

# Passion

A Salon Professional's Handbook  
for Building a Successful Business

Susie Fields Carder

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## Foreword to 10th Anniversary Edition

It's been ten years since I first wrote this book. I was traveling in Brazil when I came up with the title. My husband and I were on a 24 hour bus ride, feeling somewhat delirious at the time, and thinking about what the name of this book would be.

When we came up with *Passion*, I immediately knew that it described what I felt was one of the most important aspects of success. Soon after the book was published, I opened up a salon and called it *Passion*, as well.

Everybody I hired to work in the salon read this book and it became our Bible. Everything that I talk about in this book is what we did ourselves and four years later my salon was included in American Salon "Salon 200," as one of the fastest growing salons in the country. I was honored and it reinforced that the simple business concepts that I put together for this book, work.

Over the last ten years, hundreds of people have come up to me and told me that this book changed their life. It

gave them the direction and inspiration to go out and cause their own success.

I feel so fortunate to be able to support and impact so many people in this industry. I feel blessed that I was chosen and that I chose to do something with my Passion. I have traveled the world and built a training company that delivers business trainings to nearly 10,000 salon professionals each year.

I am so proud of my team and their commitment to improve this industry. Our companies bold statement is, “Global Leaders Delivering World Class Business Education,” and that’s who we are. They get up early and leave late. They jump on planes nearly every weekend to teach, train, and share some of the business principles outlined in this book.

They are committed like me to giving people in the salon industry the tools to succeed and everyday I marvel at their love, their teamwork, and their friendship.

Ten years later my dream is still the same. That you enjoy the book and it helps you to create and live your dreams. If I can ever be of support, don’t hesitate to email me @ [susie@salontraining.com](mailto:susie@salontraining.com).

# Dedication

Dreams do come true. The book you hold in your hands right now started as a dream and has evolved into so much more. It is my vision. It is my quest. It is the sum of all the parts that have become me. It is the reality of my passion. It is my gift for you and every salon professional in the industry.

In the beginning, I held my vision high. I had to show the universe who I was. In the process, the book has materialized. In sharing my hopes and wishes, goals and aspirations, I feel humble and proud in the same instant. I am timid and yet fearless.

All I have experienced as I present this book to you could not have been possible without the ever-supportive people with whom I am proud to encircle my life. Some have coached, some have mentored, some have teased, some have listened (and laughed) and some have hugged as we've cried. In stormy times, they've been there; in moments of peace and celebration, they've been there. I am truly blessed and thank you all.

Thank you to my right arm Linda D. for editing, supporting, correcting, and making me look like a genius. My mentors Anne Boe, Barbara Geraghty, Dr. Barbara De'Angelis, Jean Braa, Shawn Hite-Harris, Joan Lakin, Chalea Pierce, Robyn Litt, Joy Lanoue, Sharyn Tolle, Sherry Musser, Andrea Carter, Rebecca Evans, Princess

Tina, Tasha Nelson, Bonnie Dean: Thank you for being powerful women with vision enough to share.

Pat, you have been an amazing contributor to my personal and professional life. Brian Reiss, thank you for holding up a mirror and sharing in the greatness of every venture with your enthusiasm and outrageous self-expression. Moshen, thank you for standing in a place, strong with commitment, as you strive to make a difference in this industry and work toward increased prosperity for salon professionals. To all the women in Women's Impact Network and my colleagues who have encouraged me, saying, "You *can* do it," thank you. Without your support and belief, I would have still been saying, "Well, maybe someday." To Landmark Education, thank you for having a support system and educational curriculum that allowed me to see what was possible. To wordsmith Eva Shaw, a blessing in my life and my intuitive sidekick, you brought my word, ideas and dreams to life with passion: Thank you for sharing your talent and inspiration.

Dad, thank you for being a great leader. And thank you for teaching me the ethics of life and that if I wanted something I'd have to work hard. You taught me lessons that have been indispensable, including the fact that hard work pays dividends. Through example and words, I learned about paying my dues, about honesty and about integrity. I mastered the complexities of the Golden Rule, and I now know it is the basis for everything. I am honored to have been and continue to be your student.

Auntie Em, without you and your support I would have never had the courage to take many of life's risks, including attending cosmetology school. You're a risk taker and I'm

gratified to have learned so many things from you; thank you for always being “mom.” I love you.

Saving and savoring the best for last has always been a fancy of mine. Thus, it is with overflowing indebtedness and intense love that I dedicate this book to Bert Carder, my friend, business partner, confidant, soulmate and wonderful husband. Thank you for being so unstoppable as I continue my quest, as I live my dream. Thank you for being such an unselfish, joyful reason for my every breath. I love you. And to Amanda and Megan, my beautiful daughters who are gifts from God, I love you both. You have been my cheerleaders, my life preservers, and my reality checks. You’ve taught me how to be a kid, put up with my stuffy business persona, and tickled me with humor, wit and immense insight.

I love and appreciate all of you. Bless you.

Bless you, my dear friends and colleagues as you undertake a journey to capture passion. This book is dedicated to you.

# Introduction

Do you remember when you first entered the industry? What did it feel like? Take a minute and think back. Do you recall the pride you sensed at accomplishing your goal — to be a full-fledged salon professional? It felt wonderful, didn't it?

For many of us, that sense of fulfillment, the dignity of our profession, has been put aside. There are always “should've” and “could've” lurking inside our heads. Have you ever thought: “I should have gone to work at one of the up-scale salons instead of this home-town shop?” Or: “I could have made more money (had more clients, given more demonstrations, been more successful) if I only had the same opportunities as Mary (or Bob or Diane).

If you've ever felt or voiced these excuses, you're in good company. Eight out of ten salon professionals say that they've been disappointed as professionals at one time or another *in the last five years*. Actually, statistics take this feeling of loss a step further; most people are unsatisfied with their chosen careers.

The great news is that *nothing is wrong*. You're okay. You're very normal. I remember working nights at a local restaurant until I built up my clientele. I thought: Why am I working so hard? What am I doing? I should just go get a real job, one job. If I had quit, I wouldn't be able to share this knowledge. How many times do we quit when success is around the corner?

