

## GMSB 222

[00:00:00] **Antony Whitaker:** Welcome to the Grow My Salon Business podcast, where we focus on the business side of hairdressing. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker, and I'll be talking to thought leaders in the hairdressing industry, discussing insightful, provocative, and inspiring ideas that matter. So get ready to learn, get ready to be challenged, get ready to be inspired, and most importantly, get ready to grow your salon business.

[00:00:28] **Antony Whitaker:** Hello and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon business podcast. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker, and it's great to have you here with us today. And whether this is your first time or perhaps you're a regular weekly listener, thank you for tuning into today's episode. And thanks for the feedback on the podcast.

[00:00:46] **Antony Whitaker:** The reviews that you've been posting really do mean a lot to me. I read every one of them and I wish it was like social media where I could reply directly to you, but you know who you are. So a heartfelt thanks. Here's one that came in from someone in the United States who said, What I love most about the Grow My Salon Business podcast is the fact that Antony keeps the topics real and relevant, meaning that the information is not fluff and it's relevant to the times that we are in.

[00:01:15] **Antony Whitaker:** I love that the information is universal, meaning that it fits most business models, sizes, and cultures. Most importantly, there is trust. I can trust the information given is accurate and comes from the heart. Overall, these podcasts are not to be missed. There's something for everyone. So thank you for putting these together and making the time to do so.

[00:01:38] **Antony Whitaker:** Well, thank you. The appreciation is what keeps us going as we're not sponsored. So if you haven't yet left us a review, it would be greatly appreciated. Just go to the Apple podcast app, scroll to the bottom of the page and write us a review. We would be most appreciative. So with that said, let's get on with today's show.

[00:01:59] **Antony Whitaker:** I've been doing a series of podcasts lately where I've been talking to industry educators who have online education platforms ranging from Vivian McKinder in New York to Paul Davey in Dublin, who has the hairdressing live platform and Travis Parker in San Diego, who has Travis

Parker Academy. And my guest today is Johnny Othona, who has Allilon education based in London with his partner, Pedro Inchenko.

[00:02:29] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, in today's podcast, we will discuss Johnny's philosophy about education. And we'll also talk about suitability. And I asked the question, what is beauty? And can you teach suitability? Can you teach feeling and how and why? Online education is evolving. So, without further ado, welcome to the show, Johnny.

[00:02:51] **Johnny Othona:** Hey Antony, how are you? Thank you for having me.

[00:02:54] **Antony Whitaker:** I'm very good and I'm really looking forward to our chat today. So, uh, Johnny, I should start by saying to our listeners that I've already had your business partner uh, Pedro Inchenko from Ena Salon on the podcast

[00:03:08] **Antony Whitaker:** that was episode 176, where we spoke mainly about your salon, but today we're going to focus on your education company, uh, which is Allilon. But before we do that, let's just start off with an overview of you and your background. Who is Johnny Othona? Give us your sort of two minute backstory.

[00:03:32] **Johnny Othona:** Okay, I'll keep it quite lean in regards to my answer. I am a 45 year old man based in London with two beautiful sons that I love very much. I own two companies, Allilon and Ena. Which I am with my best friend and my business partner. Ener is our consumer brand, whereas Alon is our industry driven brand and I've been hairdressing for about 33 years now, so I'm a bit old.

[00:03:58] **Antony Whitaker:** Great. Okay. Well, that's nice little introduction. Sort of sets the scene a little bit. Um, Allilon, um, I always find it difficult to, uh, you know, get my mouth around that. I know it's a, it's a Greek word originally as well, isn't it? Uh, and I know it actually has a meaning, which is quite, uh, appropriate for what, for what, uh, what you do.

[00:04:16] **Antony Whitaker:** Uh, what is the meaning again? What, how does, what does Allilon translate to in Greek?

[00:04:21] **Johnny Othona:** So when we first started the companies, we wanted names that were quite easy to explain. Um, Ena is modern Greek for the word one. And what we mean by that is not we are number one. It's more like one team, one dream, one goal, one mission. And Allilon, which is actually pronounced Allilon, is ancient Greek for the word one.

[00:04:44] **Johnny Othona:** The direct translation is one to another, so the principles of sharing. So the idea is you have the ancient Greek, which is Allilon, which you have to go through the training to then work with the modern Greek, with Ena, which is our consumer brand.

[00:04:59] **Antony Whitaker:** Perfect. Perfect. Very, uh, very well named then. So let's start off with that. What exactly is Allilon Education? Okay,

[00:05:09] **Johnny Othona:** Allilon education is a group of people who have the same goals, the same culture, the same mission, which is basically to share everything we love about what we've learned. Um, the main goal behind the company is to try and be as open as possible. And if you look at the track record of our company in regards to how much information we've given away complimentary to the industry and hopefully the positive influence we've had, I think we're living up to our reputation of what we're trying to Do.

[00:05:41] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Fair. So, so how did it come about? Because I know you've been, you know, you've had a long career, um, as an educator. How did Allilon Education come about?

[00:05:54] **Johnny Othona:** When me and Ped decided to change our journeys, um, we wanted to create a brand that really represented our core values as two people. And, um, we did have quite a strong, uh, background of education. Um, PED was teaching longer than myself. I, I worked in the salon for quite a few years, but I used to teach the assistants.

[00:06:14] **Johnny Othona:** It was different type of level of education and, um. When we opened up Allilon, we really wanted to try and create something which was, um, something that wasn't static. I find sometimes with education, it's very easy to just duplicate and repeat what you've been taught. And what we wanted to try to do is to a certain degree, look at our journey, look at all the positives and really kind of embrace them and hopefully improve them, but also dissect the things that didn't quite make sense.

[00:06:44] **Johnny Othona:** And then hopefully rewrite. what it is we've learned with our flavor, should we say?

[00:06:51] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Okay. Now, I mentioned to you earlier on, I've been speaking to a sort of series of educators from different countries, um, and very much about the online side of the education space. Now, I think I'm right in saying that Allilon Education was originally just a live, you know, academy, um, in the salon, um, but then it started to sort of morph into doing more online stuff.

[00:07:17] **Antony Whitaker:** Do you want to talk to us about that journey, um, you know, what brought that about?

[00:07:22] **Johnny Othona:** Definitely. I mean, uh, like you said, prior the big change that everyone went through, um, Allilon was a physical business, whether it was shows, classes, seminars, um, internationally or in the UK Academy. And then due to everyone's circumstances changing, Allilon was almost like a, a kickstart business based on responding to what was happening around the world to everybody.

