



16 SECRETS FOR SALON SUCCESS

by

Jon Reyman



JON REYMAN

Jon Reyman is a successful hair stylist, salon owner, educator, and collaborative partner to some of the most influential designers in the world.

A creative force behind many runway looks and trends, Jon has engineered the hair for fashion houses including Christian Siriano, Oscar de la Renta, and Naeem Khan.

Jon is the "go-to" stylist for beauty editors on both coasts and his work has been featured in top publications including Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Forbes and Allure. He has made guest appearances on E!, The TLC Network, Access Hollywood, and Bravo TV.

Jon currently splits his time between NYC and Los Angeles.

MESSAGE FROM JON

I count many of these philosophies and practices I have chosen to share with you to have greatly contributed to my success.

The average US salon has just a 2% profit margin. I currently own eight Spoke & Weal Salons that generate over \$20M a year yielding a 12-20% return. I do things differently than most and my strategies are proven to work.

Keep in mind Salon Pro Rx is here to support your education journey and provide you with quality online training you can do anytime, anywhere. I have so much more knowledge and experience to share with you.

Your journey to excellence will take work, but it's going to be an amazing ride.

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BRAND YOURSELF

We live in a world of endless options, which means branding is everything. Today's consumers want to experience, believe in, and feel part of the brands they love—not just purchase the products they offer. Nearly every industry is saturated with different companies offering the same, and the salon industry is no different. So if you're not thinking about branding, you should be.

Here are two branding questions I like to ask salon owners to get them started: Why did your staff choose to work at your salon and what makes them stay? Why do your guests choose your salon and what makes them return?

Knowing these answers will begin to craft your salon's brand identity. I also like to ask these follow-up questions that relate to purpose, position, and pursuit: What is your purpose as a salon? What drives you to do the work you do? What is your position as a salon? What do you do better or differently than the competition?

How are you pursuing your staff and guests? How do you continue to engage in relationships with them?

Combine all these answers, and you'll have a better understanding of who you are as a salon and a brand. You'll also be able to identify any gaps and know what aspects of your branding need work. Then bring your team into the discussion, listen to their answers, and refine your salon brand even further.

A salon with a defined brand knows exactly who they are, what they have to offer, and how they do it unlike anyone else. SPRx was created to help you become the best salon in the business. Use our comprehensive education platform to your advantage, and strive to be a salon that your staff and guests can't live without.



STOP DISCOUNTING YOUR SERVICES

I like to spend money on what I love, and I'm not ashamed to say it. It's a beautiful exchange when I receive something I value. Here's a story that illustrates why: I was traveling recently and wanted to purchase some high-end headphones. As I was about to buy them, the salesperson said, "I think these might be on sale." My first thought was, "What's wrong with them?"

Those headphones lessened in value once I learned they would be sold at a reduced price. In the end, I didn't buy the headphones because I don't believe in discounts—and I don't offer them at my salons. To me, offering a discount means I don't value the services or products I offer.

Rewards, however, are something I do believe in. They are the polar opposite of the discount. While the discount takes money off, a reward gives the guest something extra they might not normally purchase or experience.

An easy way to do this at the salon is to set up a reward system where your guests experience complimentary services when they book appointments with you. The more your guests know what services are available at your salon—and experience them first-hand—the more services they are likely to book in the future. If you just offer a discount, you'll have guests waiting to take advantage of the discount period and then doing what they've always done.

If you're currently offering discounts at your salon, do an experiment. Replace them with a rewards system, and keep an eye on your books and your revenue. My guess is that you're going to see big changes.



STAFF MEETINGS 101



Staff meetings are an integral part of the health and wellness of your salon business. They help you establish your salon culture and create a consistent flow of information to your staff that is paramount to your success. If your staff is operating as confident individuals within a unified whole, your salon will be a healthy, efficient ecosystem that positively impacts you, your business, your staff, and your guests.

Think of staff meetings as family time—a time to celebrate successes, brainstorm solutions to challenges, reinforce salon culture, coach on observed behaviors, and listen to feedback, concerns and ideas from your team. It's as

important for your team to connect with each other as it is for them to connect with you. Every staff meeting acts like a temperature gauge—it will indicate any changes you need to ensure everyone feels comfortable.

Here are some of my recommendations for holding effective staff meetings: Keep meetings to 60 minutes or less. So many things in the world demand our time and attention. One hour with your team is enough time to make an impact while avoiding information overload. Decide what is most important and requires immediate action, and determine what should be tabled for another time. Make meetings a regular part of your salon culture. Routine meetings create positive habits and set clear expectations for your staff. In my salons, staff meetings are mandatory, and I pay them for their time. You can choose what's best for your salon culture, but the key is making staff meetings a regular and routine part of your business.

Have an agenda. Creativity and spontaneity often go hand-in-hand, which is why having a plan will help both you and your staff stay focused. Meetings can often go off on tangents, which can be positive if the discussions are beneficial. If a tangent is not beneficial or relevant, simply redirect your team back to the agenda to keep the discussion moving.