You're right if you're thinking that we have all missed opportunities, possibly taken the wrong fork in the road. And we've all thought sometime in life that somebody else's grass was greener. This is common. We've all had a sense that we're only realizing or using half of our potential. What really separates those who can't shake those anxious sensations and those who acknowledge them and then move out of the career doldrums is *passion*.

Is passion missing from your professional life? Let's get personal for a minute, and give this concept some thought. I so strongly believe that we should all have passion for our business that I'll make this promise: If after you have read this book, applied the principles, and accepted the how-to's I've outlined you do not increase your success and self-esteem, I will never bother you again. No guilt. No hassle. No reminders of the should've and could've.

If you're missing passion, you're missing the boat for success and fulfillment in all facets of life. Take a second to look at this term, and see how it applies to those who work as salon professionals. In our field, passion is lust for excellence. It's a hunger for success. Passion is knowing what you do is important. Passion can be an obsession, a yearning to be your best self yet. This attitude, however, does not include comparing your career motives (or your personal goals and objectives) with others. Passion is in you and for you. You own it; yet if it's lost, you can regain it. We're all very fortunate in that respect.

Throughout this book, we'll continue to talk about passion. Using the advice contained here, you will have the opportunity to control your own destiny and recapture your passion.

Let's make something crystal clear. We each have our own road map to arrive at the point called success. But, keep in mind that we each color success with different shades of crayons. Winston Churchill said that success is moving from failure to failure without losing momentum. While you're formatting just what passion is for you, curb any tendency to compare what you want out of life with the gal or guy at the next station or next salon. That won't work.

Making comparisons only undermines self-confidence, but learning from the success stories of people with passion can inspire you. Therefore, I've included advice to motivate you on your journey toward success. I'll give you quotes to ponder and suggestions to ingest. I'll give you concrete ways to attract and maintain clients, to present yourself to your best advantage, to network, and to make more money. We're going to talk about being a professional, communicating for success, increasing retail rewards, setting goals, marketing, team building, planning for the future and visualizing your dreams. Throughout the book, I refer to you, the reader, as a salon professional. This was done to make reading easier; please understand that "salon professional" includes everyone in the salon or connected to it such as nail technicians, make up artists, colorists, perm technicians, salon owners, hair designers, receptionists, shampoo assistants, manufacturers, distributors, and salon consultants.

To make this book easier to read in quick snatches, a necessity in the busy life of any salon professional — I've organized it into short chapters. That way, you can read one in a spare moment or perhaps a section when you have a few minutes.

No one is going to make a fuss if you decide that a recommendation isn't right for you. It's okay. We all have times when we're in the "gathering stage," that is, a time to reflect and map out future plans. If you're not ready to move out and ahead, don't fret. This book will help you when you are ready. Each chapter has gotten me where I am today; a small piece of the bigger puzzle.

Nonetheless, just as I made a promise to you that you can regain your passion, you must make one for me. All I ask is that you read the advice that's shared and do so with an open mind. These techniques and methods work; men and women in the salon industry from San Diego, California to Bangor, Maine have used them to increase their:

- Communication skills
- Personal satisfaction
- Self-esteem
- Financial options
- Choices for personal and professional growth.

The stumbling blocks to achieving a higher level of success, hurdles that may have contributed to your loss of passion, probably originated somewhere in the past. The steps toward regaining your passion and moving toward success (as you define it) are available now. Your desire for success is restricted only by the intensity of your passion. Your passion is controlled only by your depth of imagination and creativity.

Here's the catch: You must promise to try to regain it or to capture it. That's all I ask. Period.

I'm a salon professional, too, and have a busy clientele as a hair designer. I've worked in salons that have great clients and wonderful teams and some salons that didn't measure up. I've been in this business since 1983, and I built my business being a single mom of two girls. I've struggled with the ups and downs just like you. I truly share your concerns and fears. But, I also believe that if you're going to do something, and take the time to do it, you should do it well. I believe that to be the best for ourselves takes commitment — takes passion — and it starts inside.

Have you ever tossed a pebble into a still pond? Passion is like that pattern of ripples. You feel successful, you take steps to become more successful and you know what? Others suddenly see you as a highly confident individual, and the ripples make a wider circle. They can alter your entire “pond” of life *forever*.

Motivational speaker Brian Tracy asks, “If you could dare to do anything in the world, and there were no limitations, what would you dare to do? What would you dare to be?” Are you ready to take on that dare — to be the best, to be passionate and to be the most confident person you can be? No need to wait — turn the page, and let's get going.

# Section 1

## Passion: Getting It, Keeping It and Communicating It

Do you have what it takes to really succeed in our highly competitive field? It takes passion. By examining passion more closely, it's easy to see that it's full of possibilities and even more secrets. In order to unravel the meaning of passion, we'll focus on the secrets of success and professional presence immediately, since it is the foundation on which to build a successful career and a more fulfilling life.

In this section, we'll disclose the secrets of becoming even more confident, ways to measure your personal satisfaction and thoughts that might just change your attitude.

Since presence is more than who you want to be, we're going to look even deeper at the personal secrets of a successful life. Presence is a blend of your inner-most self and the self that the world meets, so we'll also focus on your professional image with tips and suggestions on the power of communicating, listening, and shaking hands.

## Passion: A Salon Professional's Handbook

Additionally, I believe there are clients everywhere. So we'll focus on skills to attract new clients whether we are at a network meeting, club meeting, church meeting or professional mixer. Therefore, I've included information on how to plan a presentation.

I think the best "secret" in this section, however, is the power of saying thank you. How often do we forget to credit, recognize, and acknowledge those who are important to us, the individual at the next station, the person who delivers our products, our clients, and our families? Proclaim yourself a rarity in this hectic society, and learn great ways to say "You're important. Thank you so much." There's no time to waste. The secrets of success and passion are waiting to be revealed. Do we have any time to lose? Definitely not!

