

Live Simply...Really?

I recently received an e-mail with a subscript after the signature. It read “Live Simply, Love Generously, Care Deeply and Speak Kindly.” I have, like you, seen the same or similar wording on posters or signs before, but on this day it caught my attention.

The e-mail was one of 34 awaiting me at the office one morning, in addition to a dozen text messages and half a dozen voice messages. Add to the list Facebook, LinkedIn and more, and before you know it, half the day has passed.

Clearly, the methods in which we communicate have significantly changed, and communication is but one aspect of technology-driven change in our daily lives. Live simply, right? Just after I turn back the clock 20 years.

Then I arrived at Grand Island, Neb., for the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in July. As I crossed the parking lot and walked toward the entry door, I noticed three young boys laughing and playing with nothing more than a couple of sticks — sword fighting at its best. They were in the essence of living simply. Standing at the VitaFerm® booth, I observed family members of junior exhibitors waiting and then greeting their children with hugs, smiles, words of encouragement and pride as those children came out of the ring. Those family members were loving, caring and speaking kindly.

I went upstairs to the Foundation area and saw many enjoying the blessing of friendship. Simple face-to-face conversation with the occasional warmth of a touch, a handshake or a hug. And then as I walked through the barn, I observed families together — working, helping, playing, nurturing and, yes, even, deservedly, napping. All of a sudden the words of the subscript scrolled across my mind like a bright digital billboard: Live Simply, Love Generously, Care Deeply and Speak Kindly.

I pretended that dust in my eye would explain the tears on my cheek, the manly thing of course, but the truth is I was touched by what I was seeing and feeling. Simple acts, spoken or unspoken, reflected clearly the message expressed by “Live Simply, Love Generously, Care Deeply and Speak Kindly.”

I repeat those words because it is not sufficient to just mention them briefly: Not just to live but to live simply because we cannot change the past or predict the future; not just to love but to love generously; not just to care but to care deeply; and not just to speak but to speak kindly.

In the midst of a well-organized but not so simple JNHE, I saw example after example of these best life lessons being practiced and taught. The words were real and the actions were being shared effortlessly by so many.

As I gave thanks for those I observed and the opportunity to observe, I thought about the responsibilities we have as parents in raising, nurturing and teaching our children. I also thought about how fortunate we are as parents that there are so many who assist us in this role, including those involved in events

such as the JNHE and organizations like the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). Although on this day I had no parental responsibility, I was grateful to be there and even more grateful for the opportunity extended to me by Jack Ward, Amy Cowan, the American Hereford Association (AHA) staff and the leadership of the AHA. This was a wonderful opportunity to live simply, love generously, care deeply and speak kindly.

Fortunately for me, and for you, we don't have to wait for an event such as the JNHE to lift our hearts by expressing our love and concern for our children — our Hereford children.

The Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) provides each of us just that opportunity. The mission of the HYFA is to provide financial support for youth scholarship, leadership and education within the Hereford breed. The classroom may be the traditional institution; but as I observed, the showing is clearly another place that scholarship, leadership and education are accomplished.

These youth, from toddlers to NJHA directors, are our legacy. They are a gift to our families, our breed and this great country. It is a privilege to be a part of their journey and to insure that all have an opportunity to participate and pursue their goals, visions and dreams.

I hope you will join me in placing a dollar, or more if you like, in a jar each morning as you start your day. As you put the dollar in the jar, think about and focus on your act of giving and on these wonderful young folks you will be helping. There is no better way to start the day than by giving thanks and by giving. I promise you cannot give to the HYFA without experiencing the feeling of loving generously and caring deeply. **HW**



Bob Norton and his wife, Lisa, are pictured with the 2014 National Junior Hereford Association board of directors. Bob is the president of BioZyme®, and its product line Vita Ferm® is the title sponsor of the 2015 Junior National Hereford Expo.