[00:07:50] **Johnny Othona:** Um, myself and Pedro, we learned some really valuable lessons about the pros and cons of the way we were running our businesses prior. And, um, Allilon plus, which is now our virtual platforms has just taking our business to a whole nother level. It's given us the ability to diversify our services and also reach people that we never, ever, ever could reach before, simply because of cost of, you know, different markets, currency exchanges and so forth.

[00:08:18] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. So, so Allilon plus is the online side of the business. So you still have Allilon education, do you, which is a classroom, live, interactive, you know, uh, face to face. But then on top of that, you've got this online component.

[00:08:33] **Johnny Othona:** Yes, if you were to think of it as like a bit of a division. So Allilon education would be anything physical where you're sitting in a classroom or you're looking, you know, at someone physically in front of you. Whereas Allilon plus think of it more as in we have virtual classes. We've got group classes, one to ones, one to one coaching.

[00:08:53] **Johnny Othona:** We have our subscription business, which has over 282 videos. Now on it, we're now diversifying that. So we're breaking it down to kind of fit into the model of VTCT and NVQ. So there's loads and loads and loads of things that, you know, the digital world is something that I think people need to be aware of

[00:09:11] **Johnny Othona:** ain't going away. It's only going to grow. So luckily myself and Pedro. We were at the beginning of this kind of movement. Um, I would say we are at a point in our business where we're riding that wave and actually inventing what the next kind of steps are within that business model.

[00:09:29] **Johnny Othona:** It's a whole completely different business model than the physical education. So you have to think of it very differently as well. The key nowadays is that information or data is a new currency. And by using a digital platform, you're able to really target and give people what they want rather than what you think they want.

[00:09:50] **Johnny Othona:** So for example, you can keep track of what people are watching and how often they're watching it and what they're watching and the duration they're watching it, whether it's color videos, cutting videos, barbering videos, product videos. How long are they spending? Are they watching mainly bleach videos?

[00:10:04] **Johnny Othona:** Are they watching mainly curly hair videos? And then what you're able to do is custom people's experiences based on what they want and at the same time channel them with what they need.

[00:10:15] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, that sounds really good. I mean, I totally get what you're saying with that. It's exactly the same with my business, especially from the financial perspective is because it's online,

[00:10:25] **Antony Whitaker:** You can get people from all four corners of the earth. And, uh, yeah, and that's the whole thing. So it was very much cOVID that spurred you on to take it online.

[00:10:37] **Antony Whitaker:** It was a case of like, we know this is going to happen and this is a sort of impetus to really make it take off. So, so, so what have you done? Have you like invested in like a whole sort of studio set up, full production. Is this a full time thing or something you just dabble with?

[00:10:53] **Johnny Othona:** So that's a very good question. The fundamentally you have to almost what I've learned from this and maybe if your audience wants to take anything from this particular podcast is don't be scared to try something new and don't be scared to fail. Because trust me, if you stay or perceive staying still as being the way to be safe, that's not the reality of how things are moving.

[00:11:16] **Johnny Othona:** So being able to adapt is the key. Myself and Pedro brought a lot of money, to, um, take our company to another level. And we invested a proportion of that into a brand new studios, uh, which has five virtual classrooms, a recording space where we do all of our actual step by step tutorial videos. Um, and again, as we've created from the beginning, during lockdowns, we could only work on mannequins.

[00:11:44] **Johnny Othona:** So a lot of the content at the beginning was purely mannequin based. And then as we obviously started to allow ourselves to work with other people, human beings and so forth, which was for me, a godsend again, um, We were able to really start looking at things like texture differences, skin tones, and things like that, and really personalizing and looking at suitability and how different things have an impact in your choices of what you're teaching.

[00:12:07] **Johnny Othona:** Um, we invested a lot of money, uh, but the key to this, and this is something that I know me and Pedro both very strongly believe is on. The value to any business isn't necessarily the assets, i. e. the cameras or the screens. All these things play a part. It's actually the people that pull it all together.

[00:12:25] **Johnny Othona:** And that for me is the golden nugget. Surround yourself with the right people, magic happens. Have people that aren't on the same journey as you or don't necessarily believe the same vision as you. Everything becomes heavier, you know, and that's not necessary when you're trying to adapt quickly.

[00:12:42] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. So you're now full time working on the education side of things. You're not in the salon at all. Yeah.

[00:12:48] **Johnny Othona:** Correct. So yeah,

[00:12:49] **Antony Whitaker:** and you said a minute ago when you were talking about, uh, Allilon plus, you said something about there being 285 videos or something. So that's a, that's a library of content that people can access.

[00:13:00] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah.

[00:13:01] **Johnny Othona:** correct. Yeah, I do. I do still have an input in Ena. I don't for me. Um, our roles are different. So our responsibilities are different. And that for me is the balance that we've got now. You know, Peds able to really kind of run with the vision of him and what the leadership team want.

[00:13:20] **Johnny Othona:** And then if it's anything that maybe needs to be, um, can I say it's crossed by me, should we say, or worked alongside me, me and Ped just have a little chat on the side and we, we make sure everyone's on the same page and vice versa with that long when we're looking at our report system, our data system, when we're looking at team motivation and who's in front of the cameras, when they're in front of the cameras, all the, all the nitty gritty bits.

[00:13:44] **Johnny Othona:** I deal with and then Ped basically has input on, you know, maybe where the vision is going and what we think we need for the business. It's really interesting. It's really fun. And it's allowed me and Ped to really, um, express ourselves differently.

[00:13:57] **Antony Whitaker:** Sure. Yeah. Okay. And you also mentioned, uh, mannequins. Um, and there was a time where that was sort of what you had to do because of, you know, uh, social distancing, et cetera. Um, yeah. Is the majority of the library, do you use mannequins? I suppose is what I'm saying. Or do you use humans or is it a mixture of both?

[00:14:17] **Antony Whitaker:** Because, you know, I'm always a fan of mannequins as well, because you don't have those problems that you get with real hair. You know, you don't have someone tugging at it saying, not too sure. Or, you know, I'm getting married. I'm trying to grow the layers out or all that stuff. You know, so mannequins can be really helpful because they get people to focus on technique and not be focusing on all that other stuff, which is important.

[00:14:39] **Antony Whitaker:** But let's nail the technique first before you have to deal with all that other stuff. So what are your thoughts about that?

[00:14:45] **Johnny Othona:** I agree with everything you just said. Uh, the only thing I'd add to that extra would be that when you have a mannequin, you take away the fear element. So the students not scared to make a mistake on the mannequin. No one's going to tell him off. You know, the fear element disappears. So people can express themselves much more confidently.

[00:15:02] **Johnny Othona:** Um, the benefit like you mentioned before how virtually you could have someone from, say, I don't know, Japan, somebody from South Africa on the same, on the same, uh, class, actually, what we found, um, when we first launched it, that was the business model just to get any hairdressers from anywhere involved.