### **What is Success?**

*To be successful, realize that:*

*There is no such thing as standing still.*

*Time lost is time gone forever.*

*Life lessons are valueless unless we've gained insight.*

## **The Secrets of Success**

Here, ready for your immediate use, are some of the best secrets of success ever formulated. It's a formula you'll want to use every single day of your life. Remember, just as easy as they are to do, they are easy not to do, too.

1. *Keep smiling.* It's hard not to smile back when a smile comes in your direction. With a smile, you can change a person's mood or improve a person's day.

Secret Note: Your face can't tell the difference between an honest, spontaneous smile and one that is put there to make others happy. Smiling feels good; it makes others feel good, too.

Try this right now. As you read the next few paragraphs, put your lips into "smile position." Don't you feel better? Of course. Make smiling a habit to transform your world for the better.

2. *Avoid arguing.* Never disagree with a client. You're not going to win. End of story. While the client may not be correct, that aspect hardly matters. You are not winning a war, and you're not the captain of the high school debating team. This person is your client; this person is your business.

Secret Note: When a problem arises, look the disgruntled customer in the eyes, acknowledge what has been said, and reply, "What I understand you to say, Tina, is that you are angry because..." or, that "You're upset because..." or, "How can I make this better for you?" Listen to the response, and use positive body language, such as, a smile, erect posture, a firm handshake. If possible, end your question with Success Secret #1.

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3. *Give a minimum of three compliments each day.* Every person wants recognition; some of us need it more than others. Have you ever said something like: “Hey, Bert, great shirt,” and watched Bert beam. Or, “Kiki, that last weaving you did was spectacular.” And Kiki’s reaction? Smiles, and quite possibly, the receiver stands a little taller.

We all need compliments, and I’ve found that when we give them, we get them back. Make a personal effort to give three sincere compliments each day.

If you stay with behavior-based compliments such as “You’re always on time,” or “I appreciate your knowledge and artistry,” people generally have an easier time believing you. The behavior-based compliments make you seem more sincere versus trial-based compliments, such as: “Your eyes are pretty (or your blouse is stunning...)”

Secret Note: There are endless possibilities to meet your compliment quota. In addition to those people in your salon, you can give compliments in your personal realm, too. Did the grocery bag person carefully place the bread at the top of the brown sack? Did your significant other or offspring do something helpful without even thinking that he or she was doing you a favor? Was a sales clerk, bus driver, school teacher, postal worker, garage mechanic or other service person especially friendly, courteous or kind? Does that give you a few ideas? Yes, these folks and other people in your life will give you perfect opportunities to reach your quota.

4. *Make an effort to reach out and touch someone.* The customer relations office with the New York City

## Passion: Getting It, Keeping It and Communicating It

Public Libraries recently did a study concerning non-intrusive touching. The librarians found that when they made contact with patrons in non-intrusive ways — a pat on the hand, a finger’s touch to the elbow, and so on — patrons reported that they had received more caring and helpful service than from non-touchers. The patrons believed that there was a connection to the public servant, and they felt a warm bond to the library that they couldn’t quite explain. Nonetheless, they gave the library’s customer service survey higher marks.

Take some advice from a librarian, and create your own bond with clients. Although we’re in the high-touch business, we need to extend that technique to immediately greet clients.

Secret Note: With your next three customers: 1) Shake hands. 2) Pat a shoulder. 3) Touch an elbow. 4) Or you can do as I do, and hug each client. I always feel better when I share hugs, and my clients admit that they do, too.

5. *Mirror positive emotions and behavior.* Does your client seem to bubble with happiness? Mirror that. Is your client excited? Get your excitement level up. Is your client subdued or introspective? Put the bubbles and excitement aside, and make it a time for quiet conversation.

Secret Note: You can move mountains with this one secret alone. Be sensitive and empathetic. Make your emotions genuine.

6. *Use your client’s name often.* While you’re providing services or selling products, use the client’s name frequently. “Barbara, how was the traffic getting here?” “You know, Brian, you must have been on vacation;

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you look so tan (or relaxed or fit).” We love our names, and feel good when others use them. I believe that there is nothing more beautiful than the sound of our own names, and using names is an easy “success secret” to include in your every day business.

Secret Note: Make your goal to use a client's name a minimum of seven times during the appointment.

7. *Make eye contact.* Look into your client's eyes when listening. Let them know what they're saying is interesting, and you're very interested. If you're not, you'll probably lose that individual as a client.

Secret Note: When using a client's name in conversation, make sure you're also making eye contact.

8. *Cultivate your sense of humor.* Read funny books. Go to funny movies. Tell at least two jokes a day. Remember, good humor never offends — make sure your humor is inoffensive.

## **Super Tips from Success Makers**

While gathering information for this book, I talked with the movers and shakers — the really passionate people of our industry. I asked questions like a nosy two-year-old-child, and I got a bundle of advice on what one needs to be successful. Here's the best of the bunch. Circle your favorites. Adopt at least three pieces of advice today:

- Keep moving.
- Keep trying.
- Give the gift of heart.
- Get off to a good start in anything you do.
- Give your enthusiasm to everyone.
- Be yourself.
- Forget yourself.
- Become genuinely interested in the other person.
- Be fair, honest, and friendly, and you'll be admired and liked.
- Make others feel important.
- Count your assets, and stamp out self-pity.
- Put your smile power to work.
- Meet people on their own level.
- Keep your temper to yourself.
- Work smarter, not harder.
- Keep your promises.
- Learn from the examples of others.
- Overwhelm people with your charm, *not* your power.

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- ✂ Forgive yourself if you fail.
- ✂ Be lavish with kindness.
- ✂ Be a do-er, not a say-er.
- ✂ Count your blessings.
- ✂ Don't keep score — nobody really wins.
- ✂ Laugh at yourself.
- ✂ Share.
- ✂ Think twice before you give unwanted advice — or any advice.
- ✂ Look for the good in all people and every situation.
- ✂ Be an optimist.