Talk about the numbers. Engaging your team in the salon business helps them understand the role they play in the success of the salon, which directly impacts their personal success. Share where the business is doing well and where the numbers are down, and then brainstorm ways to boost your retail and service sales as a team.

Be creative and have fun! Share something that has inspired you lately, play music, celebrate a staff member for an outstanding guest look, or do quick team-building exercise.

A close-up, profile view of a woman's head and shoulders. She has her hair styled in a complex, multi-strand braid that is gathered at the top of her head. She is wearing a small, round, clear earring. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

PUT AN “I” IN TEAM

What makes a great employee? Most salon owners would say someone who is loyal, responsible, talented, trustworthy, a team player—and the list could go on and on.

What about a bad employee? Well, that's easy. It's the exact opposite of all the qualities we just mentioned: Non-committal, unreliable, unwilling to work hard, dishonest, and so on. In some of my first salon jobs as a fresh-out-of-beauty-school stylist, I often felt like the best and the worst employee. If my salon owner treated me well, I was their biggest champion, and I quickly inhabited the list of things that make a great employee. If my salon owner didn't treat me well, I was their worst nightmare. And it didn't take long before one of us called it quits.

With this in mind, here's some advice for all the salon owners (and future salon owners) out there: You need to create a place where you would want to work yourself. Think about all the jobs that have brought you to this point in your career—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Every experience was teaching you what to do or what not to do as a salon owner.

Some of these to-do's are universal. Every stylist wants to feel empowered, encouraged, inspired, and part of a culture they believe in. And some things will be specific to you—little things that make your salon uniquely yours and attractive to a specific type of stylist. But overall, you must build a great place to work, one where you'd like to work, and you'll have no problem finding and retaining excellent staff. So picture yourself at your first hairdressing job and honestly answer this question: Would me back then want to work for me right now? If the answer is anything other than yes, you've got some work to do.

