

NO (REAL) ANIMALS WERE HARMED

Four or five April's ago, I ran over a pig. Maybe a few more details would help. Four or five Aprils ago I accidentally knocked over a concrete pig while driving a towmotor. The accident occurred on one of those dew-dropped, blue-skied, sunny spring mornings. Right before the chains came down and the open sign went up, I was restocking pallets of topsoil and black satin mulch at Gali's Garden Center in Beachwood, Ohio.

Minutes prior to the devastation, Gali's president Linda Gali and manager Chris Murray were out admiring a new shipment of outdoor statuary – Chris had worked everything into various spring displays. Of the new stock, I heard Linda mention the two concrete pigs (positioned kitty/catty-corner from a row of mulch) were among her favorites.

Flash forward ten minutes: I towmotored my way successfully through a tight, somewhat merchandised sidewalk to replace a near empty pallet of topsoil. But to get at that pallet I needed a better angle. I backed up just a couple of feet. Then I heard what, in my mind, sounded like a cinder block tipping over and breaking. I immediately put the towmotor in park, jumped off and surveyed the scene.

Oh, the Humanity!

"I ran over Linda's pig," I thought. The \$120 pig suffered a broken ear and a separated left front leg. While panic-stricken on the inside, I played it surprisingly cool on the outside. My first order of business – hide the evidence.

I took off my Gali's hoodie, used it to scoop up (and hide) the damaged oinker – broken limbs and all – and dashed my way to the back drive where my car was parked. So far so good and Chris and Linda were none the wiser. Though, it was only a matter of time until someone would notice the missing porker. What next?

Maybe it was the guilt or maybe it was the certainty of hearing "Watch out for that pig!" the rest of the summer that urged me to go with the first thing that popped into my head. I walked up to the checkout counter where Linda was standing and told her I wanted to buy one of the pigs.

"Really?" Linda asked. I could tell she thought I was joking. To make my purchase more convincing, I said my mom had been

talking for some time about wanting an animal statue like that for the backyard. I lied. My mom never said anything like that, but it was the only thing I could think up that sounded believable. She bought it, and \$90 later (thank goodness for my employee discount), so did I.

This Spring

There's really no moral to my story. I guess I just want to remind you to be patient with your staff — full-time *and* seasonal — this spring. It's April and you're about to go from neutral to overdrive any minute now. You'll make mistakes; your staff will make mistakes; and pigs will get run over. These things happen, and rarely do they bring an end to the world. Just remember to breathe and you'll be able to handle anything spring throws at you. 🌸



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