*“I don't know anyone who has got to the top without tenacity. That is the recipe. It will not always get you to the top, but it should get you pretty near.”*

— Margaret Thatcher,  
former Prime Minister of England

## **Super Confidence: Making Your Dreams Come True**

### **Never say “fail”**

Have you ever said or even thought, “Gosh, I’m a failure.” I believe that your mind can only go one direction at a time — either in the positive “can do” way or the opposite direction toward failure.

This “F” word, failure, could actually be sabotaging your success. Those who have confidence will not even think about using this “F” word and rightly so.

About five years ago, University of Southern California professors Warren Bennis, Ph.D. and Burt Nanus found out in their study of 90 highly successful leaders, the super-confident people “simply didn’t think about failure — they didn’t even use the word.”

The study showed that the confident people acknowledge errors, but they used synonyms such as glitch, bungle, setback. They viewed their blunders as miscalculations. They did not fail, but rather used these as learning experiences to help them avoid future fumbles.

Patty, the super-confident owner of an up-scale San Francisco salon, recently made a wrong decision. She honestly revealed the significance to me in order to share this story with you. The price tag? It cost the salon nearly \$100,000. Ouch!

I asked, “Patty, how do you feel about the loss? Do you feel awful about losing so much money?”

Patty simply shrugged, and replied, “Perhaps I should have, but I don’t. To me, money is just a way of keeping score in the game of life — and I’m sure I’ll regain my score. More so, I’ve always believed a mistake is just

another way of doing things. We learn a whole lot more from what doesn't work than what does." Summarizing her philosophy, Patty quotes actress Sophia Loren: "Mistakes are part of the dues one pays for a full life."

### **Trust your ability to learn**

When offered a chance to do a job we've never attempted before, many of us protest: "I don't know if I can do that. Maybe you should ask someone else. I've never had experience in that area."

In case you haven't realized it before: We're not born knowing everything. But we're born to learn as much as possible. Smart people — the super confident men and women of the world — continue to learn and to seek out learning as part of their daily lives.

People who have mastered the super-confidence game wade right in. They figure what they don't know, they can learn. Early in her career, Gloria, a prominent stylist in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, won a contest offered by a manufacturer. The prize was to assist the luminary Vidal Sassoon with a demonstration at a national beauty show in New York. Looking back, Gloria remembers, "If I'd been holding a handkerchief, I would have been twisting it wildly trying to make up my mind. I'd never done anything like that before. I was born and grew up in this tiny, dusty town in southwest Texas. Why, I'd never even been east of Houston."

Today, Gloria chuckles with a contagious laugh, "Somehow I managed to say thank you and that I'd love to assist." It was the best thing she could have done for her budding career. She explains. "Weeks before I was to go to New York, I learned everything I could about being an

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assistant — all the etiquette. I talked with the producers of the show about what would be expected of me. I badgered the product line distributor with questions, and I learned. I even arranged to stay with some friends of friends who promised to help me navigate Manhattan. Then, I read everything I could on body language and presentation skills. Sure my time on stage would only be a few minutes, and I knew I was going to be there to assist, not provide the instruction, but I take work seriously.”

As luck sometimes has it, Gloria never did assist Mr. Sassoon. Rather, something better happened. Because one of the platform artists was suddenly called away, Gloria was asked to fill in. “Had I said, ‘No’ to the initial invitation to go to New York, I would never have made that super confident leap. I probably wouldn’t have gotten the courage to move to Dallas — or strut into the foremost salon in the city to ask for employment. If I hadn’t made that leap, I may never have realized my dream of working with dignitaries, celebrities and other exciting people.”

### **Honor yourself**

As children, we’re taught that it’s not nice to brag, talk about ourselves constantly, and crow about our accomplishments. Boasting still isn’t good form, but honoring our accomplishments is a different ball game. From this moment on, do yourself a favor and honor your successes. Love yourself, and feel proud.

Lucille Ball, that incredible actress, once said, “Love yourself first, and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.”

If we love ourselves, we’re proud of our accomplishments. This doesn’t mean that we should flaunt a humon-

gous tip or tell the world why we got such a hefty raise. It means personally congratulating ourselves on a job well done and enjoying the moment by savoring it.

Publicly, you might say, “Thank you so much — I couldn’t have done it without everyone’s help.” Privately, crow all you like. Jump up and down. Scream a little if you like. Hug yourself, and say out loud that you’re a winner. And as you slip off to sleep, you might want to recount exactly how glorious it felt when you pulled off that incredible success.

Every night before I slip into bed, I write in my success journal. I write down everything I am proud of myself for, and what I did that was terrific. I have even shared this with my daughters and asked them to name one happy thought or thing that went well that day. You’d be surprised how hard this is. It seems easier to focus on what we didn’t do.

### **Downplay your mistakes**

People who have super confidence accept that they make mistakes, however, they don’t dwell on them, over-dramatize them, or personalize them.

Running out of gas on the way to work doesn’t make you stupid; it simply means that you need to pay more attention to details. I once dumped a bottle of color down a client’s face. I was humiliated, but I resolved it with quick action. I gave her the service free because of my clumsiness, apologized profusely and learned some amazing lessons.

Dropping a bottle of shampoo or hair color and making a mega-mess on the salon’s new carpet doesn’t mean you’re a klutz; it means that you were probably rushed. You may need time management skills.

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Lecturing yourself with “I’ve always done stupid things” may be based in school-days experiences. Children can be exceptionally cruel to one another, and sometimes adults can be purposefully hurtful to children. I call these the “negative or old tapes,” and when we commit an “oops” in life, they rewind through our minds. They sometimes seem to be on a continuous tape so we hear them over and over when confidence is low.

According to success experts, the only way to stop the berating is to deny those thoughts and clarify ourselves as adults. We must push the off button to the stupid tapes and get rid of them. Our minds can only go to one thought at a time; choose the one you would prefer.

Sure you may have done something you wish you hadn’t. Everyone does something unforeseen once in a while. Remember, this is just one incident in your entire life. It says nothing about your self worth. It says nothing about you as a professional or as a woman or man. Your best advice? Get over it, and concentrate on why you are a valuable person. Concentrate on one really great personal quality. Do you have a wonderful smile? Are you a genius with a weave? Is your checking account always in balance? Do you have a joyful home life? Great chef or gardener? Have lovely eyebrows or a way with poetry? Turn off the old tapes, and play your best quality tapes instead.

