GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

9/1/2021

Maddie’s Book

Jennifer Zurko

If there ever was a person that epitomized the old saying, “Never judge a book by its cover,” it’s Maddie Maynor, this year’s Young Grower Award winner.

Please don’t think me a shallow person—I don’t decide how I feel about someone after just one meeting. Through the years, I’ve learned that first impressions aren’t always correct. I’ve met a lot of people who I feel I really didn’t get to know until after multiple interactions. Some people are introverts and need some time to warm up to you. Some people are distrustful and need to decide if they want to take the time to get to know you. Some are very different people after a few drinks at the Front Street Cantina in Columbus. I have learned to hold judgement on people.

So when I met Maddie face-to-face at Cultivate’21, I wasn’t sure what to expect when I was going to interview her for this month’s cover story. Of course, I already knew she won before the award was given out. The judges send in their votes in June, well before the show so we can have the awards made in time. (Interestingly, my poker face is good when I know who won the Young Grower Award—not so much when I’m actually playing poker. Who knows why!)

When I shook the hand of this petite, athletic young woman with the slight southern accent, I couldn’t wait to talk to her and delve into her personality. Maddie is the 12th Young Grower winner I’ve interviewed and their personalities have run the gamut, but I always find that one little tidbit—that one interesting “hook”—and I use it to weave their story. It turned out Maddie had many tidbits I could focus on.

As Maddie and I spoke over Zoom, and she told me about her background, her experiences, her management style and her hobbies, I stopped and said, “Maddie, you’re a very interesting person!”

Now, not everyone is interesting. In fact, most people are unbelievably boring. I mean, how many people do you know have participated in an Ironman triathlon? Or know how to be build a cob house? Or who went to the Bahamas so they could learn all about tropical fish?

How she manages her growing team is also interesting. How many managers do you know who make their employees feel valued? Who teach them? Who ask them, “How can I make your job better today?” Who acts more as a mentor than just a boss? Who buys you Starbucks and takes you out for ice cream? I think managers who truly

mentor and support their people are hard to find. I hope the folks at North Creek know how lucky they are to have her.

Another thing I said to Maddie, which I included in my story, is that she could fill any lull in an awkward conversation with one of the many interesting things she's done. Remember when I said Maddie epitomizes never judging a book by its cover? I think she should actually write a book about her interesting life. Now, that's a book I would read. **GT**