



Time to take the stabilisers off?

Do you remember learning how to ride a bike? While my memory is vague, the one thing that sticks for me was the day my Dad took off the stabilisers.

As the defiant, slightly impatient, child that I was, I longed for nothing more than being able to ride my pink, sparkly bike up and down the roads completely unassisted.

When the day finally came, I was absolutely terrified. As my parents watched me take seat on the bike, I remember panicking as I began to pedal, and my knuckles turned white as I gripped onto the handles for dear life.

I lasted but a few seconds before the fear and panic got too much, and I fell off the bike, grazing my knees and my hand, and I still have a scar as a reminder today.

How silly it seemed that I was so confident with my stabilisers, and so desperate to be rid of them but when it came to going alone, I couldn't do it and I begged my Dad to put them back on.

The same as sentiment applies now as we start to see the restrictions gradually

ease and the weight on the pandemic that's brought life to a halt slowly start to lift.

While the world has cried out for normality — aka, our life stabilisers to be taken off — I find myself doubting whether the day will come, and in fact believe that life as we know it has changed forever.

In all honesty, I'm a little bit scared of doing life without the stabilisers now, having spent the past few months staying safe at home.

A few weeks after the initial de-stabilising escapade, I tried again after a reassuring pep-talk from my parents. Lo and behold, I could do it and I've been happily riding my bike ever since — though I'm slightly sad I can't get away with tassel-laden handlebars anymore.

So instead of the fearing what life after a pandemic looks like, I'm thinking about all the opportunities that this new normal could bring.

I'm sure there were some of you that tuned into the virtual Cereals Event this year. While I wasn't convinced at how successful it would be, I was very pleasantly surprised to find that it was actually very good

and brimming with technical content.

For us journalists, show days are far from a jolly, often bringing a lot of stress as we try and navigate an unfamiliar site and dash between briefings which are always at completely opposite ends of a showground.

But this year, the usual stresses were completely alleviated as I sat comfortably at home, avoiding the rain, and seamlessly went between briefings, meaning I could absorb much more content than would be physically possible in the usual set up.

The Innovation and Tech demo ring was a fantastic hub for all things machinery related, and a unique opportunity to see the most innovative launches "in action" — something that isn't always doable on the day.

Arguably, without the pandemic minimising social contact, a virtual type event was probably never on the agenda, but in my opinion, it was as good as the physical event, if not better — though the press room bacon sandwiches were missed.

So it just goes to show that

sometimes a nudge in the right direction is all that's needed.

I think we're about to head into a rather strange time as we all try to figure out the new normal, and no doubt many of you are juggling a very busy time of year with home schooling, or childcare, or even just missing loved ones you haven't seen for a while.

But just like the day I finally rode my bike alone, I think this unlikely scenario could bring us some reward in the form of the most advanced, digitally connected agriculture industry in history.

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Could virtual events like Cereals Live become the new norm?

