



# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## A Moment of Clarity

Have you ever had an epiphany?

When I say epiphany, I'm talking about an unexpected, shocking moment of clarity. A magical moment that totally changes the lens through which you view your life. That single moment of such illuminating discovery that you know your life is never going to be the same.

That pretty much describes what happened to me.

I was preparing to speak at a women's business conference and had written down my notes. My notes began with me introducing myself.

Imagine this, I walk up to the podium with my notes in hand and set them down.

I begin to introduce myself when I glanced down at my notes. I paused, and I couldn't speak. I could not believe what I saw. Four words. Four words I had never said before.

What the heck was I thinking when I typed them? Was I even thinking at all?

Are you curious yet?

Trust me when I say I've not only never, ever spoken these words aloud before, I've also never written them or thought them. I'm pretty sure my husband has never used them to describe his wife either.

"I'm a cattle rancher."

I did not say what I've always said, "I'm a cattle rancher's wife."

I said that I - me, myself and I - am a cattle rancher.



Annette Bridges had an epiphany that she was not just a cattle rancher's wife, but a cattle rancher herself. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

I tried to compose myself and continue on with the talk I had prepared, but those four words were like neon flashing lights in my brain. They kept requiring me to say them aloud again and again and again throughout my entire speech.

When I finished my talk, which

had nothing to do with cattle ranching by the way, I couldn't wait to text my husband to give him my big epiphany. I'm a cattle rancher. I'm not just a cattle rancher's wife. After 39 years of marriage and living on a cattle ranch, I suddenly had a drastic game-changing shift in my own

perspective of myself.

I love how Maya Angelou described epiphany.

"It's the occurrence when the mind, the body, the heart, and the soul focus together and see an old thing in a new way," she said.

The truth is this city girl may have lived on a cattle ranch for



two thirds of her life but I had never thought I was a city girl gone country, as the name of my column implies.

When my husband and I were first married and moved next door to his parents on the ranch, I didn't feel super welcomed.

I felt inadequate and ignorant on anything ranch related. There was much that wasn't explained to me. There also was much that wasn't even expected of me. After all, I was a city girl.

I did various ranching chores with my husband when he needed me to, and frankly, there wasn't anything happening on the ranch I wasn't acutely aware of.

I was more observant than anyone ever realized, and I now accept that I've had almost four decades worth of ranching education. I'm not a dumb city girl anymore, by golly.

I do think my husband is pretty tickled with my epiphany.

Maybe he's even relieved and thankful for it, too. I think he's always wanted me to be his ranching partner.

Actually, I think he already thought I was.

Later that night after I spoke at the women's conference I wrote in my journal, "You have to know who you are in order to be who you are."

For the first time in perhaps my entire life, I feel like I know who I am.

I'm so happy to be getting to know myself better. The me that loves her cows.

The me that loves living in the country. The me that never wants to live in the city again.

The me that's happy driving her old red tractor. The me that feels refreshed gazing out on her broad horizon of cattle grazing pastures. The me that is blessed to see millions of stars in her dark Texas sky. The cattle rancher me. ®

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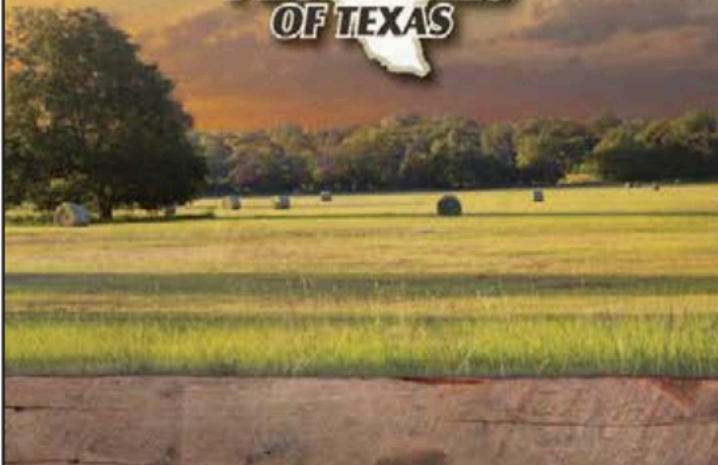



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