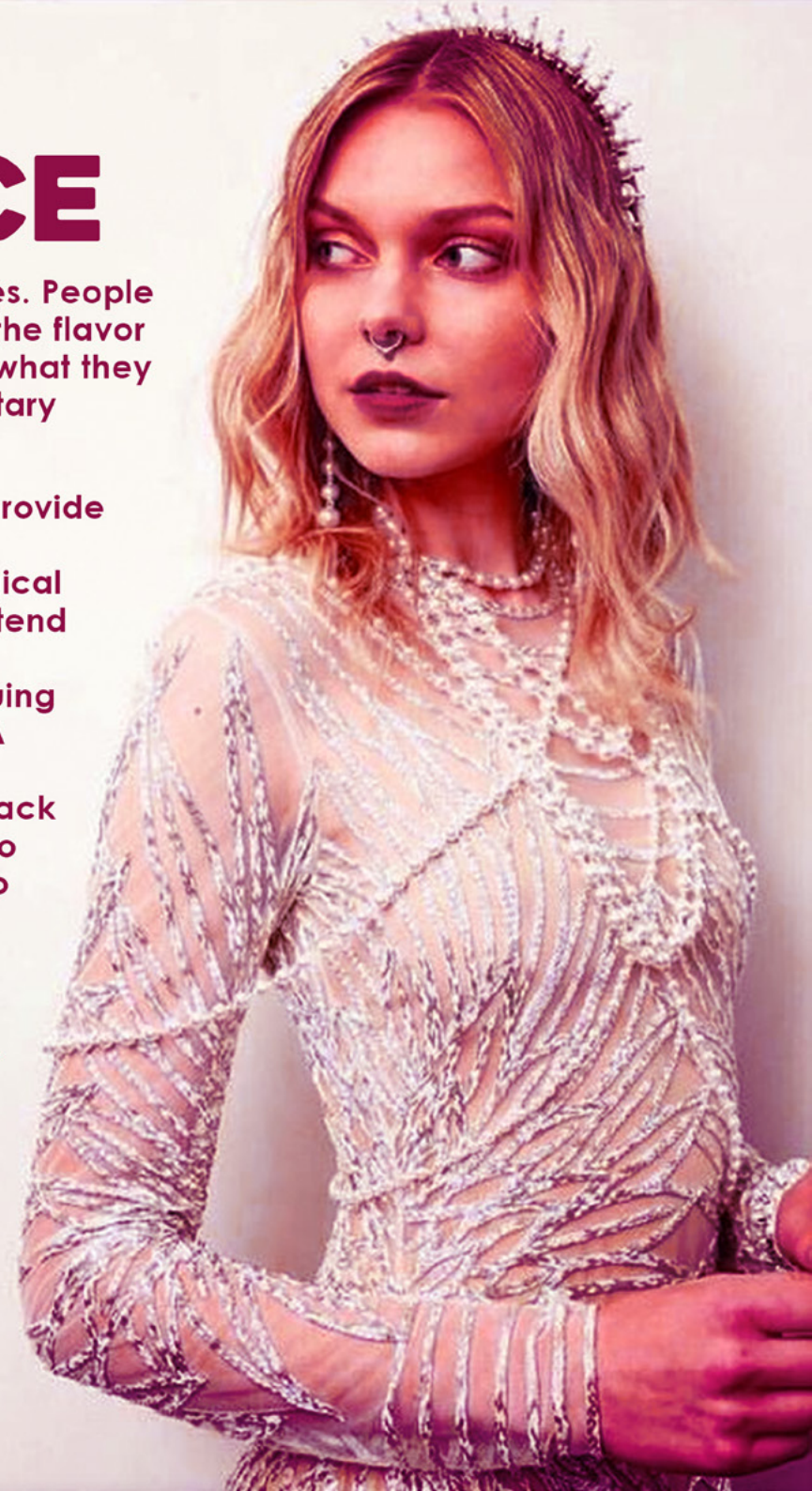
THE POWER OF A FREE SERVICE

I like to make it as easy as possible for new clients to experience our services. People want to know before they go. They want to test drive the car and to sample the flavor before committing. That's why I am a major proponent of giving the people what they want. At Spoke & Weal, my team is required to provide as many complimentary services each month as possible in an effort to get new clients in our doors.

Here's why: I am so confident in our services and the client experience we provide that I know if we can get them in the door and in our chair once, a certain percentage of them will become customers for life. There's also a psychological component to it. When someone gives you something of value for free, you tend to appreciate it more and might even feel a sense of loyalty towards them. To be clear, I believe in service comps, not discounts. A comp is not de-valuing the service. It is saying, "Here, experience it and if you like it, come back." A discount makes it seem like your service isn't worth the price. When I have someone in my chair for a complimentary service, not only do they come back and pay next time, I ask them to tell their friends, family, and co-workers who also end up being clients. We try to make it as easy as possible for people to experience us. Simply get some cards made up outlining the offer and ask your clients to give them to their friends and family.

I would rather be doing a free service than no service. When I do the comp service, the client usually purchases products and tips well. I'd prefer to stay busy doing my craft than sitting in the back room complaining about why I'm not busy.

If you're looking to bring new clients into your doors, give this technique a shot. It's what has allowed us to successfully open five salons in less than four years and see 50% growth year to year at each of our locations. We review the numbers at our monthly team meetings and there's a direct correlation between the stylists doing comp services and the stylists earning the most for themselves and the salon. The return you'll get on that one free service from a life-time client is well worth the upfront investment.



