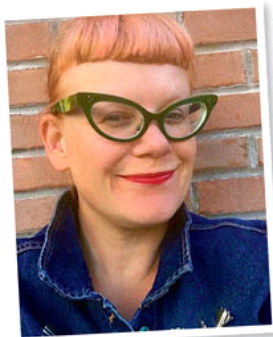


Kiss My Aster

7/31/2025

I Can See Clearly Now

Amanda Thomsen



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A woman with a talent for pattern recognition opens a shop and three years later she's kicking buns. That woman is me. I'm kicking buns. I'm tired and invigorated; you know the feeling well. The shop is 40% over last year, and I'm not cocky enough to say it's all wins, but it seems like everything I pull out of my pocket is selling like hotcakes. Things are different enough that I have to over analyze it—what made the change?

Everything I touch is so much easier, more honest and more profitable, and I attribute that to a few things.

Year 3 is where it's at. I've put in the work, and like one of those games at an arcade where you put the quarter in a slide to join a shelf with hundreds of other quarters, eventually the quarters are going to get pushed into your winnings drawer. Lots of trial and error, of course, but also a lot of "watch and see" and we've arrived at the "see" part. A seasoned staff, marketing that builds on itself and a sassy reputation are all part of it.

I've figured a lot out, and in retrospect, I see how much of this I've done painfully alone. I need to be reminded almost daily that I need to process out loud because my hermit inclinations are just easier to work with. I'm grateful I get to talk shop with the glorious Katie Elzer-Peters at least once a week, sometimes for our podcast and sometimes just to be talked off a ledge. Having someone understand me and my business that I can talk to has made the magic happen and I do not use the word "magic" lightly.

Honoring my needs has made me see things so clearly. The ones that get upset that we aren't open on Wednesdays and I ask if they ever came in when we WERE open Wednesdays; the people who come in wanting me to have no boundaries and it comes across in their every word; those that ask for low-maintenance plants and get upset because I showed them low-maintenance plants—it's all something I've achieved a new level of chill about. I need to save myself before the people who may or may not become customers. I am so amazed by the band of customers that go so hardcore for me. I could just work with this group for years getting them outfitted inside and out and call it a day (I will not be doing that, as tempting as it is).

My interest in my life, outside of the shop, is returning. I am able to divide my attention between home and work a little more. It feels extremely complex, like having the fire hose of my mind directed solely at the shop is just easier,

but this is nice. I've always been an extremely capable person. I just wish I didn't have to be proving it all the time.

I'm pretty sure that most of this is because I was recently diagnosed with ADHD and medicated for it. I never saw it coming—my little sister was diagnosed in the '80s and we're nothing alike in that way. She was feral and full of power and I was introverted and daydreamy. It turns out there are a billion ways to be neurodiverse. I've always known I had “superpowers” (pattern recognition, reading a room to a frightening degree, etc.), but it took the added weird factor of menopause to push me into a psychologist's office for testing. Now I can hear myself more clearly, stay on task and complete things that make me feel good.

Those changes show on my face and in my demeanor, I believe. It's brought a new level of excitement to what I do because I can't wait to see what I can accomplish next.

There's some degree of loss for all the years I was masked, unaware, unable and unsupported. Thankfully, another one of my superpowers is an extremely short working memory and I get over things mega-quickly. So on to the next thing—what shall I conquer next? **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author with her own store, Aster Gardens in Lemont, Illinois. Her store info is at [KissMyAster.com](https://www.kissmyaster.com), and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Threads AND Instagram @KissMyAster.