

## **Farming Philosophy - Staying Positive in a Negative Environment**

Following the recent rebalancing of the economy, the change in the dairy payout and the change in the fortunes of farmers, it is important for farmers to ensure that they maintain a mental toughness. It is important to try and get a realistic view of what is actually happening.

When things go wrong or we perceive that things are bad, it is how we handle the processes and information that we are feeding ourselves that makes the difference.

Did you know we have approximately 60,000 thoughts each day! This gives us plenty of opportunity for our thought to spiral into negativity. Doom and gloom exists everywhere, and yet we can choose what information we feed ourselves. We can choose to take on board all the negative information and get really down in the dumps, or we can choose to eliminate these from our thought processes, and try and focus on the positives.

There are people loosing their jobs, being short of money, droughts, sick cows, staffing issues on farms, so how can we turn all the negative information into positives events and refocus our thoughts?

Our thoughts can be linked to our actions. Sports Heroes can visualise the performance they want, visualise how they are going to play, and see the end result. We need to realise that every time we have a negative thought, we can actually turn it into a positive thought. We need to visualise where we are going and hold that visual in our mind.

If you go back to the 60,000 thoughts a day and turn each of the negative thoughts into 60,000 positive thoughts, imagine how good you are going to feel about the world, how excited and happy you might be?

You often find negative people who are just full of the miseries of the world – the world is going to end, it is all bad, doom and gloom. That is not true, because as we have all found out, life does go on. The sun rises in the morning the birds continue to sing.

We all know that there are people in our lives who are really negative. When you talk to them, all they can see is unhappiness and they seem to attract doom. In difficult times, as we are in now, they are not the kind of people that you should spend a lot of time with. They are going to pull down your attitude, pull down your good feelings and make you feel the same as they do.

Many farmers are worried about how well their neighbours are doing and how they think they are being left behind. They have only got one farm, and the neighbour has got three. That neighbour may look like they are doing very well, they may look the picture of happiness, but if the truth be known, they may not be either.

This rebalancing time has taught us that having a lot of assets and money does not necessarily make us happy. The things that do make us happy are family, friends, and being content with in our environment. It is important to take a balanced view on life and realise that we actually are very well off. We should enjoy what we have got, enjoy the farm or the house that we own, the family we have. We need to value the things that are around us and stop wanting more, and enjoy what you already have. Happiness is ... not having what you want but wanting what you have.

### **Here are points to consider to help with keeping Positive**

1 **Optimistic people** seem to have the following:

- Better health
- More energy
- Less stress and worry
- Improved immune system
- Better team relationships
- Better productivity

2 **'Instant Gratification'** is also creeping steadily into our farming lives. We need to teach our children that instant gratification is not the best. We need to put in some effort and wait for the benefit at a later date. Achievers are mentally tough people who are looking,

to build better businesses, better lives and better farms, rather than taking the short term solution and short term gratification.

There was some research done in the US by a Doctor Seligman which shows:

- Attitude is more important than aptitude
- Optimists outsell pessimists by 57%
- Optimists stay employed longer
- Optimists are healthier
- Optimists do more exercise.

4 In valuing our environment and our surrounds and what we have, part of that process must be to eat healthy food. We need to perhaps grow our own vegetables, and eat meat from our own farms, rather than buying semi-processed foods from the supermarket.

5 **Laughter is very important.**

We need to find some friends that you can laugh with, and it is a good stress relief. I belong to a group of three business people we are all involved in the finance industry, and a lot of stressful situations. We have a laughing lunch nearly every week. The deal there is that we meet up and we are not allowed to be serious, and have some time together supporting each other, but making everything humourous.

6 Action cures fear and worry. If you are worrying about something, why not take action, ring the bank manager, tell him / her you are in trouble and you will feel better immediately. Stepping over your fear with action is the best cure I know.

7 **Breathing:** When under stress we tend to shallow breath and then we run out of oxygen in our brain and we can't think. Deep breathing (using your tummy muscles) for a short period, in a relaxed environment can help you with managing stress levels.

8 New Zealand is one of the most wonderful countries in the world, and we need to appreciate this. Go and spend some time looking at your own country. Most farms are only an hour and a half from a beach, where you can go and play in the sand for nothing. Enjoying the environment and the country that we live in is a great stress relief and a great way to feeling happier.

- 9 **Be prepared to change.** If something does not feel right, use your intuition and make the changes that are necessary. If people are giving you a hard time, keep away from them, and go and find someone that you can work with and you enjoy their company.
- 10 **Value your staff.** If you are down in the dumps, then your staff will be to. If you are seeing things in a negative manner, then your staff will also. The staff are looking to you for leadership, and it is important to be really positive when dealing with staff. There is no point in sharing problems with staff.
- 11 **Television** is one of the most negative things in our environment. Within three quarters of an hour of watching television, most people go from being positive and happy to being negative. If you are feeling down, do not watch television, instead get outside and do something physical, rather than sitting slumped in front of a T.V. which is filling your mind full of negativity.

#### **IN SUMMARY:**

Times are tough, and it is a re-balancing process. Be realistic about the information you are feeding into your brain and acknowledge that you have 60,000 thoughts a day. You can choose to have negative thoughts or positive thoughts it is up to you to decide.

If things are getting on top of you, then try and find some activities to do which change your attitude from being negative into positive. Look for good friends and support, and be prepared to talk to friends whose opinion you value. More importantly look for friends who actually, actively listen to what you are saying. If it gets too much, then maybe you should get professional help, see your GP. The Government has set up the Rural Support Trust (R.S.T.) to assist in emergencies and their contact phone number is 0800 787 254 or 0800 RURAL HELP

**Remember:**

**DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY. You can choose!**

**These are the opinions of Don Fraser of Fraser Farm Finance. Any decisions made should not be based on this article alone and appropriate professional assistance should be sought.**

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