GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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What, Me Worry?

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I'm a weird type of worrier. For the small stuff, I usually take a silver-linings approach to things, always knowing everything will work out in the end.

For what I consider mid-level worries, I tend to vocalize. As a talkative extrovert, I'm the type of worrier that needs to vent her grievances. Come to the Ball Publishing offices anytime between the 10th and 15th of each month and you'll see me in Chris Beytes' office pulling my hair and raking my hands over my face, shouting, "I have to finish my cover story! AND write my column! Aaaaahhhhh!"

Then there are the high-level worries that are more troublesome and out of my control, that live deep down because I keep them hidden where I can internally stew about them. And, lately, they all stem from COVID-19: What if [FILL IN FAMILY/ FRIEND NAME HERE] gets it? (So far, only one close family member has contracted it and he recovered well, thankfully.) How behind will my daughter be academically? Will my husband's job ever get back to the way it was before? When will this nightmare be over and life gets back to normal?

Imagine if I had to worry about all of this while also running a multinational corporation. I don't know if I could handle that kind of pressure. You would need to be a special kind of person that stays calm in a crisis. Someone who doesn't overreact, who looks at the problem and provides strong leadership.

This describes Anna Ball. I'm always amazed by her calm-ness, even when she has to deliver bad news (luckily, that's been very rare during my 17 years with the company). I've observed her over the years—during meetings, speaking at events, talking to customers over dinner—and have made it a point to be more like her. Be more professional. Listen more, talk less. And be calm in a crisis. She's such a great example for Ball's employees and for the industry. I don't know if she really realizes how much people admire and are inspired by her, which makes her all the more likeable. She's genuinely a humble person.

The apple doesn't fall from the tree, as the old saying goes, and Anna's daughter Susannah, who's taking on a greater role within the company, exhibits a lot of the same traits as her mom. I'm still getting to know Susannah, but from what I can tell so far, she's friendly with a bit of bashfulness mixed in and always wears a smile. You can tell she's trying to soak everything in and learn as much as she can as she plays a larger role in her family's business. It's exciting to watch, and I think it helps keep morale high because it shows Ball will continue to operate smoothly,

working toward the same goal of servicing its customers and supporting its employees. Just like it's been doing for 115 years.

If any time needed Anna's calm approach to a crisis, it was this year. Ball Horticultural Company has been faced with multiple challenges in 2020 (besides COVID-19), but through it all, no one panicked or overreacted. Hard work and cool heads (and a surprisingly excellent spring) made it possible for Ball and its employees to end the year on a significant high note. And this includes new changes in leadership that takes the first step in Ball's succession plan.

One of the major obstacles for Ball this year was when their computer system suffered a ransomware attack. I talk about it in my cover story, but Bossman Beytes went into more detail.

And, as it's our annual homage to *Fast Company* with a focus on business and human resources, we have articles on giving your job postings a shot in the arm, surprise taxes from COVID-relief programs and the results of our 25th annual Wage & Benefit Survey.

As I write this, COVID cases are off the charts and hospitals are overwhelmed. My daughter's school is going back to full remote and we're being asked to work from home full-time again. And how we're going to celebrate the holidays is up in the air.

I'm very worried, but I'm going to try and do my best "Anna Ball" and stay calm, cool and collected. She would say that everything will be okay, so I'm going to use that mindset to be hopeful for a better 2021. **GT**