

Great Time To Give Our Thanks

Andy: I'm thankful to have a roof over my head and thankful to have a wonderful wife who supports me every step of the way. I'm thankful I lost 6lbs on a vacation where I was eating the entire time! But today Jay and I will talk about the things we're truly thankful for in our business and in our lives. We hope you enjoy!

We're back here at Non Toxic Environments. Jay, today we are taking a little break from our normal activities, it's Thanksgiving so lets give some thanks.

Jay: Yea boy aren't we thankful. I can think of a whole lot of folks we could say thanks to. For you and me both it's just the people surrounding our businesses. The people we count on to provide the products we recommend and folks we're in a business where there's a lot of different moving parts of a project.

Andy: Without a doubt, and for me, I'm thankful for my employees, really thankful the last few weeks since I was on vacation for a while and they did wonderful work while I was gone. They always do wonderful work but especially when I'm gone it allowed me to relax and have a good time they kept the ship above water and flowing towards the right direction. So I'm very thankful for my employees and I'm very very thankful the manufacturers we work with obviously your company Jay, AFM, it's been a wonderful relationship over all these years and it continues to grow and I'm very thankful for that.

Jay: I am too thank you Andy. With us, it's our customers, and our vendors, we're all kind of on a team together, that's how I feel about it and all growing towards the same direction. That's the goal anyway. It really makes it a lot easier when everyone's thinking the same way and on the same page. Wanting to do what we're here to do and that's to help everyone live a healthier life.

Andy: And I have to say, I am most thankful for my clients and customers. Not because of the fact products they buy, or the services they hire me for, that goes without saying; of course I'm thankful for that. What I'm really thankful for is the education that they give me, that they give us both I think, and so I thought it would be kind of fun to share some of those stories and I've

got a couple I can talk about off the top of my head and maybe while I talk Jay you can think of some that have affected you in the last year..

Jay: Let me think about it but go ahead with yours.

Andy: So I can think of all the wonderful clients I work with; I've said this over the years, one of the best things about my career and what I do is that I actually get to hear directly from the people who are affected either positively or negatively by the things they do in their home. And because of that, I get a direct education on the items that are healthy to use, unhealthy to use, questionable, and of course just because it works for one doesn't mean it works for all. But it gives me an insight and so when people say... I had a customer recently who was looking at some flooring materials and he wanted to know what kind of testing is done to make sure it doesn't offgass and I said, "Well, here's the tests that they do, here's the test that I do (FRAT test)," and I said, "more importantly, I have anecdotal information. I have customer testimonials who we've worked with for years that have worked with that product for years with wonderful success." And he got back to me and said that anecdotal information wasn't really trustworthy, do you have any data? And you know, that's a good question. Sometimes there isn't data. But when I have dozens, hundreds, thousands of people who have used a product very successfully, and can tell me why it worked well for them, and it my mind, that's more important than just about anything.

Jay: I agree, and I fall back most of the time on the anecdotal stories we've heard. I like them because it's a real world situation with a real world challenge. And I understand why people want 3rd party verifications or collaborations or whatever you want to call it, because they don't want to think you're just blowing your own horn all the time and would like to make sure what you're saying is true. But at the same time because of the very challenges we have with the different client chemical sensitivity thresholds, and the projects and the complexity of those I really love to refer back to knowing what I know from the real world, from the story that was told to me, and then, you too, I notice we are our own guinea pigs. You're working on your house all the time and the office there, and I'm doing the same thing here with us, and everything that you sell I know and everything we put together I've had some experience personally with. I think that's a very powerful thing we get to share with our clients. When I tell people I'm using one of my products and I've used one of my products very successfully, and I

explain to them exactly what I did and what they can expect, because in most cases I've been living with this for quite a while. So, to me that's a powerful tool to give people a kind of confidence.

Andy: Without a doubt.

Jay: And I'm willing to say, and I know you are too, I did that- it didn't work, so maybe go down a different trail. We can give you some suggestions on what we've discovered when we found something wasn't working really well.

Andy: And on top of that too, if it's not going to work, you and I both are going to hear about it from the customers so we'll have to fix the problem.

Jay: Oh yea.

Andy: That's one of the things I'm very grateful for. I can certainly point it out right now. I'm very grateful for the fact that we've created this company wide mantra, and you're right along with that Jay, where we touch everything we sell. We know how it works, we know how it installs, how well it works. A lot of the products we sell are sold specifically because we know that it's the healthiest material available of its kind. And we also know the limitations.

Jay: Well, you had to do a heck of a vetting when you put together your Degree of Green program.

Andy: I did.

Jay: And you had to vet every one of those products you sell, you had to look at them very carefully. And you have a whole metric on how to review them.

Andy: Correct.

