
Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
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1. Quick [ASK]

Are you guilty of spending 80% of your time doing things that do not generate a return. The Japanese have a wonderful word for this. They call it *muda*, which translates as 'waste', 'futility' or 'purposelessness'. What jobs do you do that are *muda*?

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2. Welcome

Whilst drought grips Australia, it is exciting to see that people are doing things that are creating better and more exciting results.

This weekend Suzie and I visited the *Good Living Grower Markets*, held right in front of that monument to western values, Star City Casino, in Sydney! The *Sydney Morning Herald* has sponsored the markets, and it is a great atmosphere. Each stall is an identical size, with a pointed canvas top. The front of each stall is the same - a blackboard announces who the stall holder is, and what they sell.

The stall holders are all 'dinky-di' farmers marketing their produce direct to the public. I talked to many of them, and I sense they are happy with their returns compared to traditional marketing arrangements. It would be fair to say that traditional methods actually forced them to do things differently, in order to survive.

NSW Farmers is getting behind such a grower market push in other locations in Sydney, and I know there are similar things already happening in Brisbane, and no doubt Melbourne, and perhaps Perth and Christchurch?

Chris Eggert is an organic dairy farmer at Wauchope, NSW. His family are seeing a significant lift in profitability as their local dairy factory promotes an increasing availability of organic milk in the district.

It's all hard, this change, no doubt about that. And the harder people fight change, the

harder it is to change. I admire what they are doing. It is a great start. Wouldn't it be great if we could actually have those city-siders actually visiting the farms and becoming even more involved in their food.

Two requests from practitioners:

Col Freeman, Landcare Officer from Karuah, NSW is currently undertaking a postgraduate degree. His major work is studying the relationship between grazing planning and the seemingly significant opportunities it creates for tree re-establishment without the need for preparation and planting. If you have experienced a return of trees under grazing planning, can you drop Col a note col@nobbys.net.au He is keen to research the conjunction of events in a wide range of locations that allow such (conventionally unexpected) germinations to occur.

David and Gail Guthrie are farmers in WA. Apart from their Majestic Merinos business, which sells wool products around the world, they operate two properties, one at Kojonup and another at Walpole. They are keen to consolidate back to their Walpole base, and even keener to make sure that the five or six years work they have done in restoring their Kojonup property can be of benefit to someone else. Perhaps there is a city investor keen to participate in restoration of land, or a family wishing to expand for an upcoming generation. Kojonup has had a good season this year, and the property is in good heart. Please contact David and Gail majmer@bigpond.com

Finally, we have reorganised our administrative functions so it is all under one roof again, in Sydney. Wendy Cobcroft did a great job for us, and we thank her for her work at Inverell, often done at odd hours - and this year a long way away from where we live and work. Suzie and I welcome Tina Morris to our team. Tina grew up at Gulargambone, in Central-Western NSW, and for many years farmed at Mudgee, NSW. Her email is tina@holisticresults.com.au

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3. Around the Traps

WA

Since last writing we have heard that Mel Vivian has been a bit off colour. However, he rang me this week to tell me that he has never been better. 'I hope you are as well as I am', he said. Great work, Mel. Mel will be one of the speakers at the first HDMA event, to be held in Perth on November 28. See below for more details

Daniel Cook has been getting to the ear of Warren Truss, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Some months ago Daniel addressed the Young Nationals State Conference. As a result the minister has followed up, and although it may be a long road, Daniel deserves all the support we can collectively muster.

Meanwhile, daniel's parents, David and Joan Cook, Dandaragan, are meeting considerable success with their new range of Certified Beef.

Vic

I recently spent time at Lakes Entrance, on the Eastern side of the Ninety Mile Beach. I learnt a few things. The lakes run for about 120kms contiguously, parallel to the beach. In the 1880's one of Australia's major ecological experiments was conducted. The barrier between the beach and the northern end of the lake system was purposefully breached at Lakes Entrance. Prior to this the lakes were fresh water, although occasionally in huge seas, some water would overtop the coastline and tip a little into the lakes.