[00:15:19] **Johnny Othona:** And then what we realized, actually, in reality, when you do that kind of class, you have many different levels of student on the class, and you also have language as a problem. So that can become quite disturbing in regards to the session. So what we started to do was we changed the business model. So rather than sending to individual hairdressers, we started involving Davines, who's our business partner in everything that we do.

[00:15:42] **Johnny Othona:** And they've been an amazing, an amazing kind of support mechanism. So what we do is through their distribution network, we sell group classes to salon owners who then have them and their teams within the session. So it's much more controlled. And you can actually deliver a class really smoothly. There isn't all these moving pieces of different internet connections dropping.

[00:16:03] **Johnny Othona:** Sorry, I missed that bit. Could you go back? Sorry, couldn't hear you. You know, all that stuff that happens when you've got one feed and it's you and a group of people, it becomes brilliant. Another thing we did, which was, I think, quite unique again through the Davines network is sell one to one sessions.

[00:16:18] **Johnny Othona:** So, for example, be me and you on the other side of the screen, whatever. Um, let's say, for example, The distributor from South Africa decided to buy you a gift and that gift was a session with Johnny or a session with the Allilon team. We would get in contact with you. We would have a consultation to find out what your exact wants are.

[00:16:38] **Johnny Othona:** Technically you own three hours of my life. Where should we focus those three hours? How should we use them? I struggle with



curly hair, for example, or I find it really hard to work on balance or whatever the conversation will be and then we'd custom make the session for you, which again is completely different to having a group session where you're trying to navigate multiple people's abilities.

[00:16:59] **Johnny Othona:** Um, and then obviously we'd schedule a class and then deliver the physical class virtually me and you on the other side. And I'll be honest with you. It's been amazing. I think the best thing about it, it's reignited my team. like, they've learned new skills. A lot of people are tech, they have this fear of tech sometimes, and they've been forced to embrace technology and understand how it works.

[00:17:23] **Johnny Othona:** What happens when your camera drops off? What happens when the microphones are not like all these things that you've never had to deal with before in a class scenario? What happens when you can't physically pick up that student's Hair and show them, you know, physically in front of and all these lessons.

[00:17:39] **Johnny Othona:** It makes you such a better educator as a whole, you know, you have to be able to use your mouth to explain the words so clearly that person to really be able to understand. And for me, that makes a really good, a really good tool for my team to

[00:17:53] **Antony Whitaker:** Very good. Very good. You know, I agree with that. Um, I know you, uh, and I've seen you teach and I know the way you work and you're very, very technical I don't want to put the words in your mouth here, but if someone said to me, what's Allilon? What's, what's Johnny? You know, what comes to mind? I'd say technique. He's, he's like hardcore technique.

[00:18:17] **Antony Whitaker:** what is your philosophy? on here. What's your thinking behind Alilon? What, what is it that makes what you do different to other educators online or not online?

[00:18:32] **Johnny Othona:** really good question. So what I would say to is this. If we're talking about me as a person, my personal belief is never lie in a class. People know when you're telling them you're trying to make them feel good about what they've done. Um, so for me, it's not about being hard or soft, it's about being honest. Um, when they walk out of that class, they need to know that there's been some kind of growth happening. Um, my team have the

[00:19:00] same, passion, I would say, in regards to being honest with the students, uh, truly honest.

[00:19:04] **Johnny Othona:** Sometimes it's very hard for people to absorb that. But I'd rather do it properly than do it halfheartedly. So, if you were to ask me, what's the biggest difference between us and other education companies, I would say ask our students because they would be the best people to explain to you what their experience is really truly like.

[00:19:22] **Johnny Othona:** I don't believe, I don't want to be the biggest education company in the world. I just want to be one of the most respected. And how do you do that? You do that by hopefully Uh, being true to your own personal philosophy and how you look at hair. So, for example, as a company, we don't talk about layering, graduation and line.

[00:19:37] **Johnny Othona:** We don't talk about square circles and triangles. We don't talk about over direction elevation. We talk about choice of length, root movement, placement of natural, natural fall. We talk about, um, growth patterns. We talk about a lot of detail that I think, um, I don't know how deep I want to go into the rabbit hole, but basically what we've done is we've taken everything that we know, we've ripped it to shreds, and we've, we're focusing our attention on other things.

[00:20:04] **Johnny Othona:** It's not that, it's not that these things don't play a part in education because they do. It's about what is it as a company we want to focus on. Choice of length, root movements, number systems, these are just some of the things that for us are really important. So we tend to. design our class and our curriculum like that, in our education journey, you can't move forward to the next course until you do the first course.

[00:20:29] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah.

[00:20:30] **Johnny Othona:** We tell you at the end of that course, whether or not you can move on or not. And there's something that's a bit of a secret. I'm not sure if I should say, but I will do because it's you. There's something we're doing, which is going to be very, very, very unique. Um, which basically is as we're in a classroom scenario, So we always do reviews at the end of classes, where we sit down with the students and find out about their experience, but also tell them what we believe is the future journey for them.

[00:20:56] **Johnny Othona:** So as they move through the stages of the courses, they really understand that we're with them. They're not just coming, paying money, getting a certificate and going home. For me, that's not what education should be about. So we're launching this thing. It's going to be from New Year.

[00:21:11] **Johnny Othona:** we've created this platform, which is again, a digital platform, which allows us to, um, personalize everybody's learning experience. So when we're in the class, we're able to, let's pretend I was teaching you. I'm able to, to, Get a profile picture of you, get all your details, blah, blah. And then we have a tick list of things that we feel you need to work on or what you're good at.

[00:21:33] **Johnny Othona:** And then we grade you during the class process. So at the end of the classes, at the end of the fourth day or third day or second day, we're able to say to you, okay, look, um, for example, I feel that you need to work on your tension. You need to work at looking at the roots. You need to work on X, Y, and Z, right?

[00:21:49] **Johnny Othona:** And then the next time you come to an Allilon class, I may not be your educator. It may be. educators. So they'll be able to go onto this digital platform, look at your history and go, okay, the last time you were taught, this person was your educator and this is the feedback they gave you. And these are the things that you've been asked you to work on.

[00:22:08] **Johnny Othona:** Okay. So I'm going to focus as your educator on these things to see if you have actually grown. And then we're able to keep it almost like a proper dialogue, proper journey on that person's career. And for me, that's where education should be going.

[00:22:21] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Very good. So, Allilon before Allilon Plus was, tell me if I've got this wrong. It was very much about doing shows. You seem to be on the road all the time doing shows. is this now become the biggest part of the company? And where there's the most growth, that online education is where you're focused as opposed to being out on the road doing shows and doing live classes.

