

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country* By Annette Bridges Looking Forward

How much of your life have you spent looking forward?

I think my entire childhood was dreaming about the future. Imagining what I could be when I grew up, the places I would explore, who I would meet and maybe fall in love with.

I really don't think too much changed as I got older. My dreams remained about something to do in the future. Things like vacations to take, new places I wanted to see and changes I wanted to make.

This is one reason why this pandemic initially felt overwhelmingly disruptive. Suddenly, I was thrust into an uncertain world where exploring it now felt scary or even unlikely in the foreseeable future.

The miracle of this unimaginable situation is that being forced to stay in place resulted in an appreciation and recognition of the beauty and possibilities right here on the ranch. I've moved from the disappointment and depression that is felt when you're told what you can't do to a focus on what I could.

My creativity went into overdrive painting and conjuring up new products to create for my little shop.

Yes, I've been one of those gals who spent way more time in the kitchen than her old normal baking muffins, cookies and trying out new recipes.

There's no shortage of things in need of repair or remodeling around the ranch and my husband and I were finally focusing on some projects we long talked



about but not acted on.

Over the years I think sometimes my husband felt like my dreaming about changes I wanted to make meant I wasn't satisfied or content with what I had. I can recall many times he would ask me why I couldn't be happy with where I was or what I had.

It used to bother me when he said this to me because I was happy. I was very happy to be living with him on his family's cattle ranch. My desire to make changes didn't mean I wasn't. I'm pretty much one of those people that actually welcomes changes.

In my growing up years, one of my annual practices was to rearrange the furniture in my bedroom. I usually did this during Christmas break. My mamma would also tell

you there were countless times she came home from work and I had rearranged the furniture in the living room, too. I simply liked to change things up!

So when I talk about making changes around the ranch, honestly, I guess these days it's more about making the ranch feel more like "us." We haven't changed much since my husband's parents passed. We've been considering the idea of remodeling their house that's a stone's throw from ours and moving into it. We will see. There is still much stuff to sort through and decide what to do with. Projects we can work on this winter.

I guess my favorite new routine this year has been our evening sunset pasture drives to check on

our cows. Even through the hot summer days, we spent our early evenings with our beautiful bovines. Feeling the summer breeze blowing on my face as we whizzed along never felt so good. Peace. Pure joy. Total contentment.

Of course we never check the cows without taking them some cubes. They obviously didn't need the cubes with the summertime grazing, but we couldn't go see them without giving them a treat. Hubby says he's never spent so much on cubes.

Needless to say we have some very fat, spoiled and happy cows. I've not stopped dreaming about all the places I want to see in the future, but today, right now, in this moment, my cattle ranch world is enough. 🐮