

Farm Life... The stubborn sow

Situation:

I'm a farmer who raises hogs in what is called a farrow to finish operation (birth to market). In order to have sows give birth to piglets, the sows and boars need to get together at the appropriate time. So last week when I was putting the sows and boars together, one sow did not want to move out of her individual pen. That's when I got worked up.

Symptoms:

My symptoms included a tenseness in my stomach. With this added complication I was afraid of being late to a meeting. I was mad at the sow for not moving and mad at myself for getting mad at the sow.

Solution:

I spotted my fearful and angry temper. Then reminded myself that people, places and sows don't upset me, I upset me. I looked at the situation with realism. The fact was the sow didn't know what I wanted her to do. I took the secure thought that if I'm late for the meeting, I'm late. The other people would understand, they're all farmers too and I'm sure they've had similar problems.

I made the decision to crawl on my hands and knees into the low ceiling pen and coax her out. I took the peaceful approach instead of the powerful "I'll show this sow who's boss" approach. I endorsed for my willingness to be uncomfortable. After all comfort is a want, not a need.

When I told my wife about what happened later I laughed. I must have looked pretty funny crawling around down there on my hands and knees.

In the past:

I would have taken my anger out on the sow by hitting her while trying to pry her out with a board. That anger would have stayed with me all afternoon and night. And I'd still be a cranky old man the next day. I would have never seen a stubborn sow as trivial. I didn't know enough to separate my thoughts from frustrations and work them down as they happened.