

SPOTLYTE[™]
BY ALLERGAN

Esthetician Tammy Fender on
Natural Skincare, Facial Massage,
and Why Celebrity Clients Don't
Stress Her Out



Even as a child, Tammy Fender has always felt connected to nature. “When my friends would be off playing kickball, I would be off looking at the plants or my grandmother’s grapevine,” the West Palm Beach-based aesthetician tells *Spotlyte*[™]. “Since I can remember, I’ve always felt most at peace being outside.”

So, it shouldn’t be a surprise that Fender’s path to building an organic skincare empire (with a celebrity following at her spa!) was nothing less than, well, organic. A side job working at a cosmetic counter in college quickly captivated Fender’s interest in the world of beauty and skincare ingredients. “I always had a love for people’s well-being and their happiness, but I didn’t always know about products,” the 50-year-old explains. “It very much intrigued me in what these people were buying, and [wondering] did it work, or did they just think that it worked?” In the evenings, she would go home and research ingredients, eventually deciding to pursue a career as an aesthetician. “I fell into this really holistic path that I was learning more and more about,” she says.

After settling in South Florida, Fender got started doing house calls for clients, many of whom were post-procedure (including elective surgeries and chemotherapy) and couldn’t use chemicals on their skin. With her love for nature and background in plant remedies, it wasn’t long before she was cocktailining her own natural batches of cleansers, tonics, and oils, all based off of the needs of the clients. Her work spread by word of mouth, and pretty soon, Fender’s phone was ringing off the hook with people who wanted to get their hands on her formulas.

In 2003, she opened her eponymous spa. “It was always very much curiosity that drove everything that I’ve done,” she shares. We were curious, too, so we chatted with Fender, asking about everything from where she gets inspiration to the best DIY anti-aging massage tricks. Read



Spotlyte: Where do you find the most inspiration?

Tammy Fender: Absolutely, my love for the plant kingdom. It's astounding to me — the intelligence of plants, and how there are hundreds of thousands of plants used for medicinal healing purposes. Not only is it our food source, it's our medicinal source. My love, passion, and life study has been the correlation between man and plant; so when I'm not working with my clients, that's where my research and time is spent. I have a huge home garden that I work out of every day.

Spotlyte: What advice do you have for people shopping for natural products?

TF: Stick to the basics. First and foremost, you want to look at the label, see what it is, and what you recognize. I like products that are multi-purpose. We demand too much from our skin. We have the tendency to think the more layers we put on, the faster the result we're going to get. That's very much ingrained in our culture, and it's not the case. When the skin has time to rest and to breathe, that's when we really start to see it thrive. You don't need to jump into a new natural routine and have a whole collection [of products] to make a difference. I'm a minimalist and rather take away things that aren't helping, rather than to add [more products].

Spotlyte: Tell us about your personal skincare routine.

TF: I like to keep my routine really simple. I will use different products from the collection at different times of the year. Right now, I really love to use the Epi-Peel® and the Antioxidant Crème. That's my favorite summertime routine. I'll use the Epi-Peel as my cleanser and as an exfoliant because it's clay-based and a clay base is a really great way to cleanse the skin. I'll also spray my skin down with [Bulgarian] Rose Water. I have a real affinity and connection to the essence of rose. I finish with the Antioxidant Crème, which contains neroli and orange and is very uplifting to the skin. It's a beautiful combination of plant-based vitamin C. Ultimately, I use the products to be multipurpose. I try not to layer too many things on my skin.

Spotlyte: What are your tips for doing an at-home facial massage?

TF: Facial massage, to me, is essential. It's one of the most important parts of the routine, because it helps with drainage, it helps to detoxify the skin, it helps with blood circulation, and it helps to oxygenate the tissue. So, whenever I'm doing any sort of application of product, I'm always incorporating massage.

If I'm using a cleanser, I do circular motions around the cheeks, always lifting up and out to bring the blood to the surface and to oxygenate the skin. When I go to put on my eye gel, I'm very mindful that this is the time I can incorporate a little manual lymphatic drainage. Instead of going from the outside corners in, I go from the inside corner, doing very light pumping motions; press it down through the side in front of the ear and down through the lymph channel. That gives you the opportunity to help move any puffiness or any stagnation under the eye. When I put on serum, I do the pinching action around the eyebrow and pressure points. It's another opportunity to release tension and lines in the face.

