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## CHANGE FOR THE BETTER!

WITH SIMON BRUCE

If Sorry seems to be the hardest word, then Change must be the hardest thing to do. We all become so used to our surroundings and the way things are, that we cannot believe that they can be any different. And if we do imagine a different state of affairs, then we can never find the energy or time to make the changes we would like.



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If there is one thing that I would like you to take away from this five minute read is that you are the master of your own destiny, and that you have the where-with-all to change those things in your business life that are no longer working for you.

My experience as a business advisor and accountant for 40 years is that you can either make change happen, or change gets done to you. You are either driving the car, or sitting in the back seat getting driven to who knows where. Which would you prefer to be?

Farming, like every other business, has lots of changes coming down the line which will effect you. As a responsible business person, probably with a family to support, you need to know what the main changes are and how they are likely to affect your business. Other articles in this series will explain those in more detail.

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The purpose of this article is to give you seven simple reminders on how to Change for the Better. As in most thing in life we get better with practice, so I would encourage you to get started now!

**1.**

**Get the big stuff clear in your head first** - get clear why you want to make the change and what you want the change to look like. If you know where you are heading then you will not be surprised by how it looks when you arrive. That said I urge you to keep a degree of flexibility in your thinking, do not be obstinate, unpleasant to others, or pig-headed. Bad reputations are difficult to erase.

**2.**

**Talk your ideas through with those you trust** - the people who know you, and especially those that love you, want you to succeed. They can even see things about your idea that you cannot. Share your ideas with a small number of people you trust. That means your family and your professional advisors. Listen to their advice and comments and amend your vision if necessary. Their continuing support will sustain you when the going gets tough.

**3.** **Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater** - successful change is a process of evolution, not revolution. Too much change all at once is difficult to manage and too frightening for those around you to cope with. Build on what you have so that the most valuable aspects can become better still.

**4.** **Understand what obstacles you are going to have to overcome** - the things that are going to stop you from succeeding are the obstacles, real or perceived. So when you start to put your plans together list them so you can start to find ways around them. It might be that you have to talk to other people who have already found suitable solutions. It may mean creating allies with others who are trying to do something similar. After looking at a problem from a number of ways you may decide to find a completely different route. If you know the risks in your plan at the beginning you can begin to limit their impact.

**5.** **Have a timeline and a budget** - both time and money are limiting resources. As you will need to get into the detail at some stage, I recommend that you break the project up into sequences or phases. List what physical and financial resources you need and how long you expect each phase to take. Be realistic. We all know that things take longer than expected, never shorter.

**6.** **Take the plunge** - Change is part of the fabric of life. It gives us a sense of being alive and creative. It can be enormously rewarding and bring us into contact with people and situations we had never faced up to before. It can be a fantastic learning experience. That said my advice to anyone jumping into water would be to make sure there are no rocks just beneath the surface. For many people it is better to enter the water from the shallow end first to gain confidence before striking out for the uncharted depths.

**7.** **Look after your health.** That is both your physical and mental health. Change can be very stressful whilst you adapt. Without your good health you will lack a key component to succeed - your willingness to make it happen.

I would love to hear your plans for change.  
If you want to share them with me please drop me a  
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