

# **Formulating Your Holistic Goal**

The term “holistic goal” comes from a school of thought called Holistic Management. It is three-part goal describing the quality of life desired, the forms of production to get there, and the future resource base that the forms of production depend on. No matter if you practice Holistic Management, a written goal can be a powerful instrument for building understanding and cooperation on the farm.

The power of the Holistic Management process lies in the goal! Management that fulfills the obligations we have to ourselves, our families, our environment, and our communities can only succeed in the context of a journey toward a holistic goal.

The holistic goal is a living document. In the journey of our lives, we may start out heading to Los Angeles, but circumstances along the road may lead us to decide to go to Seattle instead – or maybe even Florida! But without knowing where we are going, we cannot know how to begin. A goal provides us with the knowledge we need to move with confidence, because with a goal:

- We know the direction to go (plan);
- We have a way to measure our progress (monitor);
- We can correct our course when things go wrong (control);
- We can get back on course when big things go wrong (replan).

A goal doesn't have to be beautiful. You don't have to type it on the computer with four different fonts, bold and italic. The sentences don't have to be complete. The motives don't have to be lofty. The only requirement is that it works.

The most challenging aspect of formulating a written holistic goal is actually doing it. The process has none of the instant gratification of chopping wood, changing the oil in the tractor, or pulling weeds, (or even the gratification of financial or biological planning) but it guides and informs our decisions about how, when, and whether to do each of these tasks. DO IT!

## **A Process for Doing It**

The holistic goal is such a big fuzzy thing concept that wrapping your arms around it can present a significant challenge, so it makes sense to reduce it to a series of steps. First, each person in the whole (for a farm or farm family, this will generally mean the people directly involved in management and making decisions – husband and wife, older children on the farm, partners) should complete a process of defining his or her own goal. Then, with respect and understanding, everybody should come together and make a goal as a group.

## **The Private Process**

The four provided worksheets will provide you with tools to define your deepest values, then work outwards from there towards your goal for your farm and your life. The objective of these exercises is not to come up with beautiful grammatically correct flowing sentences, but rather an overall picture of what you want. Complete them in this order: Going to a Funeral, Personal Values Worksheet, Defining the Whole Under Management, and Defining Your Holistic Goal. The whole process can easily take under two hours; do it without interruptions or distractions, and do it as an individual. If necessary, schedule a time to be alone to complete this project.

### **The Collaborative Process**

When everyone has completed the private process, come together as a group with the worksheets in hand. Again, set aside a time to do this when you can focus: turn off the radio; get a babysitter, stop doing the dishes. This is your life we're talking about!

Communicate about what each person wrote in the way that works best: pass sheets around, talk out loud, or whatever works best for your group. The most important thing here is for everyone to understand what the other person is asking; do not challenge the values and goals of other people, but understand them and try to see how everybody's goals relate. Some goals may not be initially shared by everyone, but should become part of the goal for the defined whole. Find ways of expressing these differing goals that combine and collaborate. Remember: not everybody has to agree about everything, but everybody needs to agree to make the individual goals part of the goals of the whole. Accommodation, not compromise, is the objective. **First seek to understand, then seek to be understood.**

For example, Joe might have noted in his goal that a clean, organized house is important to him. Sue might have noted that professional recognition is important to her. For the "whole" to succeed, these needs must be worked towards by every member of the whole. Sue will need to contribute to a clean, organized house, and Joe will need to contribute to Sue's professional recognition. Ignoring or subverting the needs of anybody in the whole will guarantee failure.

Don't forget to write it down! Then post it somewhere you will see it often, and hold yourself accountable for making decisions that move you towards your goal.

### **Exercise 1: Going to a Funeral**

From Covey, Stephen, 1989, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

This exercise may be difficult. Its purpose is to look at your values from a different angle.

In your mind's eye, see yourself going to the funeral of a loved one. As you walk down to the front of the funeral parlor or chapel and look inside the casket, you suddenly come face to face with yourself. This is your funeral, three years from today. All the people present have come to honor you, to express feelings of love and appreciation for your life.

As you take a seat and wait for the services to begin, you look at the program in your hand. There are to be four speakers. The first is from your family, immediate and also extended - children, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents who have come from all over to attend.

The second speaker is one of your friends, someone who can give a sense of what you were as a person. The third speaker is from your work or profession. And the fourth is from your church or some community organization where you have been involved in service.

Now think deeply. What would you like each of these speakers to say about you and your life? What kind of husband, wife, father, or mother would you like their words to reflect? What kind of son or daughter or cousin? What kind of friend? What kind of working associate?

What character would you like them to have seen in you? What contributions, what achievement would you want them to remember? Look carefully at the people around you. What difference would you like to have made in their lives?

Write down your thoughts.

After writing down the things you would want people to say about you (which in many ways is your personal vision), write down the things that prevent you from being the kind of person you want to be; i.e., what are the obstacles to attaining your personal vision.

## **Exercise 2: Personal Values Worksheet**

On the following page is a PERSONAL VALUES WORKSHEET. You may add other values or modify the listed ones to make them more meaningful to you.