[00:22:46] **Johnny Othona:** The answer to that question is no. For example, in September, I was in the Philippines, France, Poland, the Lithuanian, the whole month of September. So I was in London for two days. But what it is, is we've

managed to create the company in a way where there's people responsible for different things. So there's a team working on the digital business.

[00:23:05] **Johnny Othona:** There's a team working on the physical business. So there is a crossover between the talents, i. e. the people behind the camera doing the physical hair, whether it's prerecorded, um, Video for the subscription business or whether it's a virtual class. But there's somebody in charge of organizing all the virtual classes.

[00:23:21] **Johnny Othona:** There's somebody in charge of organizing all the video content. There's somebody in charge of all the physical stuff and booking the calendar and looking after the physical stuff. So there's somebody in charge of looking after the academy. So I think one of the things that I've learned along my, along my journey, also from an influence from you.

[00:23:40] **Johnny Othona:** So thank you for this has been to have the right systems in play to allow all people. To have accountability, to have responsibility, to flourish, to allow them to have their own import, to really be able to almost allow me to work on the business rather than being the business as much. And obviously there's books like the E myth.

[00:23:58] **Johnny Othona:** There's obviously things that you've taught us as different things that I've learned from so many different people. I've been very lucky on my journey. Um, The big thing for me is having the structure in place to allow me to just simply plug in, plug out where I need to focus my energy, um, and just keep the balls kind of juggling really.

[00:24:15] **Johnny Othona:** But the team is the key. Like our team is so good at really, um, I need this done. What do you think is the best way of doing it? Okay, go. Do you know what I mean? And I let them

[00:24:26] **Antony Whitaker:** do, I do. And you have a great team. And whenever I've, uh, I was looking at some of the videos on the website beforehand and I could recognize a lot of the people that were there still. And it was like, oh my God, they're still there. That's fantastic.

[00:24:37] **Johnny Othona:** yeah, we, our turnover of staff is tiny, literally is tiny. We've been really lucky.

[00:24:42] **Antony Whitaker:** That's a good sign. That's a good sign. So what do you, the, the other thing that I think of with you is that you teach cutting hair. Obviously you teach more than that. So, so if you don't, other people do. So is the Allilon Plus, does it cover cutting hair, coloring hair, dressing hair, you know, is, is everything in there or is it just specifically focused on cutting?

[00:25:07] **Johnny Othona:** So on the digital platform, let's talk about the subscription platform. There's content from everything. Um, it's very kind of inclusive. So there's lots of different textures, lots of different nationalities. We've tried to really make it accessible for Everybody, whether it's blow drying and styling, whether it's dressing, whether it's cutting and coloring when it comes to the virtual classes, there is everything from one-to-one sessions, i. e. physical cutting sessions. But with me, they can also have business coaching or mentoring, which has also been really, if I'm honest, been quite successful. Um, and that tends to be more about me talking from my experiences, like because I have a salon. So I know what it's like to be in the salon. I have an education company.

[00:25:48] **Johnny Othona:** I've been on, I do on, you know, I do everything that they may want to do. Um, so that's really fun and I love doing that. Um, and whether it's me, me working with them in a physical class, uh, cutting hair or me doing the coaching or whether it's my team doing cutting or coloring classes, all of this. So just think about the digital business as having.

[00:26:07] **Johnny Othona:** The subscription business is being one animal and then the virtual classes being another animal.

[00:26:13] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. Okay. And is it accessed via a website or is it an app? Like, how does that work?

[00:26:20] **Johnny Othona:** Okay, so if anybody wants to experience Allilon Plus, you simply just type in Allilon Plus on your Safari or your Google. And when you go into the kind of platform, you will see that obviously you could subscribe to either a weekly, monthly, six month or yearly sub. And the content, as soon as you go in, there's no boundaries.

[00:26:37] **Johnny Othona:** So you've got access to everything. Like I said, our philosophy is Give everything and something's going to stick rather than try and be specific. Um, and if they want to have virtual classes, I virtual one to

ones or virtual sessions with their salons, they would email info at alliloneducation.com is info alliloneducation.com

[00:27:01] **Johnny Othona:** and they'll be able to, uh, we'll, we'll get in touch with them and arrange a class.

[00:27:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay, cool. Uh, and another thing I saw, uh, I was on your website or somewhere, was Allilon Unplugged. what's Allilon Unplugged?

[00:27:14] **Johnny Othona:** Good question. So we have lot . We do lots of different things. So Allilon Unplugged is something that we did prior Covid, um, for, for one year every night on a Tuesday night, depend. Didn't matter where I was in the world. I did like a Facebook Live where I just, I had a model, uh. It could have been any any country that I was in and I would do this haircut step by step haircut It was usually maybe an hour and a half to two hours Um where people can really interact watch comment and so forth and I did that every single Tuesday for a solid year and then um covid hit and since covid we've We obviously be focused on our digital business.

[00:27:51] **Johnny Othona:** And then what we found was actually, we've got lots of people messaging us going, Oh, when can you start the alarm plugs again? And I was a bit conflicted if I'm honest, because to a certain degree, we are so open that what we, what was quite interesting about it is you can really see who's watching. So we had a lot of people watching and a lot of people absorbing.

[00:28:12] **Johnny Othona:** Our lectures, our theory and so forth, and then kind of regurgitating, which is a massive compliment to a certain degree, but it also a little bit frustrating if it's not being recognized that I found that quite frustrating.

[00:28:23] **Johnny Othona:** Um, So Allilon Unplugged is basically, it was a Facebook live, which was, uh, different people now. So before it was only me. And now we've started to have all the different teams to profile the different team members so that they could be build their identities around the world. Um, and then we have obviously the open house event, which is a completely different thing where on the sound international weekend, we basically open the building up and any, we charge, I guess, 10 pounds a ticket.

[00:28:49] **Johnny Othona:** And that's all that money goes straight to a charity that we choose from. We are usually a sustainable a sustainable charity. And then we have hairdressers. We've had up to three to 400 hairdressers walking up and down the building. Cause obviously the buildings like you've been there, it's like

[00:29:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, it's big. Yeah.

[00:29:05] **Johnny Othona:** um, people kind of walking up and down, just basically watching our team do hair, have drinks, have listened to cool music, just like. Like an open house. This is our home. Come into our home and experience our team. You know, ask questions, get involved, be part of our community. And, um, I think that's been a huge success.

[00:29:22] **Johnny Othona:** We didn't do it this year, unfortunately, because we're refurbishing all the floors,

[00:29:25] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. So, um, you know, I sort of alluded to this at the beginning, we talked a little bit about the loyalty of your, of your team, et cetera. And every time I've gone on there, there, They're passionate teachers. You know, they're passionate hairdressers.

