

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Making Assumptions

Do you ever make assumptions and jump to conclusions that prove to be wrong?

Unfortunately, our smallest heifer got pregnant prematurely. My husband was certain her birth would be difficult and likely with complications. Honestly, he was pondering the idea of selling her. We had taken her to a vet to estimate when she was due.

Apparently, either the vet was wrong or she had a premature birth. The awesome thing was her calf was not only the smallest little guy ever born on our ranch, he was perfectly healthy, strong and frisky. Her birth happened unexpectedly and easily one night. It was a delightful surprise. Don't get me wrong, I do realize this was a fortunate event that is not always the case. We've pulled many calves and we've lost a few, too.

Yet for me, this was a lesson about making assumptions.

There have been many times and ways I've been proven wrong. Certainly there have been football games I've stopped watching when my team was way behind and the end of the game near. I would assume there was no way they could win, as I didn't believe there was time for a comeback.

My daughter got her undergraduate degree at Texas A&M University and she would have called me what Aggies refer to as a "two percenter" for leaving before the game was over. I have one very vivid memory of a Cowboys game when I walked back into the living room before the final six seconds



Hope and faith may prevent us from jumping to the wrong conclusions about our cows and ourselves. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

in time to see the game winning field goal. Clearly, I had jumped to the wrong conclusion about the outcome.

I've speculated many times about what was going to happen in the future before it happened, just as my husband did with our small pregnant heifer. I've pre-supposed the worst about what others were thinking as if I was a mind reader. I've believed something to be true about others based on my assumptions rather than known facts. I've also labeled myself in such a way

that limited my potential, lowered my expectations and defined my talents and abilities.

For way too many of my 40 years of living on my husband's family cattle ranch, it was more assumption than fact that I believed my in-laws and husband thought I was incapable of learning the ropes of being a cattle rancher. This became a self-fulfilling prophecy for far too long. This changed when I dropped assumptions about myself that weren't true.

Here's what I believe are some

of the consequences of being too quick to reach conclusions.

We hurt the feelings of innocent people, fabricate unnecessary stress, waste time, bring about misunderstandings, make wrong decisions, create obstacles that don't actually exist and cause ourselves to miss out on opportunities.

I appreciate the old adage, "Look before you leap," that sounds like it's encouraging us to think carefully about the possible results or consequences before doing something. It seems to be good precautionary advice and if followed, might help keep us from jumping to wrong conclusions—at least some of the time. I suspect it would be best for us to slow our racing mind, cool our rising temper and remain calm so we can think and act clearly, reasonably and responsibly.

Other times, I think hope and faith in the possibility that our first inclinations and conclusions could be wrong can be invaluable. My husband hoped he was wrong about our little heifer's inability to have a successful birth and his hope kept him from selling her too quickly. His hope proved to be true. This time at least.

Even when our hopes don't get the results we long for, I don't ever think that means we should give up our hopes. Hope and faith seem like a good way to help balance out our fearful and doubt-filled assumptions and maybe, just maybe, can prevent us from jumping to the wrong conclusions about our cows and ourselves. 🐾