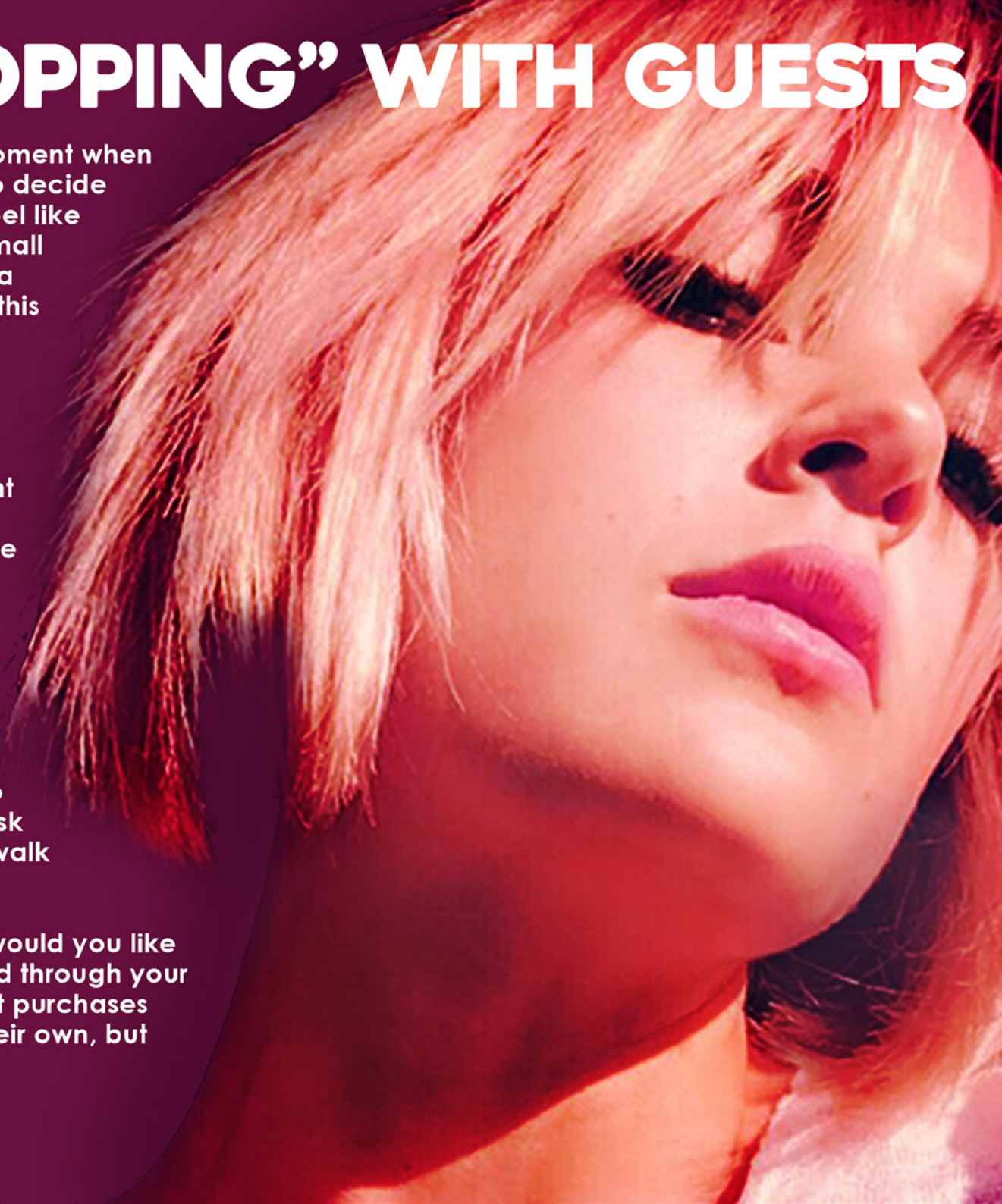
DON'T GO "SHOPPING" WITH GUESTS

After a service, there is sometimes an awkward moment when you recommend products and wait for the guest to decide which ones they will purchase. This moment can feel like an eternity for both you and the guest. But a few small changes in your language and actions can make a huge difference in how you and your guest feel in this moment.

Instead of taking the guest "shopping" after the service or asking if they need any products, walk them to the front desk, grab the products you recommend and place them on the counter in front of the guest. If you educated them about the products you used during the service, they won't be surprised by what they are looking at. Explain to the guest that you have ranked the products in order from most to least important, and remind the guest how each product will meet their needs and help them recreate their new look at home with success.

Then thank the guest for coming in, remind them to pre-book with you, and let them know the front desk staff will check them out. Then say goodbye, and walk away. That's right. *Walk away.*

You don't need to ask the guest "Which products would you like to take home today?" because it is already implied through your actions. The guest is now free to make any product purchases with all the information or continue shopping on their own, but with zero pressure—or awkwardness.



INVEST IN YOUR FRONT DESK

A woman with a long, thick, dark brown braid is shown in profile, facing right. She has light-colored eyes and is wearing a dark, collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Every role in a salon contributes to its success or failure. Consider your guest services team: they are the first and last point of contact for every guest, which means they greatly influence guests' impressions of your salon. The beginning and the end of the experience are what the guest will remember most. If they don't feel welcomed when they arrive or cared for when they leave, they may not return—even if they received the best hair cut or color of their life.

Your guest services team is only as good as the training you provide. That's why SPRx includes education for your guest services team. We believe that investing in their education will create a pattern of authentic, consistent, and caring behaviors that bookend every guest experience in a way that leads to more pre-booking, more retail sales, and more salon growth.

When was the last time you included guest services training in your education rotation? If it's been awhile, we're here to help. SPRx offers video modules and phone simulation training with real-world scenarios to help your front desk staff connect with guests in a warm, professional, confident manner—and, in turn, keep those guests coming back.

So I invite you to see what a difference a front desk investment can make on your team, your salon, and your business.

NO REST FOR THE WINNER



Some of the worst hair cuts I've seen in this industry were done by stylists who have been cutting hair the longest. This feels incongruent, right? Isn't the idea that if you do something enough over a long period of time you'll become better and better?

In theory, yes. But in practice, often no. Because when we create and sustain success, we tend to get lazy. We start to rely on our status or comfort level and gradually lose our drive to be the best. It's a natural human tendency that we all have to fight against. A great analogy for this professional laziness is marriage. The win isn't in the act of the marriage—the win is staying in the marriage for the long haul. Commitment doesn't just form in that one moment. It forms through a series of small choices over time that all add up to a long-term, committed relationship. You must continue to woo your partner and constantly remind them why you love them. If you don't, the marriage will likely end in divorce.

When it comes to hairdressing, a key mistake is becoming too comfortable and staying rooted in the education and experiences of the past. I see it with stylists all the time, and they become frustrated when I point out that what worked for them ten, five, or even one year ago may not work in the here and now. Here's my best advice: Focus on what you're doing—not on what you've done.

Develop and invest in every relationship (including yourself). Strive to be a better version of yourself. Seek to win the heart of every guest, co-worker, employee, and person in your life every time. See every day as an opportunity to strive to be your best and win others over.