[00:29:39] **Antony Whitaker:** They're really, really into what they do. Um, as you are, and I wanted to ask you about the teaching side of that. What is it? That makes someone a good teacher. You've sort of touched on some of those elements earlier on, but you know, what do you look for? Um, in someone being a good teacher or, you know, when you look at someone, whether it's yourself or whatever, you know, what is that ingredient that someone brings to the table that makes him a good teacher?

[00:30:11] **Johnny Othona:** So such a good question. It depends what lens I want to look through. Fundamentally for me, there's a huge difference between a teacher and an educator. So you could be in a room, you could have a teacher, you could have students, doesn't mean there's any learning happening. So for me, I believe this is something I'm quite strong about with my team and obviously Ped has the same kind of philosophy as me, is that when you're going to teach, you teach from your heart.

[00:30:37] **Johnny Othona:** Because when you teach from your heart, people can tell when you're not being genuine. They can feel it. They don't, you don't

need to, you can only, you can only pretend that you care about someone's journey for a short period of time before someone feels it. And that is, to a certain degree, when you're checking somebody's haircut and you're telling them it's great and they can see it one size an inch longer, but you're telling them it's great because you don't want to hurt their feelings.

[00:30:59] **Johnny Othona:** For me, that's what a teacher does, whereas an educator is more of a mentor. It's somebody that actually people can really connect with and know that even though I have to give you some bad news, there's an answer to how we can make it better. And I'm going to help you and I'm going to get behind you and I'm going to make sure that you do what's needed for you not to have this problem every time.

[00:31:18] **Johnny Othona:** A good educator for me is somebody who fundamentally makes themselves not necessary because if I'm doing a good job teaching you and I'm actually doing a good job, you shouldn't need me. Whereas it's like a doctor who keeps feeding you pills because he's making money rather than actually a doctor who tells you, coaches you on how to make your lifestyle better so you don't get ill again.

[00:31:39] **Johnny Othona:** For me, my job is to make myself superfluous. That's my job. If I can get you to a point where you don't need me anymore, I'm a good educator, right?

[00:31:48] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, got it. Okay. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Um, you and I had a similar background in terms of our training, and it was very much, uh, technique. Um, so what I want to ask you about is, and you can become a really good haircutter with, you know, strong technical training, but just because you're good, Uh, technically cutting here.

[00:32:13] **Antony Whitaker:** It doesn't mean that you have any understanding about beauty or suitability, et cetera. So I want to ask you that question about beauty. What is beauty? To you, how do you, because you are renowned for doing, let's call it strong work, but, uh, and, and it's beautifully executed strong work.

[00:32:40] **Antony Whitaker:** So it's not just strong Uh, it's it's they're strong, but there's also stuff that has this really nice twist to it where it's beautiful So like define that to me What is beauty because I mean I was a teacher too behind the chair cutting hair for you know, 15 20 years or whatever And I I still



to this day grapple with trying to answer that question because there's a lot of there's a lot of fluff About beauty.

[00:33:06] **Antony Whitaker:** There's a lot of fluff around suitability and, you know, all that stuff. And I, and I'm always searching and asking, uh, other people, you know, what they see as beauty, how they define beauty.

[00:33:20] **Johnny Othona:** your diplomacy. I love it. Um, for me, it's a really, that's actually a really simple question to answer. Uh, for me, it's all about energy. You can create the best haircut on somebody, but if they don't wear it properly, it doesn't make a difference. Sometimes the best haircuts that you see people that cut their own hair and it's rough and it's really on.

[00:33:41] **Johnny Othona:** So for me, suitability is about energy. You need to understand the energy of the person in front of you. Cause if I know me cutting a strong, hard fringe on your face is going to make you feel silly. Why would I possibly do that? Because you can't sell it. So suitability for me is more in the consultation.

[00:34:00] **Johnny Othona:** You need to understand the human psychology and more about how the person sees themselves because you could, you could do the most technical, most mechanical cut or color. But if I don't, if I can't make it feel sexy, if I don't feel sexy wearing it, how can I possibly come across confident? So for me, beauty, beauty is an eye powder for me.

[00:34:22] **Johnny Othona:** Beauty is about understanding the energy of the person that you're dealing with and then complimenting that just keep focus on building their positive energy because if you can get that that kind of movement, whether it's choice of length, whether it's softness, whether it's definition, it's all about making that person more confident.

[00:34:40] **Johnny Othona:** That for me is stability, because I'll give you an example. I'll give an example. You may have someone who, with all due respect, might end up might look like me, right? There might be not just. Not right. Okay. But yet, but yet they love their haircut and they come across so confident and one bit shaved and one bits weird and one bits green and one bit, but they sell it.

[00:35:01] **Johnny Othona:** And then you got, then you've got another person who just simply putting a bit of a fringe in freaks them out. And then all of a

sudden, they, they haven't got that length to make them feel secure and blah blah. It's all about energy for me.

[00:35:13] **Antony Whitaker:** I love that answer. I've never had that answer before. Energy is a great way of putting it. I mean, I've, I have this, this sentence that, uh, there's variations of a theme floating around with this, but its suitability is about making someone look on the outside the way they feel on the inside. And, and that's it, isn't it?

[00:35:34] **Antony Whitaker:** That's, you know, it's, energy is a different way of saying that. It's about, you know, if, cause if you fail, you look good with something. Then you look good with it. Like that's all that matters. You feel it's energy and confidence. If you feel you look good with it, then you're confident to wear it. You sell it. And,

[00:35:52] **Johnny Othona:** how many times have you worn something and someone who loves you or cares based on what you're doing? You look ridiculous.

[00:35:57] **Antony Whitaker:** um, yeah, yeah,

[00:35:58] **Johnny Othona:** I love it and I feel good wearing it. So I don't care what you think. And that's the key. You know what I mean? It doesn't matter if I've got a hard haircut.

[00:36:06] **Johnny Othona:** I like it. I want it, you know? So I don't know. Listening, I think is a really good, uh, if I was to give something technical to focus on, listen, don't just hear, don't just listen.

[00:36:16] **Antony Whitaker:** um, yeah, okay, alright. So let me ask you about how you teach it. So you've got, you've got a young kid who's started with you in the salon doing an apprenticeship or whatever, and you can teach them how to cut that bob or how to cut that long layer or whatever it is, but how do you teach them about suitability?

[00:36:39] **Johnny Othona:** So what I do is I teach them about human psychology, not suitability.

[00:36:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Tell me what you mean by that.

[00:36:45] **Johnny Othona:** So what I mean by that is I, I wouldn't necessarily always do it in front of the client, but sometimes I would, if I'm the model, I'd be like, look, let's look at how she's feeling or he's feeling. Look at the way she's sitting.

