



# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## Why Be Thankful In Tough Times?

Country western singer, Carrie Underwood, once sang about being “low on faith and gasoline.” These were words from her song, “Jesus take the wheel.” I remember asking Jesus to take my wheel when I lost control of my car in a snow storm several years ago. Thankfully, I believe he did as my car spun across the highway and came to rest safely against a snow bank undamaged with no one hurt. It’s easy to be thankful when there is plenty to be thankful for!

But what about all the times when our life doesn’t feel brimming over with blessings and faith in a brighter tomorrow is getting lower with each passing day? It may be hard to imagine that a good dose of thankfulness could be the answer to our dwindling faith as well as the guiding light to everything we seek.

Life in my 50s and 60s has been much different from what it was in my twenties. Back then, my anticipation for the future was filled only with enthusiasm, good expectations, dreams and hopes. But getting older doesn’t have the glamour it once did. Expectations have changed from longings to dread. Dreams have become fears. And hopes have become few.

Regardless of our age, our current life circumstances can be bleaker than we wish they were. As cattle ranchers, when we’re confronted with skyrocketing prices of fertilizer and chemicals, incessant repairs of old equipment, dire impacts from weather

extremes, it can be hard to see the light at the end of what feels like a very dark tunnel.

Lately, I just want to be happy. I want to feel happy -- today -- and not worry so much about what may or may not happen in the future. Or even if some say the future is inevitable, I don’t want to worry about it! I want to live my life today and make the most of each moment.

There’s one fact that I’ve become certain of over the years. The grateful are happy and the ungrateful are miserable. Yep, I’ve discovered it is impossible to feel thankful and unhappy at the same time.

Throughout my life, even in the most difficult of times, thankfulness changed my focus from what I didn’t have to an appreciation for what I did. And again and again, thankfulness enabled me to discover “good” that was previously unforeseen or unpredicted.

Gratitude has always brought my focus back to present possibilities rather than speculation about an uncertain or mysterious future. I’ve found that it’s having a grateful heart today that raises hope, boosts confidence, encourages ambition, lifts self-esteem, strengthens trust and provides peace of mind for tomorrow.

And gratitude is good for you! It seems many have concluded that the healthiest human emotion is indeed gratitude. The medical profession claims gratitude increases our immunities -- making



Helping herds survive extreme winter temperatures, often with freezing rain or sleet, is something every cattle rancher is grateful to accomplish. (Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

us less susceptible to illness. And that’s a good thing at any age and season of life!

The sign on my desk daily instructs me, “There is always, always, always something to be thankful for.” I often need that reminder. So, try a little thankful-

ness, my friends, and you just may find that dark tunnel you’re in is suddenly brighter!

Whatever the benefits, being thankful will make you feel better. And who doesn’t want to feel better -- especially when dealing with tough times. 