

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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A Balancing Act

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Being a stable, motivated person takes a certain kind of balance. Like a trapeze artist, you need to make sure all levels of your life are close to equal otherwise you're completely off-kilter.

Mentally, I put my life in three different "buckets": Family, Work and Friends. If one of those buckets starts to overflow with added stress or problems, I feel unbalanced, and it could spill over into the other buckets. If the other buckets are relatively low, I can handle the spillover. If all three are full ...? Oof. That requires a week on an island.

Thankfully, this doesn't happen often. Even if family and work are driving me crazy, I've got a great group of supportive pals who make sure that my Friend Bucket stays on the low side. Or at least fill it with a nice cocktail to help me get through.

Another way to maintain a good balance is to look toward the future, while also using the lessons you learned in the past. A lot of people are so stuck in the past they can't move forward; others want to forget the past ever existed and steamroll their way ahead. I think there's a way to do both without being stuck.

We've talked a lot about technology in these pages and in our newsletters lately, and that's because everyone is talking about it and it's everywhere. It's fun and exciting to look ahead at the possibilities that new technology can provide, but at the same time, we should heed past experiences with tech so that we don't repeat mistakes.

Just during the past five to 10 years, our industry has seen an influx of new technology and automation in the greenhouse. We tend to always look at these advancements from the point of view of the growers, but what about the companies that are producing all of these fancy tools and machines? What challenges and obstacles do they face with trying to get growers to try their products?

The Vineland Research & Innovation Centre in Ontario, Canada, has been conducting trials and studies on myriad products and solutions for the horticulture industry for over 100 years. Their most recent study focused on the state of horticulture automation, conducting extensive interviews with 22 different companies that provide these tools and equipment to growers across North America. We thought it was an interesting peek on the other side of the fence to see how they balance between presenting their products to (oftentimes) skeptical growers while also looking ahead to future opportunities.

As with every June issue, we've also got the essays written by this year's *GrowerTalks*/Ball Horticultural Company

Young Grower Award finalists. This year, we asked them how they balance servicing their customers with inspiration and ideas from outside sources. (Be sure to go to the Unplugged event on July 17 if you're going to Cultivate'23 to see who wins!)

We've also got some excellent columns this month that discuss maintaining a good balance—adapting when the best-laid plans go by the wayside; addressing our industry's constant labor issues with some simple solutions; and having a successful season even if the economy is shaky.

If you're wondering how my three buckets are currently faring, it depends on the day. I'd venture to guess you experience the same thing in your own lives, especially during the peak of spring. **GT**