[00:36:56] **Johnny Othona:** Look, let's look at the way she's kind of moving the hair onto her face, hiding behind her hair. What happens if you expose her? How's she going to feel? And a lot of it is to do with the words that we're using, but also. Um, primarily really watching and understanding how the how the words you're coming out of your mouth are being received and then projected back.

[00:37:17] **Johnny Othona:** So if I was to make it a learning experience for maybe someone listening, I would say, look, first thing you do is pull your assistants aside and have a conversation with them about let's analyze how the person's body language and their voice tone and how they're responding to you. And then after the haircut, Or after you've, before you get it shampooed, let's go away again and have a discussion about what you've taken from that.

[00:37:39] **Johnny Othona:** So break it down slowly. So all of a sudden what you're doing is you're learning to teach and the student is learning how to read signals that are being sent to them. Uh, I think being sensitive and empathetic is a good starting point. Because people bring their baggage to their, to their, their consultation.

[00:37:57] **Johnny Othona:** They bring their fears and their anxiety and all the other stuff that kind of laid on top of them to the consultation. So if you can teach the assistant to be empathetic, to be patient, to try and really hear what the person's saying, and also not to push what they think too much.

[00:38:13] **Antony Whitaker:** Hmm.

[00:38:13] **Johnny Othona:** So to suggest, so we have a script in the salon where the assistants are taught, okay, you know, tell me something you love about your hair. Tell me something you find challenging about your hair. As a starting point, for example, the scripting that you can give your assistants is key to getting information out rather than putting information in. So, uh, the scripting is something I'd focus on.

[00:38:36] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. I like that. It's about getting information out rather than putting information in. That's very good. That's very good. Okay. Um, what about fashion? How much are you influenced by fashion?

[00:38:48] **Johnny Othona:** That's such a, that's such a delicate question with me

[00:38:50] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. I know.

[00:38:51] **Johnny Othona:** um, uh, I'll be, I'll be really honest. Okay. I am not a fashion driven person in any way, shape or form. Uh, I am more of about. Human energy and connection and things like that. So the problem I have with fashion is that not the problem I have with fashion.

[00:39:07] **Johnny Othona:** Let me reword that differently. The danger of following fashion is that you're always going to be the follower. And for me, it's up. I would prefer to do what I'm into and what my team are into the vision of what we believe as hairdressers, rather than being. to a certain degree dictated to by what the season is.

[00:39:29] **Johnny Othona:** Why should I follow what someone else is telling me? I need to follow. I'm not a session stylist, so obviously I don't I have the freedom to not be dictated to by fashion. I don't mind being influenced by fashion, but for me, that's not That's not how hair should be done for me. Hair should be done based on what your personal vision is on that person that's in front of you.

[00:39:49] **Johnny Othona:** It's different if you're doing a hair shop for London Fashion Week, you know, you're being dictated to by, say, the, you know, the stylist of they want the hair grease back and blah, blah, blah. In my world, which is education, I focus on the hairdresser, not a fashion designer. So, you know, Allilon, if you were to numb it down to one word, Allilon has been a massive influence on teaching teachers rather than hairdressers.

[00:40:14] **Johnny Othona:** Because if we can teach the teachers, we can have much more of a stronger reach. So I know that we've been lucky enough to influence a lot of different people, uh, at such high levels, um, in a positive way, hopefully. And by them embracing some of the information that we share. Then all we're doing is making the whole picture of the hairdressing industry stronger because we're, to a certain degree, ripping to shreds what

we know is factually incorrect and re redesigning it to make it less gray and a bit more simple to understand language is really important

[00:40:53] **Antony Whitaker:** Yes, I was just going to say that as I was, I was just writing something down that it's that thing. It's not about What you don't teach people what to think you teach them how to think there's a very similar You know phrase which you'll often hear good educators use. I know lots of people have used this I don't know who said it first that And you I think you've probably said this as well was that you don't teach people how to do a haircut You teach them how to cut hair and it's almost the same thing, but it's very different.

[00:41:25] **Antony Whitaker:** You know, if you can teach people how to cut hair, then they can do any haircut. Whereas if you teach them how to do a haircut, then they can do that haircut and they try and put that on everybody. And we all know people that do that.

[00:41:35] **Johnny Othona:** Yeah. There's one thing. There's one thing that I'd like to say, which I think is quite important. And this is a good thing. I think for anybody who owns a salon who can basically help their staff, the first haircut you ever give someone will be the worst haircut you ever give them ever, because you don't know their textures.

[00:41:51] **Johnny Othona:** You don't know who they are. You don't know how they respond to things. You don't know how they maintain their hair. There's so much unknown. So the first haircut you give them will always be the worst. Your haircut should only get better. The more you cut their hair.

[00:42:02] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. That makes a lot of sense as you get to know it and they get to know you and trust you and all

[00:42:07] **Johnny Othona:** You understand their growth patterns, you understand how they respond, you understand how the choice of length last time didn't quite work for them. Maybe they couldn't manage it properly or whatever it will be. So the first haircut, it should always be your worst haircut you ever give someone. Or the first color you ever give someone.

[00:42:21] **Johnny Othona:** Same thing.

[00:42:21] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Um, I'm thinking about you and Pedro. Uh, if, if I was talking about Pedro, your business partner,

[00:42:30] **Johnny Othona:** Best friend.

[00:42:31] **Antony Whitaker:** and best

[00:42:32] **Johnny Othona:** Best friend. Best friend first.

[00:42:33] **Antony Whitaker:** friend first, uh, I would say that he is more, I'm probably going to get in trouble for this. I would say he is more feeling orientated, you know, he's, whereas you're more technical.

[00:42:48] **Antony Whitaker:** Would that be right? Are you the yin and the yang in the business? I mean, like you both bring that different part to it, which shows and lots of different things. Does that show in how you both do hair as well as, you know, how you relate to people, you know, the business itself, do you, do you come at it from, you know, different roles that complement each other?

[00:43:09] **Antony Whitaker:** Not that one's better or worse than the

[00:43:10] **Johnny Othona:** Yeah, yeah, of course, of

[00:43:11] **Antony Whitaker:** like, they complement each other.

[00:43:13] **Johnny Othona:** Yeah, really good question. Um, I would say there's certain things, I mean, like I said, me and Ped, we're best friends first, business partners second. For me, I'd rather lose the companies and lose my best friend. So I don't, I deal with Ped. Like he is my best friend.

[00:43:30] **Johnny Othona:** The benefit of that is that we understand each other inside out, like, you know, on a ridiculous level. So we both have the same core values when it comes to say, humanity and trying to be the best version of ourselves for other people, trying to be kind, trying to be empathetic, trying to be, um, supportive, try and nurture people, try and mentor people.

