a stable. We wanted them to be with us at our house. And so we knew that our first home needed to have land. So long story short, you guys have heard this before, probably, we've found our fixer upper. It had the acreage, had the barn, had the wind break for the horses and sort of, kind of had some fence that needed help. So that's what we started with. And then of course, the lightning bolt of inspiration with the milk cows and the chickens and the whole nine yards came after that.

Speaker 1 ([05:32](#)):

And through all of that, as we were building the garden and the compost pile and getting the goats, I've always had the horses, although there was a period of time there where they did take a back seat and it was when we were really building out the homestead and I started to get pregnant with the kids. And at that point I got into blogging and I just didn't ride as much as I did prior to that, which felt like it was a state of life that needed to happen. Although I always felt sad that the horses were standing out in the pasture and I was only riding them a couple times a month because prior to that I was writing every single day I was going to clinics and getting lessons and all of those things. And so, it made me sad to have to step away from them for awhile and I was kind of in the back of my mind, I was like, man, is this going to be how it ends that Jill was the horse girl up until she had kids and then she just wasn't anymore.

Speaker 1 ([06:33](#)):

But I needed, I needed to be able to focus on other things. And that is also part of our story and building the businesses and having the children. And so it was, it was a good thing. But I did have this period of a little bit of a break. Now, fast forward to 2016 the businesses were still growing, but I had more of a foundation built. We were pretty much knew we were done with kids. And so I was like, I think I'm ready to get into horse showing. I've had this vision of always wanting to do some sort of competitive showing. And I'd done a little bit over the years, but not to the extent that I was craving. And I've always loved ranch horse versatility, which is a Western performance discipline. It includes four different events at a given show. And the reason I like that is because in some of the other disciplines, horses are well, and I have to be, it's not necessarily a bad thing.

Speaker 1 ([07:33](#)):

They only can do one thing. They do it extremely well, but they only do one thing. And I liked the idea of having a horse that's versatile that can go work a cow and then can go right outside with me and do ranch work and one that can do a sliding stop and then go and do a trail course and drag a log and walk over a bridge. And that was really appealing to me. So I knew I wanted a horse that could take me into that competitive world. So I got my mare Kate, you guys have probably seen pictures of her online back in 2016, she is fantastic. She was trained by a friend of mine and she is, was a wonderful, wonderful way

for me to enter back into the horse world. And I was able to be competitive and I was able to learn the ropes and get through a whole bunch of limiting beliefs and lack of confidence and, you know, not having written for a much for five or six years and now kind of back into the world.

Speaker 1 ([08:32](#)):

So it's been the best thing ever for me. I am busy. As you guys know, we homeschool, we have the businesses, we homestead. And honestly, even though it would be so easy for me to just say I'm not riding right now because I do not have the time. Like it's really important for my mental health. Let me just say that I, I need it. I have found that otherwise I can, I have a tendency just to work and go, go, go. And the horses, while they're still work, they give me a chance to use a different part of my brain and to just do something different. It's not on the computer or it's not at the table with the kids and it just has been really healthy for me. So that's our story right now. We have four horses. We have two kid horses. Mesa, my daughter, did her first year of four HI horse four H last year.

Speaker 1 ([09:25](#)):

My other two ride occasionally. So and then I have Kate and then I bought a three year old a couple months ago and he is going to buy next up and coming show horse and I'm super excited about him. His name is Tag and he is a quarter horse. Basically all of our horses are quarter horses and he's got really good papers. He's super smart, super athletic, and it's been really good for me. My goal is that I will be the one to do the bulk of the training with him to get him ready to show. And so it's challenging me. It's stretching me. It's out of my comfort zone. I haven't written a colt in a good number of years. And so it just feels good. I'm having a lot of fun with him. You probably seen pictures of him online, but that's our horse story.

Speaker 1 ([10:15](#)):

It's not only for the kids, but it's also for something for me to be competitive with. But all that to say like, I know that horses are not a part of homesteading that's going to fit for all of you. Right. And they're not necessarily a necessity when it comes to homesteading. You don't have to have a horse. You can have a beautiful farm, homestead, backyard, whatever, without the addition of a horse. But if you're drawn to them or you have children who are drawn to them and you already have the space for a cow or a goat, it's likely you could have the space for a horse or two as well. Now I have racked my brain cause I love everything in my life to have a purpose. And I'm like, how, how could we spin this to make horses have a purpose in homesteading?

