

The Dispatch

Family Business Insight for your Agriculture Company

October 2023: Falling Back

Autumn is here. As the leaves of the trees turn, we realize that we are also turning the pages or “leaves” of our life. Another school year. Another harvest. Another anniversary. But as the word “another” suggests looking forward, there is something deep within that also pulls us “backwards,” as if we want to have one more lingering day of summer or one more 9:00 p.m. sunset. This issue of the *Dispatch* explores the various things that this Fall season provokes in our minds. Lance begins by talking about how Fall encourages him to think of and embrace his deep past; Davon explores the notion of what things she wants to let go from that past; Ethan just wants us to embrace the present moment! Take a deep read of all three, recover your past, embrace your present and be grateful for your future. - [Bill](#)

Looking Back to Go Forward

[Lance Woodbury](#)

As time “falls back,” life is full of returns. We return to school, we return to cooler weather, we return to a pattern of harvest followed by a return to a more relaxed rhythm. And as I become older, I find myself returning to the memories and interests and activities that captured my attention at earlier ages – things I wanted to continue but didn’t, or interests I enjoyed but then faded away. Personal examples include a renewed interest in public speaking, a desire to read more, and a rekindling of friendships from earlier in life. For others, it might be a return to the physical places of one’s youth, a recollection of music or art, or the re-initiation of a hobby lost for decades to the busyness of life.

In this notion of returning, perhaps I’m really resisting the idea of aging, attempting to capture the carefree feelings of my youth. Or I’m realizing, in what [Arthur Brooks calls the “second curve” of life](#), that a few of my earlier dreams still have a limited window for realization. Whatever the reason, those passions have returned, and I find myself pulling some of my past goals and interests into the present, wondering about how they might shape my future. As Brooks said in [his column](#), “We look to days gone by to figure out who we are and why we are doing what we’re doing now.”

As you think of your younger self, do you remember what you were passionate about? Have such loves remained constant throughout your life, or do you find yourself, decades later, returning to those interests? Your cherished memories just might offer clues about the next chapter of your life.

Letting Go? Yes...of Common Expectations

[Davon Cook](#)

For this issue Bill asked me what I am “letting go of”, or “downsizing.” My mind jumped to the empty nest stage, and how our house and extensive outside grounds, requiring much maintenance, are really larger than we need. Or how many friends are talking about retirement visions and timing. I internalize some social pressure that I should want to change my life. But when I think about it, that’s not me. Now that I’m less busy raising kids, I more enjoy working in our beautiful yard and country property (although I’m missing the child labor a bit!). I am not interested in retirement at all. I’m doing the opposite of “slowing down.” So, what am I letting go of in this season? Norms and expectations from the outside world, and those I impose upon myself.

This doesn't mean I'm not open to change, or reflecting on all sorts of new ideas for my life. I'm just embracing, or "falling back" on the observation that I've always charted my own course and will continue to do so.

I'm pondering how I use our home space to help others in ways that I didn't have time for before. I'm thinking about what impact I want to have in the next ten years of my career, without planning whether it's the last ten. I'm pondering significant travel interwoven with a fulfilling career.

Where would letting go of perceived expectations and norms serve you well?

Fall-time Reflection

[Ethan Smith](#)

The statement is cliché, but I find it particularly apt at this time in my life: "Take this moment and try to be present in it." It hits home because I often feel tugged by life to live at any other time than the present. The intensity of establishing myself as a professional with much yet to learn and improve on can occasionally cloud my vision more than it should. We are our own greatest critics, and I feel the self-induced pressure that comes from the need to expedite my learning.

With a young family, including two daughters under 3, I try to remind myself that it won't be like this forever. Yet the sleepless nights and diapers seem to take precedence. Thankfully, others have assured my wife and me that this season is just that—a season. Being present helps to enjoy those moments of growth or laughter. Being present, even when traveling, takes effort and a supportive family.

I find that constant awareness of two worlds -- professional career and professional father -- brings moments of gratefully-received clarity. In our work we often set our sights on the lofty goals rather than taking in the sights on the road to get there. I've sat in many meetings with families and organizations that just need to be reminded to stop and take a breath. Actually, the joy of previous successes can be missed if you don't take time to celebrate the small victories. Often we find that the hurdles or conflicts most families face happen when we skip over someone's efforts that led even to a small win.

So, my daily task is to take a moment to relish "the moment." Whether it's from the seat of your combine or from the chair in your office, remind yourself to be present for those around you.