Educating yourself on SPRx is a great place to start.

GO YOUR OWN WAY

You're doing it wrong.

I've heard this phrase repeatedly throughout my career like a broken record. No matter what I created or how I created it, I was told that my way wasn't the right way. I know I'm not the first artist to hear these words, and I certainly won't be the last.

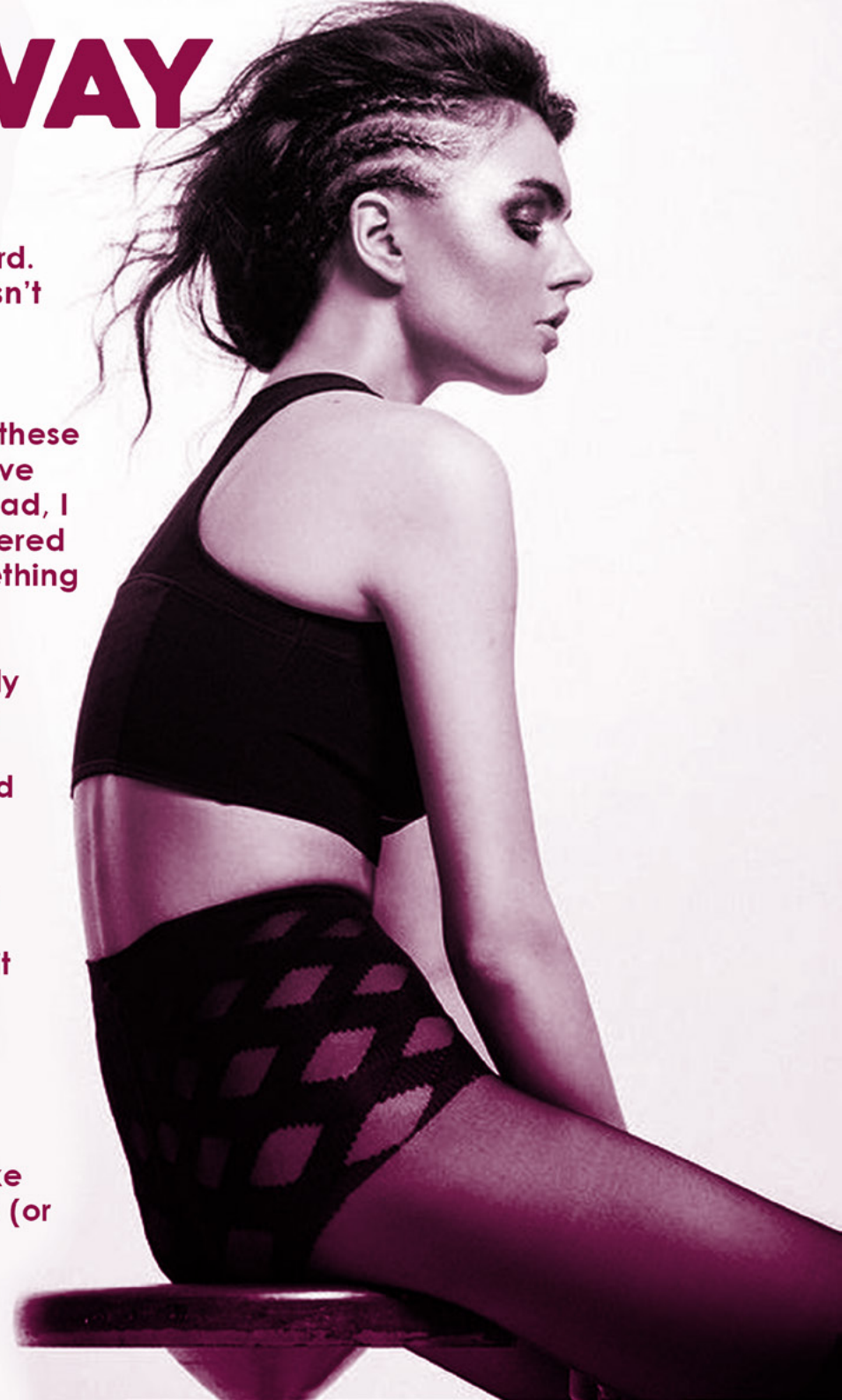
My guess is that you've heard this phrase many times yourself. Don't let these words defeat you. Allow them to fuel you toward excellence. I could have believed my critics. Given up. Walked away from the work I loved. Instead, I chose to own and celebrate my excellence. I stayed in line and persevered through all the challenges and naysayers. I saw my differences as something that made me unique instead of something that made me a failure.

If you look at the top Olympic athletes, the gold medalists aren't necessarily the most talented or athletically gifted. Many of them win gold because they have the most drive, tenacity, grit, and motivation. And they were probably told you're not doing it right & at some point in their career and decided to prove everyone wrong.