### **COLUMN A**

Identify how well you feel you've satisfied each value. Use the following scale:

- 0=not at all
- 1=slightly
- 2=some
- 3=fairly well
- 4=considerably well
- 5=extremely well

### **COLUMN B**

Identify how you would feel if your current satisfaction of this value were significantly reduced. Use the following scale:

- 0=not at all concerned
- 1=slightly concerned
- 2=somewhat concerned
- 3=quite concerned
- 4=considerably concerned
- 5=extremely concerned

### **COLUMN C**

Identify how you would feel if your current satisfaction of this value were significantly increased. Use the following scale:

- 0=indifferent
- 1=slightly happier
- 2=somewhat happier
- 3=much happier
- 4=considerably happier
- 5=extremely happier

### **COLUMN D**

Add Columns B and C together and place the total in Column D. This score reflects the relative importance of each personal value to you. Place a (\*) next to the 5 or 6 personal values that have the highest score in Column D.

Personal Values	A	B	C	D
1. Accomplishment (achieving; mastery)				
2. Affection (close, intimate relationships)				
3. Collaboration (close working relationships)				
4. Creativity (imaginative self-expression)				
5. Economic security (prosperous, comfortable life)				
6. Exciting life (stimulating, challenging experiences)				
7. Family happiness (contentedness with loved ones)				
8. Freedom (independence & free choice)				
9. Inner harmony {serenity & peace}				
10. Order (stability & predictability)				
11. Personal growth & development (use of potential)				
12. Trust (in self & others)				
13. Pleasure (enjoyable, fun-filled life)				
14. Power (authority, influence over others)				
15. Responsibility (accountable for important results)				
16. Self-respect (self-esteem, pride)				
17. Social service (helping others; improving society)				
18. Social recognition (status, respect, admiration}				
19. Winning (in competition with others).				
20. Wisdom (mature understanding of life)				
21.				
22.				

Now review the personal values that you have checked on the Worksheet and ask yourself the following questions:

As I think back on my experiences (job, career, life), do these values seem to be the most important values for me? If not, what changes do I need to make?

How do my most important personal values (those checked) compare to my satisfaction scores Column A? On which values do I want to increase my satisfaction?

Your next task is an extremely important one. From the results of your Personal Values Worksheet and your self-questioning, list below the five personal values that are most important to you. The order of listing makes no difference.

**MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAL VALUES**

**Importance Weight**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now you must decide which one of the five personal values is most important to you and place a 10 opposite that value in the "Importance Weight" column. Compare the other four values to your first choice and assign each an appropriate number from 1 to 9. Ask yourself such questions as, "Is this value about 80% as important as my first value?" If so, assign the value an importance weight of 8. Continue until all five values have been weighted. Each of your 5 values should have a different weighting.

Now you have weighted criteria (your values) for evaluating your various job career decisions. That's a powerful resource. You can use this resource to enrich your job, your career, and your life. It may be useful to do this exercise again in a few years.

### Exercise 3: Defining the Whole Under Management

Ask yourself, where am I today? What point am I starting from?

<b>PEOPLE:</b> who are the primary decision makers?
<b>RESOURCES:</b> what am I working with?
PEOPLE:
LAND:
ANIMALS:
EQUIPMENT:
COMMUNITY:
<b>CAPITAL:</b> what is the capital (money) at your disposal? What overhead are you supporting? What debts are you carrying?

## **Exercise 4: Defining Your Holistic Goal**

Ask yourself, where do I want to be in the future? What am I trying to accomplish? What point am I headed toward?

**QUALITY OF LIFE DESCRIPTION:**

**FORMS OF PRODUCTION DESCRIPTION:**

**FUTURE RESOURCE BASE DESCRIPTION:**



## **Basic Rules for Forming a Holistic Goal**

From Rockin' the Holistic World with Daniela Ibarra-Howell & Rio de lu Vista 8/15/96

- 1) The Holistic Goal should be stated in the positive:  
*100% what you want and 0% how it will be achieved!*  
-- i.e there are no problems stated in your Holistic Goal, unless you want more problems!
- 2) No "How to's" or quantifiable things, actions, etc. that should be tested further. The specific actions or tools as well as amounts of anything to be produced will be evaluated in a number of other ways in this process and are not necessary at this stage. A goal cannot be tested against itself, so save those decisions to be tested against this desired Holistic Goal
- 3) Do not include any prejudices against tools or actions that may show up in the future. For example it is not necessary to state "organic farming" because there may come a time when you will need a chemical *to save the farm*-- and there are plenty of opportunities to reflect the values expressed by "organic" in terms of clean air, water and food, healthy bodies, land and wildlife, etc.
- 4) No need to prioritize the elements of the Quality of Life. Decisions Will be tested against *all* of it and thus there is no need to put them in any order. Also prioritizing could potentially cause unnecessary conflicts over whose desires are more important. This is the beauty of the Holistic Goal, the values, economics and environmental aspects are all included in every decision!
- 5) The Holistic Goal will ultimately become the most important thing in your life-- because whatever is important to you should be in it! The Holistic Goal should be formed by those who will be living it. While a facilitator can be invaluable to assist you in its formation, they should be guides and not influence the content.