### **Give yourself a pep talk**

Anytime we start a self-improvement program, we’re nudged or perhaps obsessed as to what might have been. Here is where the “should’ve’s” and “could’ve’s” can get even the most positive folks feeling a bit down.

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“If only I could’ve avoided eating all those goodies during the holidays, I could fit in the clothes I love to wear to the salon.” “I should’ve listened to others (parents, spouse, kids, friends) and not invested in the salon because now money is so tight.”

Personal or professional, these thoughts are an extension of the “old tapes” mentioned above. Why berate yourself? Make your self talk, your personal pep talk, positive.

When I trained with Dr. Barbara De Angelis, a relationship expert, she shared a three-step routine called the “Power Process.” To use it, you look into a mirror and shout as loud as you can all the things you hate or which anger you. For example: “Susie, I hate it when you don’t believe in yourself.”

The next step is to acknowledge what you want. Okay, so you’re unhappy. What do you need to do now? For example,

“Susie, what I want you to do is go into that business meeting and show them who’s boss.”

The last step is praise. Praise yourself for all the love and good you have to offer. “Susie, I am so proud of you for standing your ground, etc.”

Repeat the process until the anger and frustration dissipate. You’ll be surprised how hard it is to compliment yourself and acknowledge all the good. But, with practice you’ll be super confident. This is probably one of the most powerful techniques I’ve ever learned. Best yet, you can do it anywhere you have a mirror and feel cleansed and energized.

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Here are more ideas:

- Write what's good or positive about yourself or the situation in a success journal.
- Speak these affirmations in the present tense: "I am creating new relationships in my life. I am creating wealth in my world. I am able to ask for a raise (better location in the salon, more assistance, and so on).
- Make a cassette tape of your favorite statements — starting with "I am" and listening to it in the car, before bed, anytime you need a personal pep talk.
- If life seems to be getting the best of you, check the resources for some counseling or self-help groups. Reach out when you need assistance; people are there with helping hands.

### **You're worth it**

The old adage of "you get what you pay for" is unequivocally true in our business. If you want something you must go after it and know your worth. For example, let's say that in your town the average rate for a woman's haircut and blow dry is \$18. However, you do an exceptional job, and your clientele refers new customers on a regular basis. Perhaps, it's time to give yourself a raise. If you're unsure of the going rate for anything, ask colleagues, and call others salons for prices. Know your worth, and you will never underrate yourself.

Super confident people know what they are worth. They do not apologize for the fact that they are in business; they do not give their services away unless they do so with eyes wide open. This is your business, and if you want good things to happen to you, you have to ask. Remember you

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have to spend money to make money. When I started my speaking career, I spent more money than I made on press kits and videos and promotional supplies. I made a lot of costly mistakes, but I learned and achieved great things.

Super confident men and women get ready for success. As Oprah Winfrey once said, “Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity.” The folks who achieve super results make plans, continue their education, network with colleagues, and ask for business. Super confident people reach out for success, and it comes to them because they know they’re worth it.

### **Let go of fear**

“Yes, I acknowledge fear, but I do not let it rule my life,” explains Chris, a colorist in Los Angeles. As a teenager, Chris immigrated to the United States to live with a distant relative in one of the tougher sections of the city. Chris worked in all sorts of odd jobs in order to save enough to enroll in cosmetology school.

“A lesson I learned early on was to feel the fear and move through it. I move on from fear — if it looks like a brick wall, I build a ladder. When I’m in a fearful period, I ask myself the ‘what if’s,’ that is, what if this terrible thing or that terrible thing occurs. What’s the worst that can happen? Looking at fear in this way, I know the odds and the obstacles.” This winter, Chris will join a firm that produces a national product line and will begin teaching color at shows throughout the country.

Use the “what if’s” if fear is stopping you. Experience the fear of a situation, but don’t be disabled by it. Super confident people look at their options, and then break the fear down into manageable chunks. For example, if you’re

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nervous around people you don't know, take a class at the community college on presentation skills. If you're not sure how best to dress for a specific body style or image, hire (or barter with) an image consultant to get more information. If you're designing the interior of your salon and just can't get it right, talk with an interior decorator or a student who is studying decorating. If you're concerned about saving for the future and for retirement, ask colleagues to recommend a financial planner or get some books on investing. Take charge of your fears and they'll make you stronger.

When I started building my clientele, I decided to do seminars for corporations on professional presence. I'd never spoken to an audience, but I thought: How hard can this be?

I managed to get a meeting with the human resource director at a local corporation, and she booked me the following week. The day of the presentation, I woke up from a restless night sick to my stomach. I called the human resource director and told her there was no way I could come. Bursting into tears, I told her my uncle had died.

To this day, I have no idea what possessed me to lie, but I know fear was a great motivator. Needless to say, I rescheduled for the following week. This time I was determined to go through with the plan. Again, I woke up sick, but pushed through the fear.

Fifty participants attended the seminar. I was so scared and nervous that I was surprised that they stayed to hear what I had to say. But, they did. That experience birthed my speaking career. The feeling of accomplishment left me feeling euphoric. If I had quit and let the fear take over, I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing now.

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Specialists who coach super-confident business people stress that throughout any self-improvement program, we must be kind, generous, loving and thoughtful *to ourselves*. Take baby steps before the giant steps. Give yourself plenty of pats on the back. With these suggestions and stories, you, too, can make your dreams come true.

Fear leads you to believe that where you are is a safe place and going forward is a risk. But, in fact, the truth is that you are always at risk: Risk of stagnating...risk of missing out on your destiny.

### **A Set of Values for Every Achiever**

*The greatest handicap: Fear.*

*The best day: Today.*

*The greatest mistake: Giving up.*

*The greatest stumbling block: Ego.*

*The easiest to do: Find fault.*

*The top comfort: Work well done.*

*The greatest need: Common sense.*

*The best gift: Forgiveness.*

*The Greatest knowledge: God.*

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### **Is My Life Full?**

At the end of a working career, the wise person looks back, and thinks, “I’ve enjoyed every day of this journey.” The unhappy individual scowls, “I’ve worked myself to death, and now I’m too old to enjoy the fruits of my labors.”

