

Being a Beginner in the Garden



I've admitted to you in the past that I honestly have a bit of a [brown thumb](#). During periods of [depression](#), this can make me feel like I will never be able to grow a plant ever again. However, most of the time, I'm able to turn off that kind of thinking. I'm able to embrace the beauty of being a beginner at something. It's okay to be a beginner. And it's okay to always be an amateur at something. In fact, I think it can be a really beautiful thing.

Being a Beginner Is Hard For Me

It's taken me a long time to learn how to NOT be good at things. Obviously, I don't mean that I'm naturally good at everything I try. Far from it. However, historically, I give up really easily at things I'm not immediately good at. School was always easy for me, so I pushed forward in that and

excelled. Flute lessons and athletics were hard for me; I quit or didn't even begin.

Learning How to Learn

Over time (I'm in my forties now!), I've learned how to embrace being a beginner. It started in school. It took me a really long time to comprehend the idea that school was a place for me to learn things, not to be automatically good at them. Since I had fit so well into traditional school growing up, it all came easily to me. I never realized I was there to learn hard things. Honestly, I didn't learn a whole lot from my Bachelors' degree either. I did the work, got the grades, moved on.

However, grad school was hard. I got my MA in Psychology. The school work wasn't hard at all. The papers and tests came easily to me. However, the actual experience of pushing myself and learning and growing and being part of a complex group dynamic was really, really hard for me. And I did it. And I'm prouder of that than of any grade I ever got.

The Beauty of Being a Beginner

I've finally learned about how great it is to NOT know something but to want to learn it. I've learned that it's not only normal and okay to mistakes; it's great. Here are some of the reasons that it's beautiful to be a beginner, in gardening or any other pursuit:

- The pressure is off. You don't have to do this perfectly because YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW YET.
- The excitement is high. There is so much ahead to learn!
- You don't have preconceived notions. Or you do but you can let them go. Thus, you're more present in the experience.
- [Hope, possibility, openness, curiosity](#) ... these are all

things that it's possible to bring to the garden as a beginner. And you can bring this beginner's mind to the garden even if you've been gardening for a really long time.

- The rewards feel huge! I feel good when I complete something I'm good at, of course. But I feel amazing when I succeed at something I'm not good at, yet!

So, I think it's wonderful to be a beginner in the garden. I think it's wonderful to stay an amateur. After all, I don't plan to do any professional gardening. Therefore, I'll never have to worry about striving for perfection, layering business over the hobby, etc. I have other things for that. A garden can just be a place to play.

What are your thoughts on being a beginner? Is it hard for you? Easy and exciting? Both?

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