
Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
#9 - Tuesday, December 31, 2002
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1. Quick [ASK]

We have many choices about what we desire in the new, and are prepared to release from the past. We now face a New year - that was not a choice for us. It was inevitable. How we use it, and what we shed in making room for it, are entirely our choice. It is now time to 'release' 2002, and in the process, learn from it. A practical way to do this is to review your plans - financial, biological and social, and check where you are compared to where you want to be. Are you moving towards your holistic goal?

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2. Welcome

The end of a year is a good time to reflect on the past year. For Suzie and I this has been a year of change. We had three objectives for our move to Sydney:

- 1. Decrease my travel time
- 2. Take in theatre and cultural activities
- 3. Have Holistic Management® more widely accepted in non-rural situations.

I think we are pretty happy with our report card. Travel is much easier these days. Regretfully, my worst fear, that Inverell would lose its air service, will shortly become reality. In truth, we have been part of the problem for Inverell by moving away, rather than being part of the solution. But for us, the decision was correct at the time we made it. And in the future, we will likely make further decisions that lead us back to the bush, as we do not see ourselves as long term citizens of the city.

Meanwhile, we really are enjoying the cultural side of things in Sydney. There is just so much that one can participate in, in such a wide variety of interests. It is very exciting and stimulating.

On the third front, we have been meeting so many good thinking people, each of whom adds a new dimension about what is needed in the city. As yet we do not have a final 'vehicle' for city activities, but we are certainly much more 'clued up', and better connected about whatever it is we finally do.

I personally think 2003 may well be a year of challenge to city dwellers, and that opportunities for holistic decision making (rather than just for holistic thinking - as you know, there is a big difference) will become significant. As things unfold we will let you know.

It has been exciting watching people succeed this year - in every state, and in NZ. Some have succeeded through massive struggle. In particular, I have watched the businesslike approach that Ross and Janette Copeman have used in order to maintain the integrity and continuity of their direct marketing beef business under the most difficult of weather - and therefore production - conditions. Of course theirs is just one of the 'stories' that will emerge from 2002. I bet you know someone with a story to tell as well, about 2002.

Suzie joins me in saying thankyou to everyone who has attended our program this year. We also want to say a great big thankyou to those who have kept in touch with us - and with each other, even under difficult conditions when it was ever so easy to go back to the sanctuary of what you 'know' used to work. Many people this year discovered that there is no sanctuary in the real world, only opportunities and choices, even in adversity.

May 2003 be a prosperous, safe, healthy and above all, a fun year for you.

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3. Around the Traps

WA

Not a lot of news emanating from the west at the moment. I noticed the possibility of rain in the Gasgoyne and Murchison recently, but have not heard any reports. Overall, WA has performed this year in a classical El Nino year manner, according to the latest science on the subject. Within relatively small distances some districts have recorded outstanding seasons (examples include Kojonup, Katanning and Wagin in the south, and Dandaragan, north of Perth), whilst places like Perenjori in the north have had absolute shockers. Poor old Lake Grace, near Katanning has also recorded a bad one, yet even within that district there have been individuals who have had a good year.

Vic

Gippsland still pretty good from all accounts. In most other regions a range of strategies have been put in place to get through the summer on a serious forage shortfall. Laurie Maxted at Pyramid Hill tells me his header did one lap around one paddock, and headed straight back into the shed for another year. His sheep are almost all gone, and his dairy herd has enough irrigation water to operate on just 35 of their normal 60 hectares. He will run out of irrigation water - and therefore dairy feed in a couple of weeks, and has purchased massive amounts of feed.

The strategy he has used for the dairy cows is interesting. They are given one green feed a day (instead of the normal two times daily feeds) on the irrigation, and spend each night in a fresh dry paddock, each one of 60 dry paddocks available. The lesson: fresh paddocks are important for stock health, even if there is no feed in them!

NSW

The North coast is now incredibly green, after anywhere up to 150mm of rain in the last few weeks. A rapid and welcome turnaround from a threatening position. However the far South coast around Bega, doesn't look good at all. It starts to get tough south from Bodalla, where dairy farmer Vanessa Tobin and her husband, Sticks, are finding the going difficult. Vanessa says the biggest problem is finding a continuity of grain on offer, regardless of its price.