Speaker 1 ([11:10](#)):

A use in homesteading and really, I don't know, I can't come up with one unless you are like farming with horses, which we definitely don't do. I think it's fantastically cool. But most of us are probably not going to plow the garden with a horse. We do use our horses a little bit for moving our cattle or, sorting our cattle, but it's, you know, not an absolute necessity. So I, I guess honestly, as far as the usefulness of a horse on a homestead, it's a little bit of a stretch unless we take into account the idea of horses being like a mental health aspect, which they are for me. They just keep me grounded. They keep me content or giving our kids a project and giving our kids a way to learn more about animals. Then I think they do have a purpose.

Speaker 1 ([12:01](#)):

So it's kind of however you want to take that. But that's how I think of it. Now, I wanted to give a few practical tips for those of you who are considering adding a horse into your homestead because it's a little bit different I feel than some of the other farm animals. They can be a little bit more dangerous, a little bit more expensive. They're just a little bit more to take into consideration. So here are some thoughts, from me to you as someone who's had many, many years of experience in the horse field. Okay. So number one, it's really, really important that you get the right horse. This is less important with the other animals. I mean, there's definitely animals that you like good milk cows and not so great milk cows or good breeding goats or not so great breeding goats.

Speaker 1 ([12:52](#)):

But when it comes to horses, they can be dangerous. And that's to me what sets them apart a little bit more than the other homestead animals. Not that all animals can't have a element of risk in there, but horses can have a little bit more. It's a higher level of risk. And if you're brand new to animals, horses can, can be quite the steep learning curve. So it's really important that you get the right horse for you and your family, especially if you have children. I'll say right now, ponies generally are not awesome. There are wonderful ponies out there and if you can find the unicorn pony that is like super easy and, gets along with all different types of children and isn't evil, then go for it. But honestly, a lot of ponies have a little bit of an attitude.

Speaker 1 ([13:45](#)):

So people are usually drawn to the ponies because they're small and I find them to often be frustrating for a lot of families. So be careful with the ponies. I recommend getting an older horse who's been there, done that, who's quiet, who's not going to get spooky, who's not going to get freaked out when something new comes their way. Generally those type of horses you're going to pay a little bit more for. So you've heard me talk about paying more for a cast iron skillet cause you get, you know it's worth the money. It's the same thing with a horse. Avoid the temptation to go get the \$200 horse on Craigslist because it's \$200. Unless you know that horse is super quiet, super gentle, has had a lot of life experience, I would steer clear. Another piece of that is to make sure that they are sound.

Speaker 1 ([14:37](#)):

If you don't have good feet, then you don't have a horse. And lameness and horse is an issue that pops up a lot. Especially with an older horse that's been used a lot. So if you see a horse that looks really good but the price is really low, there could be a reason for that. So I would always have your horses vet checked before you purchase them to make sure there's not some sort of really serious issue that's happening inside those feet or inside those hooves that you can't see from the outside cause that you can get burned really, really easily. That way. It never hurts to have someone and actually it's a really good idea to have an experienced horse person help you, especially if you're new to this. Have them go with you to look at a new horse that you're potentially buying, have them give you lessons, have them make sure that your property is set up, for a horse and you have all the necessary stuff.

Speaker 1 ([15:36](#)):

It's just a different field, right? There's the horse, the horse industry is kind of a different animal if you will. And it's really, really helpful to have someone who's been there done that. Another common mistake I see people make is when they're horse shopping, they think, you know, I am new to horses or my kids is, are new to horses and so I want to get a baby horse so they can grow up together. And that that really is a nice thought, but it doesn't generally end well. There is a saying in the horse world that

green on green makes black and blue, green being novice or new, right? So a novice or new rider on a novice or new green horse is a recipe for a wreck. So avoid the baby horses. Avoid the young horses unless you know what you're doing, especially if you have children.

Speaker 1 ([16:32](#)):

Children do best with an older, more experienced horse. And like I said, kids, horses, the good ones cost a little bit more, but due to the risk involved in riding a horse with children, especially, pay that little extra money, it's worth it. It's worth the peace of mind and it's worth the safety. All right, so, as far as facilities for your horses doesn't have to be complicated. We just make sure that because we live in such a harsh climate, they do have a way to get out of the wind. So like our cattle windbreak is important. If you live in a more temperate climate, they don't necessarily have to have a barn. You don't have to keep a horse in a stall, but it is important that you have good fences and horses get hurt way more easily than a cow or a goat.

