



Ranch Management Lesson #2 – Always Pack a Flashlight by Aaron Crowley

Up in the mountains, hundreds of miles from the city and its lights, natural wonders are brilliantly displayed in ways that can only be fully appreciated when they are experienced in person. A picture cannot fully convey the breathtaking magnitude of the millions of shining, blinking stars and galaxies. A video cannot reproduce the same hair-raising terror of lightening flashing and thunder crashing simultaneously down inside a canyon.

And a story in an article, using the blackest of black ink, cannot possibly replicate the utter darkness that exists up in the mountains on a cloudy, moonless night.

As luck would have it, my first encounter with such darkness occurred late one night on the little rutted, gravel road between the cattle ranch I spent the summer on and the main gravel road. About a mile from home, I got a flat tire, and of course, I didn't have a flashlight.

Talk about dark. My eyes were open but I could barely see a thing. I shuffled along over potholes and ruts, my tentative feet shuffling like a blind man's cane, feeling for the next step. Eventually, as my eyes adjusted, I could just distinguish the gray gravel road from the grass on either side. As my sense of direction improved so did my confidence and pace and I did in fact make it home to my bunkhouse.

Today, the economy is dark, and all eyes are on a rutted road where only limited visibility exists. So what can we do to shed light on this situation? Not much. This business cycle is much larger and more complex than any one person, or any one government for that matter, can comprehend or control.

Perhaps a better question might be - what can shed light on *our* situation?

1 – Improve ourselves.

If the last 18 months has taught me anything (and it has taught me many things) it is how much I don't understand about sales and business - this economy has made my shortcomings uncomfortable and painfully obvious. With that awareness the merciful opportunity to improve exists.

2 – Encourage our peers.

These days it seems that every conversation inevitably arrives on the topic of the economy and everyone seems nagged by uncertainty and anxiety. If there was ever a time when people needed kind, confident, and encouraging words, that time is now. Take the time to cheer those people up.

3 – Appeal to Providence.

Nature, like this economy, is so big and sometimes so scary it is comforting to know that a Superintending Power has it all under control. As we come face to face with just how small and insignificant we are in proportion to this big world, take heart that He knows us nonetheless.

So as we cautiously navigate another month in this moonless economy, let us shine a spotlight on our own weaknesses and work to overcome them. Let us brighten someone else's day. And let us appeal to the Father of Light to guide our steps. As we do our eyes will adjust and we will find our way home.