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Where the lessons are

A limited perspective leads to a limited experience



Todd Nelson

I once heard a story of a man who had a lifelong dream of sailing the Mediterranean on a cruise ship with his wife. After she passed away, the man decided that if he didn't go now, he never would. So for a year, he saved whatever he could in order to have enough money to purchase a ticket.

Since money was tight, the man decided to pack an extra suitcase full of beans and crackers and powdered lemonade to help supplement the need to pay for food and drink on the ship.

As the cruise continued, the man noticed the endless entertainment and food options that were available. Movies and shows, steak and lobster, and an endless supply of Diet Mountain Dew. He longed to be able to enjoy those activities that many of his fellow passengers seemed to enjoy so freely, but wanting to keep expenses at a minimum, the man did not participate in any of the extra activities.

Though he was able to see many of the places on his bucket list — places like Rome, Istanbul, and Athens — the remainder of his time was spent in his cabin, with his beans and crackers.

On the last day of the cruise a crew member asked him what farewell party he would be attending. The man, not wanting to pay for an extra activity, replied that he did not have the funds and would not be attending any party. The crew member told the man that the parties were complimentary, just as the food and the entertainment had been for the entire cruise. It was all included in the original cost of the ticket.

The man's limited perspective only allowed him to enjoy a limited experience.

Early in my career, I too struggled with limited perspective. I didn't understand the Oregon Association of Nurseries and why it was something I needed to be a part of. Luckily for me, I had a wise mentor — my dad. He said to me: "If you don't participate, how can you have an opinion?" He then counseled me to "Be involved."

Like the man on the cruise ship, my limited perspective allowed me to only have a limited experience with the OAN. So, taking my father's advice, I became involved.

Since doing so, I have come to appreciate what the OAN does for each of us.

There have been many times over the years where I have experienced complex issues and challenges facing our nursery and needed to reach out to those great folks at the OAN. In every instance, they made themselves readily available and were happy to help me work through those specific challenges we were facing, either directly or by pointing me towards those who were able to help. This personalized support has had such a positive impact on me.

Throughout the year I have had opportunities to witness firsthand the OAN's advocacy on our behalf. The things that worry us, worry them. The OAN works tirelessly to ensure that laws and policies being created are in the best interests of our industry. They are dedicated to the long-term success, profitability, and excellence of Oregon's nursery and greenhouse industry.

The OAN has also been successful at seeing into the future. Through established relationships in and out of the industry, we are able to get a glimpse of potential rules and laws that could greatly impact our day-to-day, prior to them actually happening. Seeing ahead gives the OAN the opportunity to learn, prepare a plan, and then act intentionally for what's best for the industry in a timely manner.

If you are on the fence about joining the OAN, I would extend to you the same invitation my father extended to me: participate, be involved, expand your perspective! Your membership allows the OAN to keep on providing personalized support, advocacy, and vision for the future. ☺