Never Stop Learning

As my younger sister returned to Des Moines a few weeks ago to begin her second semester of college, I got to thinking about the importance of learning. When we were children, learning was all about exploration and the desire to discover. Our 2007 Merchandiser of the Year award winner (see page 16) told us that a constant thirst for knowledge has been a major contributing factor to her business’ success. As consumer demands in her area changed, what began as a summer vegetable stand in the 1980s quickly grew into a full-bloomed garden center with a dedicated staff and a full line of plants, containers and gifts.

Lessons in the Everyday

For journalists like our staff, and retailers and horticulturalists like you, success is dependent on boundless curiosity and a willingness to grow and change with the world. We can never stop learning, or our businesses will quickly become stagnant and irrelevant.

As retailers, you keep yourselves updated on the volatile housing market and national trends. You attend gift markets and garden center tours, and you listen to your customers about their likes, dislikes and goals for their gardens. To stay on top of the horticultural world, you read trade magazines, visit trade shows and experiment with plant materials to see how your customers respond to the new products.

As a publication, we report on the comings, goings, triumphs and challenges of the industry, and try to help you understand how the major news stories of the day will affect your business and bottom line. But you can be our teachers as well; if your garden center wins a community award or discovers a groundbreaking secret to selling hanging baskets, we want to hear about it. If you hold a successful event and have photos to share, I hope you’ll send them along. If you’re going to be at a trade show or other industry event, let us know, and we’ll keep an eye out for you. Just give me a quick call or drop me a note at pworthy@sgcmail.com.

We can learn so much from one another if everyone is open to sharing ideas and experiences.

Oh, the Places We’ll Go!

At my high school graduation, the one gift every student was guaranteed to receive — sometimes more than one, actually — was a copy of Dr. Seuss’s Oh, the Places You’ll Go! The book’s rhyme scheme is a little obnoxious after you hit age 10, but the message behind the words is what really matters: Remain optimistic and push through the difficult times.

So be sure when you step / Step with care and great tact / And remember that life’s / a great balancing act.

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