I built my entire career, my salon business, SPRx, and all my achievements on this one little phrase. Every time someone told me I was doing hair wrong or weird, I just kept doing it my way because I knew in my heart it was right. I got angry hearing those words again and again, and it motivated me to be the very best I could be.

Now don't get me wrong—constructive feedback is essential to your growth as a stylist. But when you own your excellence, you know the difference between a legit area of improvement or your own unique take on the craft, no matter how wrong or weird it may appear to the masses (or even your instructors).

If the work you do is uniquely you, go your own way. And it will feel so incredibly right.



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE & COMPETITION

In many contexts, competition is a taboo word associated with jealousy, opposition, and fighting to put yourself in a higher, more esteemed position than others. But I believe that competition can be a very good thing when done in the right context with the right attitude.

The healthy kind of competition I'm referring to starts with a spirit of love. When you compete in love, it has the power to elevate you and your work while simultaneously elevating those around you and their work. I've seen this work both in my salons and in my personal life—and in yoga in particular.

When I was going to yoga classes with a friend of mine (who happened to be an exceptional yogi), he would do all this freaky weird stuff in the middle of class. And he'd always be sure to get my attention and say, "Look at this!" Was he just showing off or being a jerk? Not at all—he was showing me what he believed I could do, too. He was encouraging, challenging, and even daring me to push myself and get there.

Behind it all was a spirit of love, and it made me compete with him, myself, and others in a healthy way that helped me take my yoga practice to new levels of achievement. Soon, I was the one saying "Look at this!" to him, and we celebrated our successes together.

This is the kind of culture and environment I work so hard to create and maintain in my salons. One way I foster healthy competition is by posting everyone's numbers on the wall. I don't go over them privately with my staff; I display them publicly so each person knows how they're doing in relation to everyone else on the team. Bold move, right? Because that jealousy and opposition I mentioned earlier could run rampant and rob my team of both joy and success. But when you have a culture of transparency and a team of great people who care about their work and each other, that bold move can yield incredible results.

My ultimate goal in posting everyone's numbers is to help each team member know how they're doing, what's possible for them to achieve, where the gaps are, and how to best support their teammates. Because it takes a group of successful individuals to achieve a collective success

So spur on a bit of healthy competition, and success will become a reality in your salon.



THE MONEY IS IN THE MASTERY

I've always appreciated this blog post that Neil Ducoff wrote a few years back. It examined the current state of the salon retail union, and his conclusion was clear—don't put all your eggs in one retail basket. You've got to focus on creating a brand all your own, especially in an age when retail is slowing down (not picking up). And that great advice is still relevant today.

Why is building your brand more important than selling products? Because your brand is your service. While product partnerships can represent who you are and help empower your guests to recreate their salon look at home, retail doesn't define you like the service you sell. There was a time when your brand was based on the type of products you carried, but in the age of Amazon Prime, that time has passed. Today, you need to know your brand and your business to survive. You need to offer the best cut, color, and style you can to your guests. Because you'll never be able to Amazon Prime a hair cut, which means that your service is everything.

Sometimes salons choose to sell certain products based on what's trending. But if you sway to trends, you'll forever be chasing the wrong thing when you should be chasing excellence and mastery. That's where the money is. Retail sales used to be the most profitable avenue for a salon, but consumers are shopping differently now. They can get any product you sell at your salon online—and probably for less. If you're relying on retail sales to keep you afloat, you're going to sink.

Here's the truth: Retail is easily replaceable, but the service you offer can't ever be replicated. No one can manufacture it, box it up, and ship it to a guest's door (not even Amazon Prime). At its core, your service is your product, so make sure it's better than anything else out there. Make sure your team is educated, inspired, and committed to mastery, and the great service will follow.

Retail isn't the future, but service is. And so is your brand if you focus on making the service you offer the very best in the business.



ARE WE DOING OUR JOB?

If you think our job as hairdressers is just about handling the hair of the person in your chair, you're wrong. Our job is to educate the client—and we haven't been doing our job. The proof is in the plethora of YouTube channels, beauty bloggers, and other crazy people on the internet teaching all kinds of horrible hair. If we were sharing our expert knowledge with guests, they'd never go searching for outside expertise online. Need more proof? Consider the recurring struggle of guests bouncing from stylist to stylist and salon to salon.

Typically, guests leave the salon loving their hair but having no idea how to do it themselves, so they turn to a styling tutorial on the internet. Guests with naturally curly hair aren't being shown how to manage and work with their natural texture, so they chemically straighten—and often damage—their curls over and over again. Stylists aren't taking the time to show guests how to do their hair at home, so they think the problem is the cut or color and seek out a new hairdresser as a solution.

If your guest only loves their hair one day out of the six weeks in between appointments, it's no wonder they're seeking greener hairdresser pastures. Take frizz for example: If the guest's hair turns into a big fuzzy mess at home, it's not an indicator that they need a relaxer to get the results they desire. It's an indicator that you didn't do your job.

