**Managing Yourself in Tight Times**

**Ken Solly, Retired Bloke, Warrnambool.**

**Acknowledge the basics**

* The current situation is not of your doing
* You knew this one was coming
* In agriculture you must expect the unexpected
* You must discipline yourself on your priorities in life. 1st - Physical and Mental Health, 2nd – Family, 3rd Business, 4th - Personal Priorities, 5th - Friendships, 6th - Community.
* Having the best possible plan in place is your best insurance against worry
* A lot of stress can be self-induced.
* Mindset, Plans, Structures, Chemistry and Culture.
* Some self-praise and self-talk are useful
* Remain focused on the good things in your life.
* Don’t start feeling sorry for yourself – takes you in the wrong direction

**Worry - what people tend to worry about.**

* Things that might not happen - 40%
* Things in the past that you cannot change – 30%
* Needless Health Worries. – 15%
* Petty Miscellaneous worries. – 10%
* Real Legitimate worries. – 5%

**Sit down with your partner/staff and discuss the things you will do and will not do –Problem shared problem halved**

* Remember you are a leader of your family – you are always setting an example
* Share the truth, honesty in little things is not a little thing
* Don’t look for excuses, instead there must be reasons.
* Work to have the best plan in place
* Agree to not argue
* Don’t discuss problems in bed
* Get off the farm as much as possible –weekend away / fish and chips night in local park with friends.
* If you are short tempered read your own tea leaves
* Acknowledge each other’s good deeds
* Do more with your kids – they don’t have baggage
* Try not to be the problem for someone else

**Happiness chemicals and how to get them**

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| **Dopamine (Reward Chemicals)**   * Eating Food * Achieving a goal * Sleep * Having a bath   **Endorphin (Pain Killer)**   * Exercising * Laughing * Listening to music |

**Oxytocin (Love Hormone)**

* Socialising
* Physical Touch
* Petting animals
* Helping other

**Seratonin (Mood Stabiliser)**

* Sun exposure
* Mindfulness
* Nature walks

**Tactics for a best possible mental attitude**

* Keep a Journal – If you do, next time it will be easier and better, write things down
* Ensure the farm budget is done six months forward. Breakeven – can be an excellent result
* The unknown is more stressful than the known. Questions and Information = Learning
* Have fallback position – how often do you use the second cartridge in a double barrel gun
* Success is quite often only as good as your fallback position
* This year teaches you that Condition Score is good insurance
* The results of having poor and dead sheep is more stressful than the cost of extra feed. The cost of not doing it can be greater than doing it
* Rarely is spending on extra feed a waste of money
* You can always buy rainfall in a sheep enterprise not in a cropping enterprise. Rain equals feed
* If your sheep are in containment use any time saved doing constructive things around the farm. Things that make you farm look and run better. Turn negatives into positives.

**General Thoughts**

* Sleep comes a close second to oxygen. – Ensure quality sleep
* Keep working on your attitude – the Peter story.
* Don’t let the situation get any bigger than it really is.
* Extra expenditure this year should be spread over the next five years. Burning a little equity may be the best way forward.
* Meet at the local fire shed every Friday for a sausage sizzle lunch – share ideas and give support. No more than two hours.
* Can you get a retired farmer to come and do the feeding at odd times so you and the family can get away.
* Season like this can change you into a person you don’t want to be if you do not manage yourself well.
* Asking for help is a strength, a good thing to do.
* You are not on your own.
* Reflect - are my two circles the right size.

**Our reliance on our work for our self-worth**

**– Facing the hidden addiction**