

How I started in managing holistically

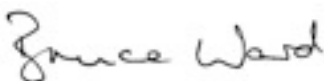
Let me tell you a personal story about how I got into Holistic Management. I undertook a course on grazing and farm business management. At the end of the program the organisers were selling copies of the first edition of Allan Savory's text book. I didn't buy one at the time but I remember the words ringing in my ears that, "If you want more information you should read this book". Several months later I bought it and I read a couple of times.

For me, fundamentally the book did not bear any resemblance to the course, and that was confusing. For instance, during the course there was no talk about an holistic goal, which turns out to be crucial in managing holistically. Neither was there really much talk about ecosystem processes, and certainly they were not allocated the emphasis I now give them. So, I got on the phone and found Allan Savory in America. I asked him to explain to me the difference between the book and the course. He sent me some information and that raised a whole lot of other questions, so I rang him again. At that time he told me, "I run one course a year and it begins in three weeks time. If you are seriously interested in this come over and sit in. I will try to explain it to you".

I remember, three weeks later sitting in the back of the plane going to America, and saying to myself, "I don't know why I am doing this, I don't understand". But I knew I had to do it because there were all these important, unanswered questions. I spent two weeks in America, the first in very intensive training and another week travelling and looking around, including time with my son, David who was gaining agronomic skills in Mississippi. David is now part of this company.

I remember on the way home on the plane asking, "Where is the flaw in this? What has this bloke not told me? When is he going to involve God in this? When is the trap going to be set, so that I will look like a real mug?" I really agonised over this, but then I began to analyse it. Whilst it may be rather complex for you at the moment, fundamentally the process is really very simple. Form a goal for yourself that describes everything that is important in life. Test every one of your actions towards that set of words, assume you could be wrong, monitor financially, socially and ecologically for early evidence you could be wrong. If things appear to be wrong make another decision, not just to solve the problem but to really get to how you want things to be.

I kept on asking, "Where is the trap" and saying to myself, "It can't be this simple". To resolve it all, I actually ended up using the Seven Testing Guidelines to test the entire management process. I figured if they were the right questions I should find a problem in the process, if it existed. When I could not find a flaw in it, that is when I decided that I probably had some sort of personal or moral obligation to do something about making it more widely known.



Managing Director