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Kiss My Aster

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Don’t Take It Personally

Amanda Thomsen



To some, this month’s column may feel like a personal attack, so I’m going to try and ease in slowly and mostly ridicule myself. When this bit of wisdom dropped into my consciousness I can tell you it felt pretty brutal (as the truth often does), but also like Dorothy realizing she had the power to go back home all along. It’s a life-changing gem and I hope you’re ready for it:

What you do does not have to be your personality.

Yeah. That’s right.

Let me give you an example: I did a stint working at a children’s farm teaching little kids to grow things and other random farm things. It’s a mega-charming farm full of horses, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, ducks, rabbits, a turkey … you get the picture. So what did I do? I became a farmer. I bought all the overalls that exist. In my head, I needed all kinds of very specific footwear. I had a wide-brim straw hat and the kids called me “Farmer Amanda.”

If anyone asked me for something outside of work, I’d say “I can’t, I’m at the farm …” I put this job ahead of taking care of me and mine and it was never intended to be taken that seriously by my employers. No one asked me to take it to that level—I was just good at it and taking it to that level felt really right. I made that job my whole personality. And now that I’m no longer working there (I will tell you that is 100% in direct response to my realization that it didn’t have to be my whole personality) they are JUST FINE there without me. So what was that even all about?

The problem with this behavior is twofold. I mean, you’re so good at what you do, why not tie your whole being to it, right? First, not everything is in your control at work (as much as that ALSO hurts to hear), so when bad things happen at work it affects your mental well-being outside of work. And, as you well know, that can really rock your whole world.

The second issue is WHY ISN’T YOUR OWN FAT, JUICY LIFE AND INTERESTS WORTH BEING CENTER STAGE? (And then you just have this job you love on top of that.) The truth is that we don’t spend a lot of time thinking about who we are, right? I feel like we’re asked what we want to be when we’re kids and it gets pressed into us that what we do is supposed to be what we are. Thinking about who we are is like life’s real homework that can honestly sting, just a little, but is well worthwhile.

I made myself into a farmer when the more mentally balanced option was to be a person that happens to work at a farm.

You're not a garden center owner, manager or employee. You're a person that owns, manages or works at a garden center. You're so much more than just what you do. So who are you? I feel like once this switch gets flipped, you can more wholly focus on the entire human that you are. A careless customer is "something that happened at work" instead of "something that happened to you."

If you want to be the best you can be, you owe it to yourself, your coworkers and even your customers to have a well-rounded life (and therefore perspective) that you bring with you every day. I'm not "Columnist Amanda" I'm "thrift shopping-obsessed Amanda who just happens to write a monthly column in Green Profit" and I'm telling you now that it's a pretty sweet place to be. **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author. Her blog is planted at KissMyAster.com and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.