What was missing from that second person’s life? Simply put, it was the joy of work. There is true satisfaction from performing a job well, and that’s the joy of working. This doesn’t mean that working isn’t hard — that’s why it’s called work! Discovering joy in work, however, enables us to more fully enjoy life. It’s savoring the journey as well as the destination.

Wisdom is gained by being open to all facets of life — our working life and playing time, and all the other joys that make our world unique. Sometimes we gain the most wisdom from the most difficult lessons; sometimes the most joy is experienced in the simplest situations.

Check yourself with this questionnaire. Answer: “Yes,” “No,” or “Sometimes.”

1. Do you spend enough quality time with your children and/or family in a giving, loving and sharing atmosphere?
2. Are you involved with your community, your neighbors, your friends?
3. Do you allow for some private time every day to regenerate or regroup?
4. Are you taking care of your physical health through proper nutrition and exercise, and when appropriate, seeking professional advice?

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5. Do you take pleasure in the work from which you are earning a living?
6. Are you constantly developing new skills or knowledge related to your profession?
7. Do you have a sound and workable budget for spending as well as saving?
8. Do you feel a spiritual connection and support this by regularly attending a service or through prayer or meditation?
9. Do you daily appreciate the blessings of nature with the changing of the seasons, the animals and plants, the sun at noon and the stars at midnight?
10. Do you feel at ease in your life and position?

Examine your responses. Consider that work, play and prayer all join to create a full, gratifying life.

Is your life full? By asking this question, you have made a move to change any area that doesn't seem as satisfactory as you would like. This quiz looks simple, but the answers can produce extraordinary changes in life if you give them a chance.

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### **Life and Mountain Climbing**

*Here's a thought to ponder:*

*Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. Occasionally glance toward the summit. This keeps your goals in mind. Look down toward your feet as you climb higher and higher, and partake of the beauty so close at hand.*

*Marvel that each step on your journey produces a new vantage point. Climb slowly and steadily. Savor each passing moment. Know that the top is in sight.*

*And the view from the summit? It becomes an uplifting climax for your journey, but it isn't the entire journey. Every step you took brought you to that point, and without each step you wouldn't have made it.*

*Your life and your world are what you make them by your thoughts and your deeds.*

— Author Unknown

## **Attitude: The Essential Attribute for Success**

Discounting luck and rich relatives, what's the characteristic that makes one individual succeed and another flounder? It's *attitude*. The really great news is that a positive attitude can be acquired.

Attitude is how we face our job, how we face our responsibilities, and how we accomplish everyday activities. It is the motivating force behind our wanting to continue to do and to be the best we can be. It is our desire to handle every situation with a professional manner in a positive way. It's picking up the pieces after a shattering experience and gluing our lives back together. Attitude is facing every situation with optimistic anticipation.

Do you have a positive mental attitude? People who cultivate passion in their lives certainly do.

## **Checking your A.Q.**

Passionate people say that attitude is everything in life. The individual who knows all the professional skills and techniques, but doesn't have the motivation to use them is no better than the person who doesn't know any of the how's and why's. Knowledge is only useful when it is put into action with the right attitude. The attitude of a professional toward a career must be one of commitment to serve, whether the salon or client or both.

What is your Attitude Quotient — your A.Q.? Let's check it, and find out. The following list may help analyze your attitude. The more times you can honestly answer *always*, the better your attitude is for achieving success in the salon and out.

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1. I am enthusiastic.
2. I am self-motivated.
3. People often comment that I have a optimistic and hopeful outlook on life.
4. I follow through on all my promises so people know they can depend on me.
5. I am confident and not easily discouraged.
6. I use my cassette player to listen to educational, sales and motivational tapes.
7. I accept constructive criticism graciously because I want to improve.
8. Creative problem solving is one of my strong points.
9. I am willing to try fresh methods.
10. I have the persistence to follow perplexing undertakings to completion.
11. I work well with others.
12. I am aware and sensitive to the needs and wants of other people.
13. I strive to act like a professional at all times.
14. I steer clear of idle gossip and negative chatterboxes.
15. I communicate well with my superiors, peers, and subordinates as well as with family and friends.
16. I am well organized.
17. I believe planning is an important aspect of success.
18. I can think quickly in difficult circumstances.
19. I am proud of my ability to use common sense.
20. I seek additional educational opportunities in and out of the salon or company.

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21. I really believe in what I am doing and that I am important.
22. I keep a manual or file of useful ideas and suggestions, success strategies and tactics. I refer to it, and add to it often.
23. I read at least one motivational or inspirational book each month.
24. I enjoy finding new applications for my personal computer and/or ways to streamline my work in order to better serve my current and prospective clients.
25. I incorporate laughter into every day, and use it to dissolve tense situations, if appropriate.
26. I seek ways to praise people.
27. I know that if I love what I do, and do the best I can, the money will come.
28. I plan for my future through a regular saving or investment program.
29. I am open to time management techniques.
30. I consider myself a valuable person.

What's your A.Q.? Could you answer "always" as much as you wanted to? If you're hesitating even a little, review the list. Turn it around, and make this attitude quotient into an affirmation list. It will give you 30 passionate ways to improve your attitude.

*"Living the past is a dull and lonely business; looking back strains the neck muscles, causes you to bump into people not going your way."*

— Edna Ferber

## **Effective Communication Is Built on Effective Listening**

To communicate means to be understood. For salon professionals, it is a skill that is potent. Being a good communicator can have a positive influence on life; conversely, being an ineffective communicator can keep one stopped in his or her tracks.

While there are many factors woven together to form the patchwork of your path to success, communication is an integral component. Effective communication is the act of purposely responding after listening. Listening is more than hearing; it's putting a meaning to the sounds we experience. Listening is the ability to receive, connect, attend to, and interpret verbal and non-verbal clues to what is being said or demonstrated through body language.