The New England and parts of the Northwest are on the mend, but for many other regions, it is still a long wait for rain.

NZ

Wonderful to spend time at Lake Hawea Station recently, with Tom and A. Rowley, their son Hamish, and a good range of locals. Janet and Baldi Lucas have sold Gorge Creek, and are now orchardists near Alexandra, with their first crop just coming in.

There are support group meetings coming up at Blenheim on January 31 in the Waihopi Valley, hosted by the Rive family, and on February 5 at Gimmermore, Hawea, hosted by the Emmerson family.

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4. Making way for the new

Over the years many credible people have shown us that in order to embrace something new, we must release something old. Sometimes the old is something physical - clothing or a piece of machinery for example. Sometimes the old is a habit, and at other times it is a belief about something. In making the release, acknowledge and give thanks for its past value - you would not have chosen it unless at some time it provided you value. But times change, and the value something contributes to your life changes as well.

We have many choices about what we desire in the new, and are prepared to release from the past. We now face a New year - that was not a choice for us. It was inevitable. How we use it, and what we shed in making room for it, are entirely our choice. It is now time to 'release' 2002, and in the process, learn from it. A practical way to do this is to review your plans - financial, biological and social, and check where you are compared to where you want to be. Are you moving towards your holistic goal?

It is amazing what happens when you do this. Just this week I received a call from an excited lady, ringing to say 'thankyou'. When I inquired what about, she said, 'we just finished our closed plan, and we have stacks of feed to get through the summer. We wouldn't have known that without our planning.' She went on to say that she and her family are on track towards their goal - debt is gone, the family have more time together, and the land is healing. She was really telling me that they now know two things - who they are becoming day by day, and where they now are on that journey. She also told me what they will be letting go of this year. They will be letting go of negative people who keep telling them they can't do what they have just done!

At the end of a year some people simply sit down and write themselves a letter, detailing their year - what they did, what they liked and what they didn't like about their year, and what they learnt during the year. This honest process might be quite profound as you write it - and interesting to look back on in future years! Here are a few headlines you might like to consider writing about:

- What I accomplished. List your wins and achievements.
- What things did I do that gave me the most fun?
- What have I learnt? Identify new skills, knowledge, awarenesses, you have gained this year.
- What I did right. What do I feel especially good about?
- What was my greatest contribution to my community?
- What would I have done differently? Why didn't it move me towards my holistic goal by the way I tackled it?
- Looking back, did I complete or release anything? How do I feel about this now?
- What still feels incomplete to me, and seems to be holding me back? What action will I take to correct it?
- What am I particularly grateful about?

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5. Update your Diary

Events we have planned include:

Tuesday, January 7, Braidwood, NSW	Wealth Generation and Financial Planning
Sunday, January 19, Braidwood, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning
Wednesday, January 22, Bombala, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning (Bega Group)
Monday, January 31, Wingham, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning (Wingham and Wauchope Groups combined)
Friday, February 7, Gresford, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, February 17, Quirindi, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management

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Coaching (unashamed marketing spiel)

For many years our business has been coaching people in holistic goal formation, wealth generation planning and biological planning. This service is provided by regular phone schedule, by email, or in person at your location.

Successful people use a coach to stay on track. Importantly, in difficult times it often provides 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. We act as a 'process coach', letting you focus on the outcome you require, taking away the worries people so often experience - such as, 'Am I doing this 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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6. Books and Materials you can use

"El Nino"
By Ross Couper-Johnston
ISBN 0 340 72839 6

Bob Simpson handed me this book when I was in NZ a few weeks ago, looked me in the eye and said, 'Read it!'. It is quite extraordinary.

El Nino has been around a long time, but has really only been understood during the last 20 to 30 years. Given perfect vision - called hindsight - it is possible to see that much of world history is associated with either an Nino or a La Nina event. For instance, El Nino did

not sink the *Titanic*, but in that El Nino year of 1912, floating ice was present more than 300kms further south than previously recorded, right into the main shipping channels from Europe to America. The phenomenon was well known to mariners at the time, but the paradigm that the vessel was unsinkable eventually sent her to the bottom. Hitler unknowingly chose an El Nino year to attack Russia. The resulting coldest weather in modern history nearly destroyed a large section of his army. The Spanish Armada ran foul of El Nino, and saved England.

