

Sheer Joy

The sun had just gone down. There was a slight hint in the air that fall might be arriving shortly. With summer leaving, last night was Kyle's first time back on the horse after a three-month hiatus. The summer heat in Phoenix is just too brutal for riding.

I watched Kyle mount his horse flawlessly, and ride off with a big grin on his face. And to think, before he began twelve years ago, I didn't believe he would be able to ride. Good thing Dad thought otherwise.

Kyle rode his horse in sheer joy. With his side-walker, Clint, he walked, interspersed with moments of trotting. You could hear the rhythmic clip clop of the horse's feet, and Clint's encouragement. With chunks of silence as the backdrop, Kyle moved with the horse in a natural rocking motion. No distractions. Kyle's body settled way down. He was in his element.

I was in my element, too. After all these years, I still get a thrill when I watch. I'm so grateful we stumbled upon an activity Kyle can enjoy so much.

Technically, the type of horseback riding Kyle does is called hippo-therapy. People with special needs or medical conditions receive enormous therapeutic value from riding a horse.

Many have asked what Kyle gets from his biweekly rides – how it has helped him. My answer is always the same: he loves it. That's enough for me. His precious quality of life is enhanced because he experiences the sheer joy of riding a horse. It is one of his passions. It matters not whether he ever achieves a certain life skill or goal through horseback riding. What matters is the smile on his face, and that serene expression he gets when the horse comes to a stop and the ride is over.

Sheer joy. That's what he receives from riding. In those moments, that's all he needs. I also receive my dose of sheer joy just watching Kyle get his.

Oxygen-Rich Tool

Have you had a taste of sheer joy recently? It's delicious, even in tiny bites. What gives you sheer joy? Seek it out. Do it.