[00:43:51] **Johnny Othona:** Our style is different. So Pedro is very much, um, Let me help you get there. Let me try and make you look to where the answers

are, whereas I'm maybe slightly more. This is where we're going. Get behind me. This is where we're going, you know, you know, let's let's let's all get there together. So one of the one of the beautiful things about paired with me.

[00:44:15] **Johnny Othona:** Obviously, he might tell you something different. But one of the things that I love about Ped is that where sometimes it's not. Um, I am very, uh, this is where we need to go. This is what of my a new idea. This is what we need to. This is where we need to be. This is what the team needs to do. The what Ped does is stabilize behind me.

[00:44:34] **Johnny Othona:** Um, whereas, and in some senses for him, that could be really frustrating because it's like I will kind of throw everything up in the air and let's do this. Let's change this listed and he'll be like, well, let's let's let's what about this one? What about and then I'll get frustrated because I'll be like, no, no, no, forget about that.

[00:44:49] **Johnny Othona:** We've done it now. Let's move forward. This. So the partnership is so healthy because we could turn around with all due respect and nothing is off the table for a discussion and nothing is personal because our relationship is so strong. So it's really crazy. it's so good. Honestly, it really is. We have such a good time. And the reason we're so successful is because of our team fundamentally take me impaired away or take our team away. We're nothing. What are we?

[00:45:19] **Johnny Othona:** We're two, two Greek guys who are trying to make it make things work and trying to leave some kind of legacy. But fundamentally, without our team, we're nothing.

[00:45:27] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, I think that, but that's, that's everybody. And, and, you know, if they're really honest about it, that's humility to, to recognize that. Um, I'm going to keep coming back at this from different angles. Right.

[00:45:40] **Johnny Othona:** Please, please. I love it. I'm enjoying this.

[00:45:41] **Antony Whitaker:** it's all about the sort of creative process.

[00:45:45] **Johnny Othona:** Okay.

[00:45:46] **Antony Whitaker:** How different people, creativity is different to different people.

[00:45:51] **Antony Whitaker:** If I look at your, the hair you do, I'd be more inclined to say it's art. Like you're very much about, like you said, you're not really that interested in fashion. And, you know, you sort of said suitability and stuff is more about energy. And I get all that. I thought they were great answers. Um. And, you know, we happen to be using Pedro as the analogy, but it could be, it could be anybody.

[00:46:15] **Antony Whitaker:** Do you know what I mean? That other people are more, more about suitability, more about, here's a, let me come at it from another way. I used to go to France quite a bit and in the old days, and I would teach, you know, hairdressing or whatever, go to Italy, whatever, two countries I loved or still love. In terms of my training at doing hair, and thus your training, we were very technical about hair, how hair had to be done.

[00:46:44] **Antony Whitaker:** You would go to France or go to Italy, and it wouldn't necessarily be done with the same technique. You know, you'd pick it up and go, Oh my God, who did this? Do you know what I mean? Sort of thing. They didn't approach hair with the same technique. But they approached hair with a different feeling.

[00:47:02] **Antony Whitaker:** It wasn't about, it wasn't about art. It was about feeling. I'm really just trying to get you to. To comment on that creative process of, of hair and art and fashion and style and beauty and all these things that I'm sort of chucking at you.

[00:47:20] **Johnny Othona:** Do you know what's been lost? What's been lost in our industry, and I'm fighting to try and kind of re reignite it, is this idea of cutting from wet to dry. Allowing the haircut to do all of the work for you. Um, if a haircut needs to be manipulated into shape, it's the wrong choice of length for that particular texture.

[00:47:37] **Johnny Othona:** Um, and that for me is an art form, which for me is, uh, dangerously getting close to being lost. So I'm really focused on that in my classes, me personally, when I'm in the classroom, different cultures. Embrace hair in a different way. And if I, if I was to look at my skill sets as a hairdresser, I would say that I have the ability to choose the right lengths for the haircut to work for themselves.



[00:48:01] **Johnny Othona:** But I wouldn't say I have the skill sets to be able to manipulate hair when it comes to styling as some of the hairdressers you're talking about, some of the cultures of hairdressing you're talking about. That's what I'm trying to do with Allilon plus showcasing different skill sets that aren't natural to me.

[00:48:15] **Johnny Othona:** Um, I can tell you very quickly if a shape is unbalanced or not clean or whatever, but what I can't tell you is how to achieve that beautiful, glossy bend in the hair, which just kind of sits like, you know, this Farrah Fawcett movement and blah, blah, blah. There's, there's a beauty and elegance to that. And you meant you mentioned before about, you know, beauty and it's like.

[00:48:39] **Johnny Othona:** There's people who look up, for example, some of my work and might say, say that it isn't necessarily always beautiful. And my answer to that is it doesn't have to be, because normally when you're looking at something that isn't, doesn't sit right, usually it's because it's slightly different, your eye isn't used to looking at it.

[00:48:56] **Johnny Othona:** Whereas if you're just reproducing, um, what is acceptable to the naked eye, I find that really boring. Uh, I mean, how many, how many bobs can I, can I look at in my life? You know, I mean, I want, I want to challenge. I want to look at something. Oh, my God, that's a bit crazy. That's a bit. Does that work? I don't know.

[00:49:15] **Johnny Othona:** I don't know. I don't know. You know, and for me, that's the, that's the exploration of cutting hair. Um, I don't know if I've answered your question,

[00:49:23] **Antony Whitaker:** No, no, you haven't. You've made me think of something. um, I could cut hair well, and I'd, you know, have a client, and I'd cut her hair, and she'd be very happy, and she'd leave, and I can remember, you know, one particular, and I'd say, are you happy?

[00:49:36] **Antony Whitaker:** Oh, I love it, Antony, it's great, you know, and I can remember one day, I was in the, uh, I was in the supermarket, and it was late at night, and I saw this client, It was a client of mine whose hair I'd cut like two weeks before, and she was walking, she was walking towards me. I'd seen her, she hadn't seen me.

[00:49:51] **Antony Whitaker:** And I thought, oh my God, she's gone and had a haircut somewhere else. Like, you know, like, she didn't

[00:49:56] **Johnny Othona:** yeah, you could see it. Yeah.

[00:49:58] **Antony Whitaker:** And so I nipped around the other aisle to save the embarrassment of like, what's happened, you know. And. All of a sudden she tapped me on the shoulder and I turned around and I was like, Oh, you know, pretending I was surprised.

[00:50:12] **Antony Whitaker:** And she said, Antony, I just want to thank you so much. I love what you've done with my hair. And this comes back to that thing we're talking about with beauty and suitability. She hadn't had her hair cut elsewhere. She just wore it. She brought life to it. She brought energy to it. She put some of her into it.