The result of the breaching has been to drop the lake level about a metre for their full length, and to turn the fresh water brackish for much of the length.

Lakes Entrance is worth a visit if for no other reason than the magnificent timber sculptures along the water front, all carved into the stumps of some massive *macrocarpa*

trees, that were deemed to old to be safe. The sculptor, by the way, used a chain saw to make this most impressive array of work, each depicting a war scene, such as Simpson's donkey.

NSW

Still crook. Precious little winter crops are going to make it through, especially in northern NSW. Cam McKellar, Spring Ridge, is doing a fabulous job of turning corn stubble and grass into feed for a mob of very hungry, thin cows he purchased about nine weeks ago. They are now gaining weight rapidly. The ground is in magnificent condition to replant in about three weeks time. Cam is fortunate - he has irrigation water.

Geoff and Sharon Brown have grown some outstanding crops last summer, and these reflect five years of strenuous effort in adopting biological processes. Not only were they good yields, but I am told the level of inputs is now starting to decline, and the soil is visibly more active and biologically sound. Arden Anderson visited the property in September, and addressed a group of local, very interested farmers.

NZ

Patchy season. Canterbury and Otago hanging in, whilst Geoff and Andi Kitto have had an abundance of moisture at Balclutha.

Ben Turner has organised an outstanding group of speakers for the first HDMA event, in Christchurch on December 6. You should have received information about this. If not, please visit www.hdma-anz.com for details.

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4. Is Vilfredo Pareto at work at your place?

It is really interesting to study what makes non-agricultural businesses tick. I have spent many hours this year doing just that. Almost without exception these folks focus on sales. Most businesses discover at some stage that the 80/20 theory, often attributed to wily old Italian, Vilfredo Pareto, is correct. The theory suggests that 80% of our results come from just 20% of our actions. In marketing terms, 80% of the profit comes from 20% of the customers. Put another way, just 20% of our actions produce 80% of our results. The remainder of our actions are pulling us away from the planned outcomes.

I recently read about such a situation. The company involved had an annual turnover of around \$A12m, but was stagnant. There were 600 customers, and the staff were at their limit in servicing them. Close analysis showed that the least profitable 200 companies (ie 33%) between them provided just \$A1m in turnover ie just 1/12 of the total. By dropping the bottom 1/3 of customers, the company has moved turnover up to \$A20m in a just one year, and lifted profit by an even greater percentage. The sales people have been able to build better relationships with the people who could and would pay the most for the product they sold. The bottom 200 customers previously occupied the company's staff time grizzelling about price, and then complaining about performance.

It is instructive to think about it in terms of everyday work in your business. Are you guilty of spending 80% of your time doing things that do not generate a return. The Japanese have a wonderful word for this. They call it *muda*, which translates as 'waste', 'futility' or 'purposelessness'.

What jobs do you do that are *muda*? Drenching? Spraying weeds? Remember the rule of succession - a species will move into an environment when the conditions become suitable for their establishment, and will move out when the conditions become unsuitable for their reproduction. So while these activities may be important in the short term, every waking moment should be directed at creating conditions which make them unnecessary in the future.

How serious are you about removing *muda* in your life, so that you live the life you desire - the life written in your holistic goal. If you don't have a goal, then you would do well to remember that some one else will have one for you, and it will most likely involve *muda* for you.

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5. Update your Diary

Events we have planned include:

Wednesday, November 6, Bega, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, November 11, Wauchope, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, November 18, Krumbach, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, December 2, Braidwood, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, December 9, Krumbach, NSW	Wealth Generation and Financial Planning
Wednesday, December 11, Wauchope, NSW	Wealth Generation and Financial Planning
Tuesday, December 17, Bega, NSW	Wealth Generation and Financial Planning
Monday, January 20, Braidwood, NSW	Wealth Generation and Financial Planning
Wednesday, January 22, Bega, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning
Monday, February 17, Quirindi, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management

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Coaching

For many years I have been coaching in holistic goal formation, wealth generation planning and biological planning. This service is provided either by regular phone schedule, email, or at your location.