Whole regimes rose and fell consequential to El Nino events. In Central America human sacrifice was widely used to appease the weather gods. In the early 15th century the Aztec sacrificial offering of an unbelievable 250,000 people per year to appease the god Tlaloc was well entrenched. One of the amazing facts to emerge from this book is the scale of human death - either culturally through sacrifice - or by sheer starvation - that can be attributed to El Nino. In China, a single El Nino accounted for 12 million deaths on one occasion.

This book is important for a couple of reasons. Looking back, we can see several things:

- El Nino really does exist
- That it is predictable, and that modern science is increasingly accurate at forecasting its appearance
- That no two El Nino events are ever alike in either their appearance, their duration or their mode of breakdown
- At this stage it is not possible to predict local effects. During an El Nino, some regions will prosper whilst nearby regions cry out for water. No better example can be found than Western Australia's agricultural belt this year, where both outcomes existed on a broad scale

I strongly recommend you put this book on your birthday reading list, at around \$A25.00

By the way:

You can get this book from The Book Connection in Dubbo, NSW

Ph: 02 6882 3311 Fax: 02 6882 3311 or email orders@bookconnection.com.au

(Also ask them about their Mail Order Catalogue - it is terrific)

or

Scorpio Books in Christchurch, NZ

Ph: 03 379 2882 Fax: 03 379 2886 or email scorpbk@ihug.co.nz

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7. Joke

This one belongs to Russell Emmerson, in NZ.

A bloke called Fred drops off the twig and ends up at the Pearly Gates. St Peter greets him, advising there is now a three question test one has to pass, in order to gain access beyond. To make it easier, St Peter tells him the questions, advising that the test can be sat any time Fred is ready. The questions are:

- How many days in a week begin with the letter, "T"?
- How many seconds are there in a year?
- What was the name of the swaggie in Banjo Paterson's poem, 'Waltzing Matilda'?

Before long Fred is ready, and the test begins.

'How many days in a week', asks St Peter, 'begin with the letter "T"?

'Why, that's easy', said Fred. 'Two. Today and Tomorrow!'

'How many second's are there in a year?', asks St Peter.

'That was a bit harder', said Fred, 'but the answer is twelve'.

'How do you arrive at that?' asks a bemused St Peter.

'Well, there's January second, there's February second, there's March second'

'Ok', said St Peter. 'Now for the big one. What was the name of the swaggie in "Waltzing Matilda?"'

'Oh', said Fred. 'That's easy. He was called Andy'.

'How did you arrive at that', asked a startled St Peter.

'Well, the words tell us Andy he sang as he sat. Andy watched as his billy boiled ...'

Thanks, Russell!

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7. A request from Ann Hodgens

As you probably know, Ann is the superb editor of the Holistic Decision Making Association's newsletter, IMPACT. She has asked me if I would help sus out some stories for her to use - for the benefit of many people. Please, if you have even half a story, give Ann a call. Stories are important for us all.

Ann wrote:

Thanks to several contributors, our newsletter has had several interesting and informative stories relating to soil during the past year or so. I would now like to find some stories about water and water management and would appreciate some more input from practitioners.

Here are a few questions I have thought about to prompt practitioners to put together an article. How are you managing water on your farm or in your home? Has anyone tried something new? Does anyone have a story to tell about using solar powered pumps? If so, what difference has this made?

What

decisions have you tested toward your goal in relation to water management? Is anyone doing any research related to water; animals or crops and water; water quality or river levels? This could relate to household water use/reuse, farm dams, tanks, springs, wells, or rivers. Do you have some good quality comparison photos which could be used in the newsletter?

With the current drought conditions, there must be a story out there somewhere!

"Impact" is your newsletter, produced by the Holistic Decision Making Association (Aust & NZ) Ltd for your benefit, so please consider sharing your information and ideas. Thanks again to all those who provide stories and feedback which we value so much. Please contact me at phone: 0267 211 487 fax: 0267 211 485 or by email at tricketty@bigpond.com

8. Quotes that mean something

"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

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly."

-- Richard Bach

"Ideals are like stars. We may never reach them, but we use them to chart our course."

-- Unknown

'A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.'

--Chinese proverb

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Regards

Bruce Ward