

Ten principles of managing holistically

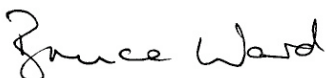
1. **Nature functions in wholes:** You cannot change or control something in one area without it impacting on something else in another area.
2. **Understand the environment that you manage:** and your location on the brittleness scale. Taking an action in one environment may yield a totally different outcome if you took the same action in a different environment – a different position on the brittleness scale. Just to remind you that the brittleness scale is about the evenness of spread of humidity in the atmosphere over the course of a year. It is not about the quantum of rain that falls. If you have periods of the year when it is very dry, and it does not rain for a prolonged period of time, and you then follow that a wet season then you have seasonality in rainfall. It is brittle-tending. When it is raining or is likely to rain in every month, there is little seasonality, and you are non-brittle tending. The more seasonal, the more pronounced the dry period is and the wet period is, the more brittle tending your location is.
3. **Livestock can improve the health of land:** The predator-prey relationship, especially in brittle tending environments, is critical to the health of the land. We mimic that predator-prey relationship by using grazing planning, when we do not have it naturally.
4. **Time is more important than numbers:** We discovered in the first session that overgrazing is a function of time, not the number of animals in the paddock. Remember the exercise we did where one horse managed to overgraze a great number of plants in a paddock. You cannot overgraze a paddock. You can only overgraze individual plants and overgrazing occurs plant by plant, by plant, by plant.
5. **Define what you are managing:** When managing holistically you do that in three parts, by describing the people who are the decision-makers, the resource base that they have available to them, and finally, the money that those people who are the decisions makers have available to use.
6. **State what you want:** Create a holistic goal, which is also written in three parts,
 - quality of life – a description of how do you want your life to be
 - forms of production – describes the ‘things’ or ‘conditions’ that you have to create or make happen in order to experience the quality of life that you desire
 - future resource base – describes how your resource base must look and be in order for you to be able to continuously produce those forms of production, so that you can live the quality of life you stated.

7. **Bare ground is public enemy number 1:** You need to know about the 4 ecosystem processes on your land – the mineral cycle, water cycle, solar energy flow and biological succession (community dynamics), and you have to make decisions to get those things functioning more and more effectively the whole time.
8. **Play with a full deck:** You need to consider all of the tools that may be available to you. They are technology, fire rest, grazing animal impact and living organisms. However, none of those work on their own - they all require the involvement of either human creativity, money, or human labour. You simple cannot make things happen without humans being involved in the thing. This is because humans ‘manage’ situations.
9. **Test your decisions:** Always test by passing possible actions through the 7 testing guidelines – sustainability, cause and effect, weak link, energy/money - source/use, gross profit analysis, society and culture, and marginal reaction.

The first of the guidelines – sustainability, cause and effect, weak link, energy money source and use, gross profit analysis are very much “what do you know?” type of questions. They are analytical. The Society and Culture question is based on “How do you feel?” You need to write down, Guideline by Guideline, does an action pass or fail that Guideline. In doing so, you begin to build up a picture of ‘how you do feel’ about the decision that you are thinking about.

10. **Monitor your results:** We are always looking for deviation from plan, rather than confirmation that we are on plan. We are looking for deviation from plan/track.

Monitor is a 24 letter word: make a plan, monitor the execution of it, if there is a deviation from plan take action to control it, if it is a real screw up, then make another plan. When making another plan, remember it is always towards your words that you wrote in your holisticgoal. Just because things go pear shaped does not mean that you abandon the holisticgoal. In fact is all the more reason why you need to move towards your holisticgoal. Get it back on track.



Managing Director