Don't rely on a chemical service to do the styling or education you should be doing. Instead, empower your guest with education so they can love their hair every day—and come back to you for every appointment. SPRx was designed to educate stylists so they could grow their own skills and, in turn, educate their guests on the tools and techniques needed to achieve amazing (and repeatable) results.

Helping guests recreate their look at home is your job as a hairdresser. That's how you lead through education. And if you're not leading through education, you're not really leading at all.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GOOD?

The dictionary offers up many meanings of this tiny word, but when it comes to your work, being good means you have the qualities required for a particular role. In other words, being good is something that can be taught.

Now, what does it mean to be nice?

Again, there are many definitions, but if we're talking about you as a person, being nice means you are polite, pleasant, and kind. It's an innate part of your personality—either you're a nice person or you aren't. It's not something that can be easily taught, if at all (that kind of work often requires intense therapy).

When I'm building a team for Fashion Week or hiring stylists for my salons, I've found that I look for good, nice people—people who are honest and hardworking with thoughtfulness, awareness, kindness, and a desire to be their very best.

Why? Because I know we'll eventually get to great together.

As a result, I'm constantly surrounded by excellent people and situations that make me feel great and help me be my best self. I've worked hard to eliminate the bad, not-so-nice people and things that cause destruction. Instead, I've chosen to seek after joy by helping good people become great.

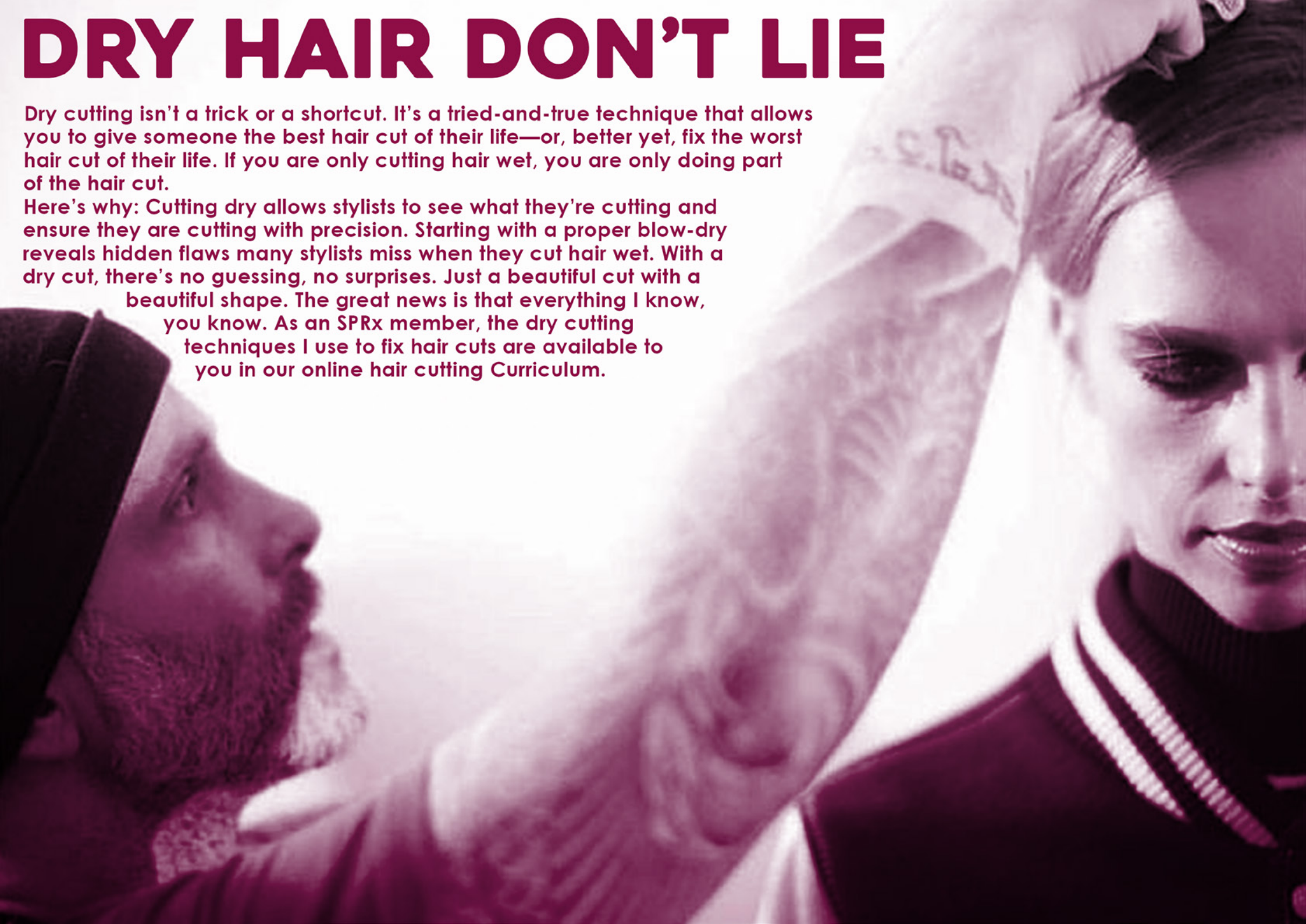
If you're in a place where you can't be great or find the greatness in others, get out. Life is too short to not surround yourself with good people. You might have to build up to great from good, but in the end, you'll be left with joy.