Are you aware that we have different communication and listening styles? Experts who design customer satisfaction programs for corporations have broken them down into these different ones: discernment, comprehension, evaluation, empathy, and appreciation. Every listening experience includes all five. Here's how the five styles work:

**Discernment:** The purpose of the discernment phase is to gather complete information. The discerning listener focuses on the main message and decides which details are important.

**Comprehension:** The purpose of the comprehension phase is to organize and make sense of the material and information. The comprehending listener relates what is being said to his or her personal experiences and attempts to understand the relationship between the ideas.

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**Evaluation:** The purpose of the evaluation phase is to focus on making decisions based on what has been said. Evaluating listeners ask questions, contemplate motives, and accept or reject the messages according to his or her personal beliefs.

**Empathy:** The purpose of the empathy phase is to support the speaker during the conversation or presentation. The empathetic listener accepts the message as it is being presented, without prejudging it.

**Appreciation:** The purpose of the appreciation phase is to relax and enjoy what has been said. The appreciative listener gets into the moment and can easily be entertained, informed and inspired.

Allow your natural talent for listening, and your desire to be a great communicator, develop. Have a willingness to hone your skills to actively and positively reach clients, team members, and others on your journey to success. Try to overcome communication barriers by being aware of how you are listening.

By understanding each type of listening style, you can close the communication gap. I like to play a game when I meet someone and try to evaluate which type of listener he or she is by actions and words. It keeps the conversation interesting and helps me to sharpen my skills.

What can be achieved through better communication and better listening? Client trust and retention. It's as simple and complex as that.

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### **Communication and Success**

Do you realize only 15 percent of our financial success is technical ability? That leaves 85 percent of our work place success dependent upon communication skills. However, some of us are better communicators than others.

Experts in communication say that of the mistakes made in business at least 75 percent can be attributed to lack of clear communication. The next time you communicate with a client, really listen to what he or she is saying.

If you don't understand or if you want to make absolutely sure you understand what is being communicated, repeat the statement made or ask questions. You will be considered a professional and a caring person. Try this technique even when you believe you're communicating clearly. The results may be surprising.

## **Anyway**

*People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered,  
Love them anyway*

*If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives,  
Do good anyway*

*If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies,  
Succeed anyway*

*Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable,  
Be honest and frank anyway*

*What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight,  
Build anyway*

*People will really need help but may attack you if you help them,  
Help people anyway*

*Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth,  
Give the world the best you've got anyway.*

— From a sign on the wall of Mother Teresa's Shishu Bhavan,  
the children's home in Calcutta, India

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### **Passionate Listening**

What's the easiest way to distinguish a successful salon professional from one who isn't? Simply watch how they interact with their clients.

See the one who is doing all the talking, never letting the client get a word in edgewise? Nine times out of ten, you'll be looking at the individual who can't seem to make it in our highly competitive profession.

In order to put passionate listening to work, you must allow clients (and all the potential clients in your extended network) to speak. You must let others talk about themselves and to curb your tendency to monopolize the conversation. Why? Because you'll receive valuable information.

Allowing your opinions to steamroll through a conversation or merely overpower another person rather than show how you can help is a sure-fire way for you to lose a client and lose business. If you use a hard-sell technique with your clients for products or services, you jeopardize your future. Additionally, if you're only "people pleasing" and never really provide the professional advice clients want, you'll lose out, too.

When I started my business in 1983, I was excited and anxious to share my life with my clients. After all, I had a captive audience. Looking back, I can't believe I still have some of those same clients. Now I do most of the listening, and I ask a lot of questions. I ask clients about their needs, wants and desires. My clients feel I am appreciative, and I really care.

Keep in mind what the writer Anne Morrow Lindbergh said, "The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere."

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Use your professionalism, and you'll sincerely please your clients and yourself.

To be sure, you and I believe in our profession and the products we use and sell. Most of us think that what we do helps clients develop better self esteem and a more confident appearance. Regardless of how strongly we believe in ourselves and our service, we have to listen, not lecture.

Listening is the only way to target the service or product with the unique set of concerns the client presents to us. By remaining focused on helping the client — rather than making a sale — we build trust. Trust is crucial in building a successful business.

Passionate listening doesn't just mean paying attention to the client's words. Only a portion of what we actually communicate is verbal; actually 55 percent is non-verbal. It's the nod of a head, the smile, wide eyes, etc. It is essential to listen in such a way that you maximize every opportunity to pick up non-verbal cues. By doing so — giving the client the time to make an important point — you'll stand out from the vast majority of service people who simply talk too much.

Passionate listening means that you'll provide services and sell products that you believe are in your clients' best interests. You must establish yourself as an expert, and then live into it — that's why clients come to you for advice.

For instance, Beth, a long-time client, called for an emergency appointment to have her luscious auburn curls cut short. These were the same curls she had nurtured and conditioned for the last few years so I was surprised by the call.

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Sitting in my chair late in the afternoon, Beth said, “Susie, I just have to have a different look — short and efficient — especially now that I have this great new job. It’s the executive position I’ve been training for. Curls just don’t belong in the board room,” she concluded with a sigh. The sigh was an important clue in our conversation as was that slight frown she made at the end of the sentence.

I listened to her words, but I also knew my client was coming for advice. Yes, I could have cut her hair short and made it look exactly like the photo in the magazine she brought. But I believed that she needed to examine other options — that’s what a salon professional does when he or she really listens.

“Okay, Beth, I understand that you need a competent, businesslike hairstyle, but don’t you love your hair around your shoulders when you’re not wearing a suit and silk blouse? Let me show you some styles that are easy to create and give a strong career look.”

You’ve probably guessed the end of this story. I didn’t cut Beth’s hair that day, even though that’s what she initially wanted. Today, it’s longer, and more beautiful than ever. Rather, we spent the next hour braiding, twisting, sculpting, and designing styles that fit her new position in corporate America, without cutting one curl. Best yet, Beth knows how to recreate all the styles at home in the brief time before scooting the kids off to school and herself to the office.

