



Family, Friends, Faith, and Farming: the good "F" words. *by Roddy Dull*

This story is about “Faith.” Don’t worry, it’s not a sermon, but on occasion you may get one of those from me, too. No, this is a story about trust in others and in yourself. I often think about my grandpa and all of the great times we had sharing our farming experiences. It makes for a never ending supply of stories and almost always a lesson.

Anyway, we used to have a night pasture on a five acre piece of land that was separated by the road from the rest of the farm. There was a small pond there that didn’t always have water in it, so we only put the cows there overnight. The way we supplied power to the electric fence was to elevate the wire over the roadway. We added a tall piece of wood to the sides of the posts on both sides of the road and then ran the wire across the top. Occasionally, the wire would be ripped down by a neighbor pulling a tall elevator or some other tall equipment down the road. Well, today was that day. We needed to fix the fence. We collected our tools and some extra wire and down the road we walked.

Grandpa picked up the wire from the opposite side of the road and I was to pick up the broken wire on my side. My side of the road just happened to be the side that supplied the electricity. Cautiously, I approached the wire and then asked grandpa, “Did you unplug the fencer?” We never liked to actually unplug the fencer because it supplied all of the farm fences with electricity. It seemed even if you just unplugged it for a minute, one of the heifers or young cattle would find out and through the fence they’d go. Instead we would always open one of the gates that supplied electricity to different areas of the fence line. If you have never been shocked by a good ole’ “Weed Burner,” then you have never been shocked. I personally have received some dandies in my day, but that ole’ Weed Burner took the cake. My grandpa’s answer to my earlier question was, “No, I didn’t unplug it, but I opened the gate behind the house.” This is where faith comes into play. I trusted him, had faith in him, but boy I did not want to grab a hot wire. So, I asked one more time, “Are you sure you opened the gate?” Somewhat impatiently, he said, “Yes, just grab the wire.” I had faith, so I walked over and picked up the wire. I carried it out to the center of the road and confidently placed the wire in his hand. “Ah! It’s hot!” he replied as he dropped the wire I had just handed him to the ground. I couldn’t help but laugh right out loud as I reminded him that I had just handled the wire and it was fine. He looked at me with a grin and bewilderment. He clearly watched me pick up the wire. So, as he stood there having absolutely No Faith in his own recollection of opening the gate, I just picked up the wire and put it right back in his hand. “Ah, Ah! It’s hot!” he cried and he started laughing uncontrollably. Finally, as our laughter reduced to chuckles he said, “Run up and open the gate.”

Was it a miracle that because my faith in him was so great I never got a shock from the wire? No, nothing like that. My tennis shoes apparently kept me from grounding out the wire while grandpa’s shoes weren’t quite so kind. My true faith in him had nothing to do with the gate being open or closed. It had to do with the fact that he would have never had me grab that wire if he even remotely thought it would be hot.

So, have faith in those that you love and trust and you won’t get burned. On the other hand, if you are the one everyone has faith in, make sure you open the gate.

Roddy Dull