Speaker 1 ([17:28](#)):

So if you have junk in your pasture or sharp metal objects laying around, your horses are going to cut themselves on it. I can almost guarantee it. So you're gonna want to make sure that sort of thing is cleaned up, even if you've had the goats or the cows or whatever in that same pasture. Know that horses love to try to cut their foot off. Ask me how I know. So it's important that you have good fence and clean pastures. Also know that the more you pay for a horse, the higher likelihood they have of hurting themselves. Like I, that's why I say that kind of tongue in cheek, but kind of not like, it's always the most important, most expensive horse we have. That's the one that is trying to cut their foot off with the fence or the whatever. It's just, it's like Murphy's law.

Speaker 1 ([18:20](#)):

It just happens. So, especially if you have a really good horse, not that you would, you know, not like any of your horses, but just make sure you have a safe place for them that they can't try to hurt themselves. They also do best with a buddy. They're herd animals just like a cow. So horses are best, at least you know when you have two of them, although if worst comes to worse, a goat or a cow is a friend can also work. There's lots of people who use goats as companions to horses. So just kind of depends on the temperament of your horse. We do run our cattle and goats and horses all together. Sometimes they will eat off of the same hay bale feeder. They usually get along pretty well. Every once in a while the horses will bully the cattle a little bit, but nothing bad.

Speaker 1 ([19:10](#)):

It just kind of pin their ears and move them around. And it's fine. They, they work it out and they figure out how to get along. So we don't feel like we have to keep them in separate pastures necessarily. All right. And lastly, my little horse tip for you, and this is a really important one, is that horses are not dogs. And this is a mistake I see a lot of new horse owners make, horses are pretty and they're, some of them are friendly and they're fun to be around and it's really easy to let them become like a dog. And every time I hear someone say, Oh my horse is so nice, he follows me around like a puppy and pushes in my pockets for treats. Like it makes me a little bit nervous for them because horses do need boundaries. Especially if we're riding them and we're working with them.

Speaker 1 ([20:01](#)):

And that partnership, I think all animals need boundaries, but horses especially. So I love my horses. I scratched my horses, I spoil them, I pet on them. But they, I actually don't feed treats cause I don't like a horse that is in my bubble. Right. And I expect them to be respectful of me. I do not want them to run over the top of me when I am leading them. When we go through a gate, they are expected to wait and not push through the gate on top of me. I just expect them to have manners. And so I would encourage you, if you're really excited about bringing that first horse home and you know, your childhood dreams of horse ownership are being fulfilled, you can still have all of that, you know, warm, fuzzy and that great relationship with your horse. But just make sure that you keep those boundaries and you demand that they respect your bubble, they respect your kid's bubble.

Speaker 1 ([20:57](#)):

They're not trying to run you over, they're not trying to step on your feet. It's just really important for safety. And you'll have a happier horse as well when they're not being rude and pushy. And so we even, I even teach my kids, you know, if they're leading a horse and a horse is trying to drag them around, like they're allowed to discipline that horse and put them back in their place and it's great for my kids. It teaches them confidence and it's also good for the horses. So all in all, while they may not be your typical homestead animal. Obviously horses have been a huge part of our story and I love seeing other families add them to their homestead. They can be a really fulfilling animal to keep. They're great for kids, a lot of important life lessons and if you need any other horse tips or you have questions, definitely shoot me a direct message over on Instagram or Facebook.

Speaker 1 ([21:50](#)):

I'll do my best to answer it. And if you have any other horse questions or any other horse content you'd like to see here on the podcast or elsewhere, definitely let me know. I would be happy to add it to my list. So if you are ready to do this homesteading thing, whether it's the horses or the cattle or the goats or just learning how to cook from scratch, but you're not sure where to start. I happen to have an entire library of resources I put together for homesteaders just like you and you can get complimentary access over at theprairiehomestead.com/grow we'll leave the link in the show notes, but one more time. It's theprairiehomestead.com/grow and that is it for this episode. If you enjoyed it, it would mean a lot. If you could pop over to your favorite podcast player really quick and leave a little review and thanks for listening my friends. We'll chat more in the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.