Jay: And folks if you're not aware of the Degree of Green program, avail yourself to that. Andy can dive in how to get into the program. A very clear eyed way of evaluating the different

products you can bring into your home and the Degree of Green program has a really simple way of understanding that so that when you're making your decisions you don't have to make a guess about it. You can go well, I'm looking at Degree of Green, does it hit that note? That note and that note? And if it does, you can have the confidence of knowing. And if it doesn't hit those notes you can go 'hm.'

Andy: And I hate to use the A word, but you can go onto Amazon and buy some of these things.

Jay: I thought you were going to say apple pie! Tomorrow's Thanksgiving!

Andy: That's not a dreaded word.

Jay: My brother is an excellent pie maker so he's bringing some tomorrow, so I'm thinking about it.

Andy: That sounds great, I can already smell the turkey dinner right now. So, you can go on Amazon, you can go into big box stores, and get their versions of these things but you know what you're not going to get? You're not going to get years of knowledge behind them. Sure you can buy, heck you can even buy some Safecoat products on Amazon and go to these other websites that tout to have everything under the sun... but you're not going to get the education behind that and I know this to be helpful because another thing I'm incredibly thankful for is the customers who take the time to write reviews, both on our website and our podcast on iTunes. They take the time to write emails, make phone calls, heck, I have people sending me thank you cards. They take the time to acknowledge the fact that there's something special when somebody not only sells a product but knows how to use it, AND can give me the pitfalls to look out for.

Jay: You know, you're mentioning about people writing in... is this a good time to talk about our Thanksgiving bonus today?

Andy: I think it is, this is what we're gonna do, it's kind of fun folks, and Jay came up with this great idea and this is a wonderful one. You know, a few months ago we offered a free book for

those who would write reviews. Well, we're what we're going to do this time Jay, this is a great idea, it's your idea, and so Jay said, what we need to do is for the first 5 people, and I might even increase that because I love reading the reviews.

Jay: And the number doesn't matter.

Andy: No it doesn't matter, and so, between now and the end of the year?

Jay: Yea!

Andy: Between now and the end of the year, anybody who writes a review of our podcast and mentions something about giving thanks, whether it's giving thanks to the show for what you've learned, or maybe a contractor you've worked with, maybe somebody else you've worked with. Giving thanks to what you've learned in your life and maybe thanks to somebody who gave you advice on how to do something to make your home healthier. Put it on the podcast on iTunes with a rating for us. If you email me a copy of that review and email it to andy@degreeofgreen.com and as soon as we see it up on iTunes, we will reach out to you and Jay and through AFM, what're you offering?

Jay: Well, I think the thing that probably works for so many people and has for just as long as we've been in business folks is the cleaner product we make, Safechoice All Purpose Cleaner, it's just one of our most popular products, it's an all purpose cleaner and can be used for a whole host of different cleaning, it's a concentrate so you dilute it with water. Which means it goes a long long way. Some of our folks who are chemically sensitive use it for their laundry, so it's so versatile so I thought that that's a perfect one, everyone needs a product like that. Because we're always cleaning. Seems like it'd be a simple one. So I thought a quart of the cleaner which will last a long time as an idea. Well, yea!

Andy: I love it, it's a great give away. Heck, it's a great purchase. A quart of the Super Clean with shipping is about a \$15-20 value, and so anybody who writes a review, and again you need to verify it with me, emailing what you've wrote, andy@degreeofgreen.com. And so I'm going to actually amend this a little bit Jay, because yes, the AFM Safechoice Cleaner is

phenomenal, I use it for everything for myself, including my laundry. But you and I have been working on a, a new product.

Jay: Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Andy: And this might be a fun time to talk about it. It's called Mud Puppy. A shout out to Emily here in the office because Emily's dog Laika, um, absolutely loves the cleaner that we developed here; a dog shampoo. It's called Mud Puppy.

Jay: And she actually named it. She has, she actually, she actually named it as well through exactly through talking to some, she's got a very big social media presence and she kind of put it out to her social media friends. And that was the name of that kinda got the, uh, got the award.

Andy: So it looks great. The, the label looks great. Very cute. We'll be, we'll be releasing it, you know, worldwide, probably January 1. But, for all of you folks listening, if you write that review, and you say something about giving thanks and send me a copy, you can either get a quart of the multipurpose cleaner or you can get a container of the new Mud Puppy shampoo. And that product comes in either a scented, unscented, which is what our standard is. But, due to popular demand folks wanted some natural very light essential oils in it. And so we can talk about that, you know, one-on-one after we decide what you need. So, that's the giveaway and that's from now until the end of 2019. And, we look forward to reading your comments.

You know, one of the things I'm thankful for obviously is, is hearing the feedback from customers and I want to hear what you're thankful for, so do that and we'll be happy to send you a one of these gifts.

