

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

3/1/2025

Away/Toward, More/Less

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I've recently been turned on to a newsletter called "The Moon Lists" that I follow on Substack. Based off of her guided journal "Moon Lists: Questions and Rituals for Self-Reflection," author Leigh Patterson gives people tools to help generate new ideas, inspire deep thinking and provide different perspectives for self reflection. The primary audience is people who are into journaling, serving as an idea source for what to write about that day. But you can also use some of what Leigh calls "casual profundity" as conversation starters to better answer the question, "What's been going on with you?"

And you can certainly use them as prompts to make positive life changes. Leigh uses statements and questions to help you home in on parts of your life that need "clarification." Like, what is truly serious and what can be ignored, recognizing patterns of behavior, what you obsess over and what's taking too much of your attention.

One of Leigh's most recent prompts was "PHANTOM LIMB: Name something you miss, but—if offered—you don't actually want back." A lot of her prompts are real thinkers ... which is entirely the point! It's along the same vein as the practice of creating In/Out or More/Less Lists—an itemization of stuff you want more of in your life and the crap you should just let go. The Moon Lists version of this is Away/Toward, which I like because it doesn't convey as much finality as In/Out. It suggests pulling and pushing, instead of adding and severing. Less harsh for those who have a hard time making up their minds or letting go.

These lists don't just have to apply to personal growth—you can make them for your professional life, too. I know this is part of many garden center retailers' regular routine; they determine what they want more of (workshops? houseplants?) and what they'd like less of (stuff that doesn't sell, staff that doesn't show up). And I know the greenhouse folks do a similar exercise, too.

Maybe one of the things under your More List is staying up on the trends, paying more attention to what's new with indoor plants or investing in new automation. If that's the case, this is a good issue for you. We have highlights of what we saw at some of the early winter trade shows, specifically MANTS, TPIE and IPM. It runs the gamut of live and hardgoods, plus a nice mix of automation to keep your eye on. And for gift and houseplant trends, see what Jen Polanz and Ellen Wells saw at the Atlanta Market and TPIE.

Or perhaps your More List includes being better prepared for extreme weather. Or taking better photos for your website and catalog. We've got information on convective storm preparation and tips on how to take better pics. We've also got a piece on mastering training and development if one of your More things is working on the

professional growth of your employees.

Creating your own Moon List may be a little too hippy-dippy for you, but you don't have to call it that; thinking of it as an Away/Toward or More/Less List works just as well. It's just a stepping-off point for you to do some deep thinking and purposeful self reflection on your business, yourself as a manager/colleague and even your personal life if you want.

I've found that my professional and personal life are extremely intertwined, kinda like a grafted plant, whether I like it or not. So I could make two different lists that would apply to both sides. Away: Beating myself up about believing weak, selfish liars. Toward: The people in my life who've always provided me with unwavering support. More: Filling my life with things that I know will bring me joy. Less: Saying yes just to please others.

Okay, these are heavy times and we're all dealing with heavy things, so how about something a bit lighter? One of Leigh's prompts for February is: "What are your current 'who cares?' indulgences? The things you're choosing BECAUSE they're ridiculous?" (Like, upgrading to First Class for a one-hour flight or buying pre-sliced apples.)

Discuss ...