[Editor's note: If you take blood thinners, talk to your doctor before using a gua sha tool.]

Spotlyte: When you want to relax, who do you go to for a facial?

TF: I'm lucky, because I have wonderful estheticians who have all been with me for over 15 years. Since inception, on my birthday, it's my gift that I always come to my spa and spend the day with all of my therapists. It's the biggest gift I can give myself. But, aside from that, I have regular treatments in my spa. To be able to come in and experience what our clients do is a huge gift for me, and I recognize the importance of it. It's just as important to be on the receiving end of it as on the giving end. I'm blessed to have it right at my fingertips.

Spotlyte: What's your "desert island" product from your own line?

TF: That's a little tough for me [laughs]. I would say the Quintessential Serum[™]. It's preservative-free, and it has a high potency of frankincense and rose, which are very powerful rejuvenators for the skin. It can be used around the eyes, the lips, on the ends of the hair, the cuticles. It's very healing. If I could only take one product with me, this would give the maximum benefit to my skin.

Spotlyte: And what about one thing you would take from another beauty line?

TF: There's a Japanese clay and charcoal soap called Deitanseki™ soap that I use regularly. I happen to love it. It's very versatile and has a very detoxifying and cleansing feel on the body. It's something I use in the shower, [and] I wash my hands with it, it has such a great benefit.

Spotlyte: What's your busiest weekday like?

TF: I have three kids, so I'm preparing everything that they need and dropping my youngest one off at school. When I get to the spa, the first thing I do is check-in with everyone in my office. My building is a beautiful house with a spa in the front and our administrative offices in the back. I check-in with all of my departments, and [see] if they need me to help them in any way.

Then I will see a few clients. Seeing my clients is a love and passion, because it keeps me very hands-on, and keeps a pulse on the needs of what's going on with people and their skin. When I'm finished with clients, there is lab work, so I'm always working with products in development. When I come home at the end of the day, I also very much love to be outside in my garden. I really enjoy what I do every day.

Spotlyte: Besides gardening, how do you relax at home?

TF: I have a full-spectrum infrared sauna that I use every day. It's not only a way for my body to relax and receive the healing benefits of the near and far infrared, but it's also meditation in a way. I go in for 20 minutes, and it is total relaxation — melting away everything from the day. It's great on the lymphatic system, too, because you can't help but take a cold shower coming out. I'm very much about the lymph system and allowing the body to release and detoxify everything that we come into contact with during the day, as well as increase circulation — that's one of the keys to anti-aging.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMMY FENDER

Spotlyte: Is it more stressful when you're working on a celebrity client?

TF: It's not. It might feel like that at first if someone is new to working with a celebrity, but really, the needs are exactly the same. They are coming to you for a very specific need, a condition of their skin, looking for a result — and people are the same. Stress is stress. It affects the mind, body, and the skin the same way. And we all have the same need of relaxation.

Spotlyte: It's your job to use your hands all day. Do your fingers ever get tired?

TF: I have to say, never. I don't know why. I've never had any issues at all with my hands. I'd like to attribute it to the plant medicine that I'm using, working with the essences, and just having my hands in the herbs and beautiful oils. That's never been an issue.

Spotlyte: Can you tell me your thoughts on the importance of reflexology?

TF: My signature treatment includes reflexology. There are [over] 7,000 nerve endings per foot, and when they are stimulated, they have an effect on the physical body, as well as the energetic body. When someone is touching the feet and the head simultaneously, there becomes a deeper sense of relaxation. So, when I can get that person to relax to that deeper state, everything opens up and I'm able to get a quicker healing result.

Spotlyte: If you didn't wind up in this role, what do you think you'd be doing?

TF: I would be researching plants and taking a deeper dive into the plant kingdom.

Spotlyte: What business advice would you give to someone who wants to break into the beauty world and perhaps start their own line?

TF: Be authentic. I didn't start with any business mindset. I started with one customer at a time, and really watched it grow organically. I've just felt my way through, and everything I've done has been based on the needs of education, and serving and helping others. When you are in that mindset and you come from that integrity, good things happen.