

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Listen to Your Heart & Your Partner

Pardon me, but this city girl gone country needs to rant a little bit. And maybe, just maybe, some country boys married to city girls will take notice - and in the process, learn a thing or two that might make for a happier wife.

In short, my best advice is this: listen. Listen to your city girl's ideas and opinions - including her thoughts about your cattle ranching operation. Believe it or not, a new idea can actually be a good one. Just because you're doing something the way your daddy did before you doesn't mean it's the only way. It's even possible - conceivable, in fact - that your city girl wife has an idea that might prove to be a better way.

Rant over. Well... maybe not totally over.

Since I'm on the subject of advice for country boys with city girl wives, I'll add this: ideas that involve change are worth paying attention to.

I doubt I'm the only city girl living on her husband's family ranch. At least, it was his family's ranch when we married. His parents have been gone for many years now, but it's still difficult for my sweet husband to be open to change. Much of the ranch remains as it always has, and his daily routine hasn't shifted much from what his parents did before him.

Keeping everything the same is not my way. Over the forty-plus years we've lived in our farmhouse, it's gone through a few remodels and transformations.

I enjoy finding ways to make the old new again, but I'm also open to letting go of the old and starting fresh. I don't get as attached to things, stuff, or routines as much as my husband does.

When it's just the two of you running the ranch, it's time for both partners' feelings, opinions, and ideas to be given equal weight.

Now that we're well into the early years of our senior season, I find myself thinking more about how we want to spend the rest of our lives - together, of course. And I don't just mean what I want. I truly want my husband to consider what he wants, without measuring it against his parents' wishes.

What was right forty years ago may not be right today. At every stage of life, I think it's worth asking: What do you love most? What brings you joy? What inspires you? What gives you purpose and satisfaction? The answers to those questions naturally shift over time.

And yes - it's possible that what's best for you and your wife today may look very different from the life you're living now.

Big changes, of course, require big thinking. I'll admit I've often been impulsive, making changes without fully thinking them through. These days, I'm more cautious. Honestly, it has become harder to dream about the future than it was when I was young - and I don't think that's a good thing.

So I'm challenging myself to keep dreaming. To remind myself it's never too late to make a change. To stay excited about



(Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

new possibilities. And to quit worrying so much about how little time might be left. That kind of thinking only stops you from making choices that could make your remaining days richer, fuller, and more worthwhile. Every day, month, and year of life matters and deserves the chance to be the

best yet.

The bottom line? Listen to your heart, and listen to your partner. Talk about your dreams, and take action - even if it means making changes. Chances are, those changes will be exactly what's needed to make your dreams come true. 🍀