DRY HAIR DON'T LIE

Dry cutting isn't a trick or a shortcut. It's a tried-and-true technique that allows you to give someone the best hair cut of their life—or, better yet, fix the worst hair cut of their life. If you are only cutting hair wet, you are only doing part of the hair cut.

Here's why: Cutting dry allows stylists to see what they're cutting and ensure they are cutting with precision. Starting with a proper blow-dry reveals hidden flaws many stylists miss when they cut hair wet. With a dry cut, there's no guessing, no surprises. Just a beautiful cut with a beautiful shape. The great news is that everything I know, you know. As an SPRx member, the dry cutting techniques I use to fix hair cuts are available to you in our online hair cutting Curriculum.



THE POWER

One of my favorite guest stories comes from Kristi Mikesky, a beauty editor for The Zoe Report, who once wrote about a hair cut experience with me at Spoke & Weal. In her job, she works with top hairdressers regularly, so I was just one among many. I didn't try to impress her by name-dropping my celebrity client list. I didn't focus on making a personal connection with her so she'd write a great story about her experience. I just did what I always do—my job. I was the expert, I gave her the best hair cut of her life and I educated her on how to create her new look at home.

In my chair, we talked about her hair—not her personal life. She told me about the “just okay” hair cuts she'd received and how she struggled with certain aspects of her hair. Based on our discussion, I gave her an asymmetrical lob and showed her how to use products and tools in a different way to create the results she desired.

Then she said something that shocked me: “No hairdresser has ever done this for me.” Her comment reveals a current reality; stylists are not setting boundaries with their guests. They are focusing on being the friend, therapist, and mentor instead of being the expert and sharing their expertise with their guests. My best advice to you is this: Do your job first. Connect with them later. This doesn't devalue the importance of making a connection with guests, but it does prioritize it differently.

Thanks to the internet, smartphones and endlessly updating social media feeds, today's guests have instant access to more information about their hair than ever before. Sometimes this means a guest will come to an appointment armed with information. They confidently tell you what they want, and how they want you to do it. But what about the guest who doesn't know what they want? The one who says, “Do whatever you want to my hair,” and appears to mean it? Here's what I know: they don't actually mean it. In reality, they have very specific ideas about how they want their hair to look—or not look.

Case in point: when a guest tells me to do whatever I want, I say, “Great—I'm giving you a mohawk.” They protest immediately: “No! I don't want a mohawk!” Now we're having an honest conversation.

No matter how open a guest may seem to change or your creative ideas, it is essential to conduct a thorough consultation with every guest to ensure their expectations—even the unspoken ones—are met. This only happens by taking time to discuss options, consider all the variables (time, budget, lifestyle, sense of style, etc.) and come to an agreement together.

I think a guest who says “Do whatever you want” actually means “I don't know what I want, and I want you to tell me.” An expert begins this process discussion; they don't just plunge ahead and create whatever they want. Because it's never about doing what you want—it's always about giving the guest exactly what they want. From the consultation to the technical skill to the styling, SPRx is here to help you turn your next “whatever” into a well-planned, beautiful hair cut or style your guest loves.

OF AN HONEST CONVERSATION



As artists, we often talk about the courage it takes to create. But it also takes an incredible amount of courage and bravery to lead others, yourself and the industry.

One reason leading takes courage is because it's not easy. At all. It's downright challenging to be at the helm of anything, which is why there are countless books, webinars, TED talks, blogs, and you-name-it resources dedicated to the topic. It takes great character and resolve to lead others toward a common goal because there are many challenges along the way. Yet being a leader can yield incredible rewards. Because when a leader is fearless, their team will follow.

Let's say you are planning to climb Mount Everest. All your planning and training has led you to this moment, and you're finally at the bottom of the mountain, ready to climb. But then your climbing guide seems uncertain about the climb, or, to your shock and horror, scared. No matter how much training you've put in, there's no way you're following that guide. A fearful leader = fearful followers (or no followers at all).

The interesting thing about courage is that fear is an essential part of the equation. The very definition of courage is finding strength in spite of your fears. If you want to be successful in the salon business, you can't afford to be afraid. You can only dare to be courageous. All our SPRx online hair and beauty courses were designed to help you do just that, because courage begins with confidence.

So crave learning, grow your skills, master your craft, and be someone who leads with courage. I promise that your team will follow.

**WANTED:
FEARLESS
LEADERS**



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NEVER STOP LEARNING

- Jon Reyman & The Salon Pro Rx Team

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