

## Going Both Ways

Many, many years ago I was riding in a clinic conducted by a very intimidating Dressage Luminary. Nowadays, having acquired the graying hair, if not the wisdom, of experience, I'd just speak up. But back then, I rode the entire lesson in excruciating pain because the seam in the leg of my breeches had twisted around in my too-tight Dehners and was cutting off all circulation from my shin down. I know now that Herr Clinician would have vastly preferred a brief interruption followed by my full attention as opposed to having to compete for it with the throbbing in my limb.

Much has been written about the instructor's responsibility to his pupil, but it goes both ways. If a rider has metal screws in her ankle, her teacher would probably like to know about them. A third party once fed-back to me that a clinic rider hadn't gotten much from her lesson with me because she couldn't hear me. Turns out she was deaf in one ear and had only caught about 50% of my words. But she had never bothered to mention this disability to me, and naturally I'd had no reason to adjust my delivery to her benefit. Another time in England, I had taken a hold of a rider's boot to rearrange her leg position when she cautioned me to tug only lightly because it was a prosthesis. Realizing I'd just ducked a Monty Pythonesque moment, I was exceedingly grateful for the warning!

Most recently, I was accosted by an angry husband *after* his wife's clinic and successful show for having "pushed her too hard." Accusingly, he proclaimed, "She has [insert dread disease here]." But since neither she nor he had informed the organizer, the show secretary, or me about this condition or even about any discomfort before or during her rides, it was pretty hard to not to feel frustrated and unfairly attacked.

So, please, if you've got a problem, a "situation," or on the bright side, if you're feeling exceptionally bionic on a given morning, do yourself as well as your instructor a favor and LET THEM KNOW!