Successful people use a coach so they stay on track. Importantly, in difficult times it is often the critical difference between clarity and debilitating confusion. Without caring help it is all too easy to deviate from where you want to be - to some place else. I am a 'process coach'. I let you focus on the outcome you require, and take away the worry people so often experience - such as, 'Am I doing it the right way?' Coaching is an important part of working on your business rather than all the time in the business.

Email blward@holisticresults.com.au to discuss your coaching time.

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The Holistic Decision Making Association will be providing a series of intensive one day revision programs, starting this Friday at Dubbo, NSW, then Perth (Nov 28) and Christchurch (Dec 6). Full details on the web at www.hdma-anz.com

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6. Books and Materials you can use

"Natural Capitalism"

By Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins

A very provoking book, co-authored by the founders of the Rocky Mountain institute and Paul Hawken, who wrote *The Ecology of Commerce*. The authors refer to Natural capitalism as the "next industrial revolution", and they may well be right.

Natural Capital is one of four forms of capital the authors describe. They include

- 'human capital' - the forms of labour, intelligence culture and organisation we might describe as human creativity;
- 'financial capital' - consisting of cash, investments and monetary instruments; and
- 'manufactured capital' - comprising our infrastructure, machines, tools and factories.
- 'natural capital' is described as our resources, living systems and *ecosystem services*.

It is ecosystem services that much of the book is about. These are the products of natural function that we tend to take for granted - those things that have no known substitute at any price. The Biosphere 2 project in Arizona, you may recall, was unable to produce sufficient oxygen for eight people for two years, despite spending \$US200m trying. Planet Earth does it every day for free, for six billion people!

The authors pose the question, 'What would our economy look like if it fully valued *all* forms of capital, including human and natural capital. What if our economy were organised not around the lifeless abstractions of neoclassical economics and accountancy but around the biological realities of nature? What if Generally Accepted Accounting Practice booked natural and human capital not as a free amenity in putative inexhaustible supply but as a finite and integrally valuable factor of production. What if, in the absence of a rigorous way to practice such accounting, companies started to act as *if* such principles were in force?' Many answers are revealed in the pages of this book.

Further on they ask the question, "How is that we have created an economic system that tells us that it is cheaper to destroy the earth and exhaust its people than to nurture them both? Is it rational to have a pricing system that discounts the future and sells off the past? How did we create an economic system that confuses capital liquidation with income?"

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of the book is its complete misunderstanding of the thinking developed by Allan Savory. who rates just one paragraph, and that about grazing! No recognition is given to the holistic decision making process, although clearly the authors know it exists. Nevertheless, this is an important work. Buy it and read it, or check your local library.

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7. Joke

A very serious couple were out driving one Sunday when they came upon a young girl, perhaps 9 or 10 years old, leading a large, frisky bull along the roadside. Aghast that this pretty young thing should be working like this on a Sunday, they stopped her, and asked what she was doing.

'I'm taking the bull down to farmer Brown's prize cow', the little girl explained.

'Can't your father do that?', the now very perturbed couple asked. The little girl cocked her head, thought for a few moments and said, 'Nope. It's got to be a bull!'

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7. Quotes that mean something

"The thoughts we choose to think are the tools we use to paint the canvas of our lives."
-- Louise Hay

"Maintaining a complicated life is a great way to avoid changing it."
-- Elaine St. James

"If you are never scared, embarrassed, or hurt, it means you never take chances."
-- Julia Soul

'It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision.'
--Helen Keller

"It is yourself that must constantly be transforming. You cannot bring the same stale self to the world and expect the world to be new for you."
-- Deepak Chopra

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Regards

Bruce Ward