Jay: You know when you asked me what I could recall in the past, and nothing right in front of me stands out. But the one thing that I get so much joy out of is when I'll talk to a customer that I spoke to 20 years ago and they've come back and they've said, you know, we found you back then and we got direction that really helped us and our health is improved. And we're back.

I know you feel the same way when you can talk to customers you've had for decades. It's such an endorsement, and it always makes me feel great to know that, you know, the products that we're putting together and the services we're providing to our clients is really making a difference.

Andy: For sure. For sure. And you know, you can't take for granted your customers and friends that they've turned into over the years. Right? You can't take for granted the fact, you know, they could go anywhere. And they do, they go because of what they're going through. They search high and low for things that work, that help. I have a couple of new clients right now and, and I of course I want to be mindful of people's privacy, but, when I mentioned this story, they'll know who they are.

Last weekend, last Saturday I came into the office because I had a couple and their kids drive six, seven hours to meet me from Michigan, to choose materials for a home that they're remodeling a home that they need to be careful about mold issues. And chemical of course. But we had just a wonderful meeting. They're here for a couple of hours, just wonderful folks. And, and again, they, they'll know who they are when I talk about this, I'm not only thankful, but I'm in constant awe at the lengths that people will go to find, not only the materials that they need, but to work with the people they trust. And it's amazing. It's just amazing. So to those folks, thank you. To a client of mine I've been working with for the past year who her home should be complete. She should be moving in probably next week. Wow. And she went through, I hate to say this folks, but she went through hell in this new home construction. I got involved after the house was underway.

Jay: Oh boy.

Andy: And right when I got involved was when they were doing exterior framing so I couldn't change things, you know, too drastically. However, all the lumber came to the site with mold on it.

Jay: Yeah. I think you remember talking about this.

Andy: Yep. And the builder, you know, their response was, well, we'll get it dry walled covered up and so forth. It'll eventually dry out. Don't worry about. So I am thankful that she found me when she did, because she reached out last week and in just, you know, she was a new person and she is grateful to be living in, you know, moving into a home that she knows that she'll be able to tolerate and live in. So, you know, stories like that, it just gets me every time and I just can't tell you how thankful I am for that if it wasn't for these wonderful customers that I work with and friends that I've developed over the years. I have to be honest with you, Jay, I probably wouldn't be doing this. It's a tough, tough business.

Jay: It wouldn't be as much fun, there's a lot of stress and you know, that kind of thing going on at the same time, there's a lot of joy involved in it too. So I understand it's worth it completely.

Andy: I mean, think of, think of the folks that we've known over the years, Jay, some of the pioneers who've worked with.

Jay: You know, and that reminds me, we've got a kind of a plan for that next year too, don't we?

Andy: Oh, yes we do. I, you know that, I'm not going to announce that yet, but let's just say this, folks that to know what your future is and where you need to go, you need to learn where we came from. Jay and I are going to do a wonderful series on the innovators, the pioneers from decades ago, and you'll be fascinated to hear their stories and I'm looking forward to that. That's going to be an absolute blast about that.

Jay: Well, Andy, I guess it's about time to wrap it up.

Andy: It is. And that's a thing we could go on and on and on about how we are thankful for what we see and hear every single day. But you know, I'm thankful that we have this outlet to do this every week and then fun. It's really a joy first of all, it's nice that Jay and I actually have a chance to talk like this for an hour a week and, because you know, he and I are both so busy that it's usually cryptic texts and emails and maybe a phone call once in a while, but, the fact that he and I actually get to meet once a week and collaborate on something is a real joy.

Jay: And do that undisturbed. That's a big, that's a big part of it.

Andy: Exactly. Exactly.

Jay: The phone's not on, the door is closed. We've got a little private cove here of communication.

Andy: Exactly. Exactly. So anyway, Jay, it's been a wonderful year so far. We still got more episodes to come, but this time of the year where we give thanks for things, I hope we've really expressed that to everybody listening. And great idea, Jay coming up with the giveaway and I look forward to reading those reviews and I really look forward to shipping out some boxes of product.

Jay: Nice. Nice.

Andy: All right folks, so, um, couple of things before we go. First of all, go to iTunes and leave that review giving thanks and what you're thankful for. Send me a copy of that andy@degreeofgreen.com. Then you know, Jay and I will both reach out and a thank you for that and we'll send you your free gift. Please make sure to tell your family and friends about the show. We are still growing at a fairly fast pace, growing in listenership. Of course. Jay and I don't do this because we get paid for it. We do it because we love educating everyone and bringing our ideas to the world. So we can only do that through knowing that you're listening and knowing that you appreciate the show. So we appreciate that from you.

Jay, you and your family have yourself a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Jay: Same to you, Andy, and I'm planning on it. I know you just got back from vacation. You're feeling pretty rest, but you know, go ahead, extend that a little bit. Next four days.

Andy: Okay. I will do my best. All right, take care everyone, bye.