Getting down to basics, a salon professional doesn’t sell his or her service, but rather we help. We’re problem solvers, and we have the answers. That’s why we continue to take classes and stay abreast of the newest fashion information. Our goal is to pass along important

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information. After clearly demonstrating how the product or service can help achieve an objective for the client (more manageable hair, an easier-to-handle style, etc.), the final decision is made by the client — not us. Ideally it's best to know what it will take for the client to accept the product or service offered, and then let the client sell him or herself. This is what happens by passionate listening.

P.J., a thirty-year veteran stylist in the Milwaukee area, owns a bustling salon that caters to the twenty-ish generation. It's such a successful shop that the retail products constantly have to be restocked. Here's how P.J. and others explained the right way to listen:

- ✂ When your client or potential client wonders something aloud, give him or her enough time to complete the thought.
- ✂ Don't jump in right then, and interrupt. He or she may need more time to think.
- ✂ When asked pointed questions, do your best to answer succinctly.
- ✂ Listen for the reaction in both verbal and non-verbal ways.
- ✂ Allow the speaker to complete sentences.
- ✂ Never interrupt, but let the speaker interrupt you any time he or she wants. Stop your thinking process to make sure you're listening.
- ✂ Express genuine interest in the things the speaker is saying.
- ✂ Keep one ear and both eyes tuned to the subtle messages the speaker is projecting.

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All this sounds easy, but most of the techniques that passionate listeners use must be practiced. Here are other points to ponder as you strive to improve listening skills.

- When you talk or give a demonstration or presentation, don't go on and on. Keep an eye on your client to make sure what you're saying is interesting. Change the octave of your voice, and keep a smile on your lips. If what you're saying isn't interesting (and you can always tell if they're really listening), change gears. Ask questions about the problems the client faces because you're probably missing something. Never become hostile or combative with the client.
- The first ten or fifteen seconds with a new client will determine the quality and length of your relationship. This is because there is an intangible, feeling-oriented "sizing-up" phenomenon that occurs early in any new relationship — including the distinctive, intimate one between client and salon professional.
- Much of who you are and how you are perceived as a communicator — brash or retiring, open or constricted, helpful or manipulative — will be on display in a subtle but crucial manner in those first moments. Make sure you are sending the messages you want to send.

How are listening skills improved? Here's an outstanding idea from Tracy, a salon owner in the Miami area. She explains that she always takes notes during the first few minutes of consultation time with a new client. Why? "It dramatizes the situation, and tells the client I'm so intent on pleasing him or her that I'm taking notes to refer to later. It

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also shouts the fact that I respect the client's needs." If you think it is impossible to listen and take notes at the same time you're wrong — the two actually reinforce each other. Just jot the concepts down using key words; don't try to record every sentence the client says.

Once the conversation has begun to pick up some steam, go back to your notes and discuss what you understand the client to have said. Ask the client to expand on key concerns; ask for clarification if needed.

Okay, I can hear you. You're saying: "Well, that's fine in theory, but what if the conversation is going nowhere? How do I listen if there's nothing to listen to? Shouldn't I take over the conversation?"

Probably not. The odds are that early in the first meeting with the new client you simply do not know each other well enough to discuss what the client really wants. Instead, focus your questions on three simple areas: The past, the present, and the future. For instance you could ask, "What specifically did you like about a favorite hair cut (color, perm, etc.?)?" You might say, "What are your present needs for a style (color, perm, etc.?)?" And you can ask, "What are your future plans for your hair? Do you have any long-term goals we should work toward?"

It will be up to you to add the "how" and "why" where appropriate. That's all you usually need. Take notes on the responses.

After you've listened passionately and talked with the client, you'll be ready to discuss in more detail what you can do to solve the client's problems. Remember, God gave us two ears and one mouth for a very good reason. Use those ears passionately as you create a listening environment for success.

## **How to Improve Your Listening Skills**

So many people are so impressed by the sound of their own voices and opinions they miss wonderful opportunities to learn, acquire new attitudes, and enjoy friendships, as well as gain important business connections. In social conversations, you may miss something crucial if you talk too much; in a business setting, you may lose a sale. The salon professional who actively listens to a client's needs and actively seeks ways to satisfy the client winds up at the top.

Here are some time-honored and successful how-to's on listening:

1. Limit your own talking. You can't talk and listen at the same time.
2. Be interested, and show it. You must convey a genuine concern and a lively curiosity. This encourages clients to speak freely so you can better understand their needs, desires, and viewpoints.
3. Tune in to the other person. Are you giving your full attention or is your mind wandering? Concentrate by practicing to shut out unwanted distractions.
4. Think like a client. Clients have important needs. When you better understand the client's viewpoint, you will retain that client.
5. Ask questions. If you don't understand something or feel that you've missed a point, clear up the confusion. Your lack of understanding could embarrass you later.
6. Hold your fire. Plan your responses only after you are certain you have a complete picture of the client's viewpoint. Prejudging is dangerous. A pause, even a long pause, doesn't always mean they've finished speaking.

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7. Look and listen for buying signals. Remember to focus on key, hot-button comments. In our dealings with others, we must be knowledgeable of prime motivating factors. Once we have identified these factors, we can gently push their buttons to get the response desired.
8. Listen for ideas, not just the words. You want to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces, so make sure you're listening to the ideas and concepts.
9. Use interjections. An occasional "yes," "I see," or "Is that so..." shows the clients you're still there, but don't overdo this technique or use the words as meaningless comments. A client can tell when you're really paying attention.
10. Turn off your own worries. This isn't always easy, but personal fears, worries, and problems unconnected to the client form a kind of "static" that can blank out the client's message.
11. Prepare in advance. Remarks and questions prepared in advance free your mind for more active listening. Prepare a list of what you want to discuss or the suggestions you want to make.
12. React to ideas, not to the person. Don't allow irritating things people sometimes say to let you become annoyed. We all have rotten days, and you don't know what's really going on in your client's life. You want to strive to be a peaceful person with a calming influence on others.