

Gareth is particularly keen to pass on what he's learnt about the business of dressage to daughter Ruby.

"We had to build our businesses from scratch and Ruby gets to swing off the back of that," he says. "But we don't earn a living through competing, the prize money is too small. So, what you also have to learn at some point is that it's about creating a business. Ruby has learnt that our business is about producing horses."

Gareth has also used his experience to prepare Ruby for the sport's inevitable lows.

"One of the hardest things is that you can be top of your game one day and the next day your horse goes lame or you lose the ride," he says. "You have to be really emotionally strong to deal with all of that. Ruby has seen it with us, and we talk to

her about it. What makes you have more chance of being successful is being able to deal with failure."

Tina remembers her parents instilling this resilience in her.

"They taught me that you will have injuries, you will have disappointments and you enjoy the highs when they come around," she says.

In turn, watching Tina has helped Isabelle become more resilient, too.

"I've seen it through her, her falling off and getting injured," she says. "It makes you realise what can happen and how you bring yourself back from that."

Having a parent who understands because they've been there themselves can be a huge support.

"When I come out of the ring and it's not gone right, Dad doesn't have to say anything because he knows how I feel," Jack says. "He's not telling me everything I did wrong, he understands that I know and doesn't make a big thing out of it."

FOR all the advantages, following in a successful parent's footsteps can put extra pressure on a rider. Leonie says it's important to recognise that you will be compared, and to know how you're going to deal with that.

"You need a strong skill set to manage the inevitable comparison," she says. "I advise riders to bring it back to themselves and how they want to do it. Some say it really fires them up and motivates them – everyone is an individual. As long as it doesn't lead to beating yourself up."

Tina admits she struggled with this at first. "Mum was a natural and I had to work at it, which I found frustrating at times," she says. "I wanted to do better. If I wanted to succeed I had to work out what worked for me."

Jack also remembers feeling the pressure early on.

"When you start coming off ponies and onto horses you feel the pressure of the Whitaker name a bit more," he says. "But in this sport, you put more pressure on yourself than anyone else can put on you."

When Ruby was younger, Gareth was conscious of the expectations put on her.

"All I wanted was for her to come out of the arena happy and enjoy her ponies and competing," he says. "As she gets older it gets a bit easier because I feel she can cope with it."

Ultimately, Gareth believes Ruby's success is her own.

"She is a lucky girl to have this to start her off," he acknowledges. "But luck doesn't keep you there."

Jack agrees. "I'm in the position of being very privileged. But I still have to work really hard to take hold of the chance and not mess it up. The Whitaker name isn't going to make you jump clear rounds. You have to do it yourself." **H&H**



Baby Ruby with Gareth Hughes – once she was riding, "all I wanted was for her to come out of the arena happy and enjoy her ponies", says her father

The alternative view

TREBLE CCI5* victor Jonelle Price was born into a non-horsey family but thinks it's been an advantage for her.

"Coming from a non-horsey background, I had to fight for it a bit harder," she says. "You're born with the passion, but you really have to pursue it to make it happen."

Without equestrian knowledge in the family, Jonelle looked elsewhere for advice. "There's always a role model, it doesn't have to be your parents," she says. "It might be the senior kid at Pony Club who's jumping bigger than you. Or someone in the region who's doing well."

And having parents who weren't experienced equestrians had its upsides.

"Ignorance can be bliss," she says. "My family knew nothing, they weren't aware of the dangers. If I had to watch my child, it would be terrible – I know too much!"

Ultimately, Jonelle believes it's resilience that gets you to the top in horse sport.

"If you don't have that ability to take the knocks and the injuries, it doesn't matter whether you come from an equestrian background or not."

But when it comes to her own children, Jonelle worries about the pressure the Price name would bring with it.

"I genuinely hope that neither of my children want to ride because when you have two high-profile parents in the sport, you are always going to be compared to them," she says.