

Overcoming fears to take his first pony ride

Our younger son is always excited about the idea of pony rides, but then at the last minute he backs out. It seems like a fun idea, but the reality is too frightening.

Then over the weekend I took both boys to Clark's Elloak Farm. They spotted a pony and they both started asking for rides. But I didn't think much of it. When I bought the tickets, I knew that one boy might be taking two rides. We have been through that before. But I didn't remind Daniel that he is always afraid.

Then we went over to meet the pony.

His name was Bruce, and wow, was he tall.

Even I wasn't sure this was a good idea for Daniel's first ride. But I didn't say so. He and I watched as his big brother rode proudly around the paddock on Bruce's back.

I could tell Daniel wasn't sure this was a good idea. But when Leo came back to the starting point and dismounted, he assumed his little brother was going to ride. He started giving advice on how to sit, how to hold on.

Suddenly, almost before I realized it was happening, Daniel was up on the pony.



He was nervous. But he was there, holding on, his legs dangling over the horse's back. And, as the pony started his slow walk, Daniel began to smile.

And when he rode up to me to climb back down, he was beaming.

It was the highlight of his day.

On the way home, as we were talking about the pony ride, I was thinking how brave Daniel was to climb onto that horse. He was frightened, but he swallowed his fear, pulled himself up onto the pony, and enjoyed the ride.



Maybe there's something you're nervous to do right now—and maybe it's not skydiving or bungee jumping. Maybe it's speaking about your faith or sticking up for someone whose voice isn't being heard. Maybe it's applying for a job or taking a step on your spiritual journey. Maybe it's committing your time to something—or walking away from a commitment that isn't making good use of your talents.

I'm not sure what it is for me, but I'm thinking about it. After all, I watched as our frightened little boy climbed aboard that pony. And, as he finished his ride, I saw his radiant smile.

