

Top 5 Homestead Frustrations and How You Can Cope

I've compiled this list with the help hundreds of homesteaders just like you. People who have had difficulties in these areas. The good news is they made it through and you will too! Don't let these things get you down, they can be solved in time.

#5 Help/ Unmotivated partner:

Sometimes it's hard enough to motivate ourselves let alone others but if you have a partner who isn't "into" homesteading as much as you are... well that can put a strain on things. What to do?

A: Don't push. Last I checked the surest way to have someone dig in and not budge is by pushing them. I fondly refer to this as " Pushing Elephants". Have you ever pushed an elephant? Probably not...when you picture it, it seems foolish and slightly painful. It's no different with your partner. Forcing this lifestyle on the unwilling will not create a helpful partner. Lead by example.

B: Ask for help. Instead of bemoaning a lack of help... just ask for a hand. For instance - Need a hand reorganizing the pantry to fit all the canned goods you purchased for an amazing deal? Ask for help. While you're getting that help mention how these extra groceries will come in handy in case of a power outage, an unseen emergency or worse job loss. There are people who don't want to think about these things. Offer gentle reminders that bad things can happen to good people, best to be prepared.

C: Share a news article or information from a homestead book you're reading. "Did you know" is a great conversation starter. " Hey Honey, did you know in order to make [1 pound of honey](#) a hive of bees must fly about 55,000 miles and visit 2 million flowers? Now what we're you saying about being too tired to pull weeds"? Ok, maybe leave that last bit out.

D: What are they interested in? Do they like cooking? Reading? Working with their hands? Watching sports?

Cooking is of great value. Plan a meal you make together. It's a great first step to team building. You're working together, building a flow. You'll need to work well together on a homestead and food is a big part of homesteading so use this " like" to build teamwork!

Reading: Perhaps, over that meal you made together your elephant errrr.... partner

could share a couple of news articles at the table. At our homestead, we each bring a current event to the dinner table. There are times the conversation is so robust, we just don't make it to everyone's share.

Working with their hands: Well aren't you lucky? There are always things that need to be built or repaired on ye Olde Homestead. Ask for a hand and be there to help even if it's to hand them nails or switch out tools. Eventually you won't have to do this (once they are on board) but not many people dislike a hand with building or repairing things.

Watching sports: What the what? First I said sports, not t.v. in general...I can't fix everything you know ;) . If you think about it many sports require strategy. This is a great ability to have on a homestead. A lot of planning goes into things whether it's starting seeds (and what seeds to start) in the winter months to what are the best choices of livestock for your land or yard. There is a strategy to it. As with most of these suggestions, start small. Perhaps plotting out a raised bed of their favorite vegetables or herbs together. Maybe creating a monthly meal planner (this incorporates our other team builder - cooking). Use graph paper, a planner or some scrap paper... it doesn't matter, just get in the habit of having them write or draw these things out. [Like the X's and O's in football it's all about the strategy].

#4 Money:

My vision of our homestead and the reality are two different things. Oh, I would love cute whitewashed picket fences a'la Huckleberry Finn but my reality is more... Huckleberry Hound. That's ok once you wrap your head around "make it work and budget" you'll be good. Think out of the box! There's not much (anymore) that I don't look at and try to envision an alternate use. Small things like reusing that bag the loaf of bread came in (no, you're not required to bake your own bread) or not tossing that old toothbrush and instead, using it as a mini scrubber... reduce your need for things and have the things you DO use enjoy multi purposes.

I use Craigslist and LSN.com for many things: lumber, livestock, cuttings, fencing - you name it. I have no problem with used items and really enjoy the hunt. You don't have to buy new! And yes, there are times you must wait and budget, that's just how it goes and it's alright. Sometimes the extra waiting period finds you completely changing your plan for fencing or whatever it is you're saving for. The most important thing here is don't blow the budget. An emergency repair is one thing, that cute rooster weather vain is another...

#3 Skills:

We all had to learn. It's been quite sometime since people relied on their land or

themselves for food or income. Learning is part of the fun! You will **NOT** know all there is to know about homesteading...ever. It's too broad a subject. Start at the beginning. Read about what interests you, see what type of approach appeals to you. Keep notes! I have several (ok...7) three ring binders dedicated to individual subjects from canning and preserving to livestock and building (be it structures or farm tables).

You are not alone! Join a group of like-minded people such as 5 Dog Farms private Facebook page. Here you can ask any and all questions to people who are walking the walk just like you. They will give you the straight scoop and offer their experiences or books they have learned from. Books are an invaluable part of your journey. Be it Kindle or paper copies, gather information.

Practice. What do I mean? Our family decided to learn how to start a fire without matches. It turned into a contest of sorts. Every person for themselves. We decided on a time period for learning, each person picking their own way to approach this skill (even if that meant we used the same technique) and chose a day for the big event! It was a blast! Some techniques were just not cutting it and others were surprising. If you have friends who are interested team up and have some fun. Please don't be hard on yourself here, you will learn!

#2 Disorganization /Energy:

An odd couple? Not really. I put these two together for a reason... it's like you're getting SIX top Frustrations!

We all know a goal without a plan is just a wish. We've discussed writing things down and creating binders to store information, this is all organization. I'm going to tell you something you may not like... you need to buy a planner or create an online planner/calendar. Trying to run a homestead by the seat of your pants is a recipe for disaster! Talk about a waste of energy! Imagine spending everyday letting the day run you. No my friend, if you do nothing else... plan on a planner. Then, use it! I'll give you some for instances:

Most gardeners start planning their plots and seed purchases in the winter months. Creating a drawing of where plants will go and what will be planted is a necessity for gardening abundance. Put a reminder in your planner to do this. Cleaning out the livestock stalls or coop, depending on your climate, good days to run errands, planning to can at harvest time, taking a new class or learning a new skill, deep cleaning the house day or even relaxing **gasp** are all things you can and should write down. It's so much easier to just check your calendar to see your "to dos". Yup, there will be those things that aren't planned and you must attend to but with a written schedule you will be back on track in no time. I usually jot down the big things for the year in January and

then on Sunday evenings I update the following week as needed.

Relax? Yup, you need to recharge... to keep your energy up. There's nothing wrong with blocking out time to do that. At our house we have "porch time" almost every night! It's when we all gather on the porch before dinner and catch up on our day. We enjoy being outside, watching the dogs and chickens do their thing while we talk. Sometimes porch time finds us walking around the garden discussing the success or failures of certain crops. Mostly, it's a cherished time that we all look forward to. You can do this!

WHICH leads us to the #1 Frustration:

Not enough time to do everything:

Well, *you can't do it all* and if you re-read #2 you'll find a calendar or planner will be your new time saver. We live in a world where we are expected to give so much... more than we can really. For instance, writing my blog takes time out of my day - everyday. So I schedule those hours and unless there is a homestead emergency, I'm blogging during blogging hours. This means something else isn't being done but this is my job and without it I have no income just as you have your important jobs to do. So you must plan wisely. Deciding to prepare a seven course meal on a day of barnyard cleaning or harvesting may not be a wise choice. Unexpected things will happen but IF you have most daily chores written out you can always delegate (to that perhaps "beginning to understand" partner). Because you have it written down it's a snap to send or text to whomever may need to step in and be "you" for a moment or two.

Whatever you do, reach out and ask for help. There are plenty of folks who have knowledge and understand your desire to create your unique homestead.

Best of luck to you and we hope to see you on our private Facebook page!

Niki Dee

5 Dog Farm