[00:50:30] **Antony Whitaker:** And, and that's what the difference is, isn't it? You know, I, I've mentioned this before on the podcast, be one of my salons. I used to have a, there was a coffee shop across the road from it. I'd go and sit over there sometimes. And, you know, I could see clients walking out of the salon and. You'd see them walk out the door with like this perfectly done hair and they'd walk up the street, you know, past two or three shops and they'd be checking themselves out in the shop windows as they walked up.

[00:50:56] **Antony Whitaker:** And once they got 20, 30 meters away from the salon, a high percentage of them would mess up their hair. Do you know what I mean? And, you know, they'd tuck it behind their ears. They'd sort of do something with it. And, and that, and that's the bit. They're putting some of them into it. And I think that's a beautiful thing.

[00:51:15] **Antony Whitaker:** It's what the, in this case, woman, it's what the woman brings to it. That brings it to life. That, that makes it beautiful. It makes it sexy.

[00:51:22] **Johnny Othona:** Do you know what? Um, what's I think quite unique now compared to maybe 20, 30 years ago. Products play a massive part in how hair can be styled now, we're lucky, obviously, because we've got an amazing relationship with having us and that for us has been like a rock. I'm not gonna lie. The company's been amazing.

[00:51:39] **Johnny Othona:** And what I love about them is that we're able to literally, like, I'm able to pick up my phone now. And speak to anybody in the company from Davide who owns it to Antony, to Mark, to Liam, to whoever. And I love that, that accessibility, cause I can really focus on, can we improve the products and what problems we're having with any of them or things like that, or the success stories, education, going back to the consultation side of it, if you can educate your

[00:52:05] **Johnny Othona:** assistant, your stylist, your clients on how to manipulate product properly and just allow the haircut to breathe with a bit of product in it, whether it's a spray, whether it's a wax, whether it's a, a moose, whatever it is that, that touch that you're talking about is when the hair is a bit worn in and a bit manipulated, you know, and products are key to that.

[00:52:26] **Johnny Othona:** And that's where I think a lot of headers don't quite get it.

[00:52:28] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. And, and, and also you mentioned editorial hairdressers before there's lots of good editorial hairdressers that do not give them a pair of scissors ever because they have no idea what they're doing. Bye. They will go up to something that you've, that I've done. I'm not going to say that you've done.

[00:52:44] **Antony Whitaker:** They'll go up to something that I've done and they'll just literally

[00:52:48] **Johnny Othona:** Push it

[00:52:49] **Antony Whitaker:** push it. And you'll go, why, why didn't I do that?

[00:52:54] **Johnny Othona:** Why? Why didn't it work for me?

[00:52:55] **Antony Whitaker:** that's the art. That's the skill, isn't it?

[00:52:58] **Johnny Othona:** hundred percent.

[00:52:58] **Antony Whitaker:** that's that understanding of beauty and taste and refinement of balance and stuff that is like lost on so many people.

[00:53:07] **Antony Whitaker:** But listen, we're going to have

[00:53:08] **Johnny Othona:** skill set.

[00:53:08] **Antony Whitaker:** Yes, it is. We're gonna have to wrap up in a few minutes But I've got a couple of sort of quick fire questions

[00:53:14] **Johnny Othona:** Let me get ready. Okay.

[00:53:16] **Antony Whitaker:** For you. How many have I got? I've got five there. What's your biggest? What's your biggest strength?

[00:53:21] **Johnny Othona:** My biggest strength is also my biggest weakness, which is, uh, I can be too intense.

[00:53:28] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay, I wouldn't have figured that was a joke, by the way, okay All right, what what drives you

[00:53:38] **Johnny Othona:** Um, the truth, the thing that really truly drives me is when, um, maybe it's scar tissue from my childhood, but it's the ability to be told or to, to believe that I can't do something. That for me is like fuel. You tell me I can't do something. I love it. I'm like, okay, we'll see. I won't say  
[00:54:00] anything. I'll just show you.

[00:54:01] **Johnny Othona:** So that for me

[00:54:02] **Antony Whitaker:** the best way. Yeah.

[00:54:03] **Johnny Othona:** a huge, huge trigger for me.

[00:54:06] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Okay.

[00:54:07] **Johnny Othona:** that something's undoable or not attainable. That's the one I want to go for.

[00:54:11] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. All right. Um, you've been doing this a long while, you know, 30, 35 years. I mentioned, I've looked at some of your collections and I see they evolve and change, which is always fantastic. Um, how do you stay relevant? How do you reinvent yourself?

[00:54:27] **Antony Whitaker:** What's the key for someone listening to this? You know, in a bit of a rut in the salon, you know, 12 clients a day, five days a week,

you know, doing the same old thing day in, day out. What is the secret to reinvention?

[00:54:40] **Johnny Othona:** Well, obviously the first answer will be education. But if I think about a bit more spiritually, our collections are never about Allilon. Our collections are always about telling somebody's story. For example, if you say to me, for example, I'm really inspired by this vase or this beautiful building, uh, my answer would be actually, is it the building that's inspirational or the glass or is it the person's mind who thought about why that building should be made out of that glass, that material, that size, that shape?

[00:55:09] **Johnny Othona:** It's the mind that's the inspiration, not the end product. So my advice to people who may be a bit feeling a bit stale is look around you at things that nothing to do with what you do. And be open to understanding the person's mindset who created whatever it is that you're looking at, because that's where the true inspiration is.

[00:55:27] **Antony Whitaker:** Exactly. It goes back to that thing we said before. It's not what you think, it's how you think.yeah, you get, you get stuck in that rut of thinking a certain way. You've got to learn to think and look at things in a different way. Okay.

[00:55:39] **Johnny Othona:** There's being, there's thinking and there's being conscious, two different things.

[00:55:42] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, we haven't got time to open up that. But, um, what's the biggest lesson that you have learned in life?

[00:55:50] **Antony Whitaker:** Doesn't have to be anything to do with hairdressing. It may be, but may not be.

[00:55:56] **Johnny Othona:** Wow. What a question. Biggest lesson I've learned in life.

[00:55:59] **Johnny Othona:** I think it's don't be scared to fail.

[00:56:01] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Yeah, there's a lot in that. All right. And last one. Is what do you wish you were better at?

[00:56:08] **Johnny Othona:** I think I could work on maybe being a bit more, um, I expect people to think like me, and I've learned that that doesn't, that's not realistic.

[00:56:21] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay.

[00:56:21] **Johnny Othona:** I could, I could learn to be a bit more empathetic and understanding where other people's brains work, their actual neuroscience, how their brain actually functions.

[00:56:29] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Good. Good. Oh, I like that. Okay. Well, listen, this has been a great conversation. I'm sorry, but we're going to have to start to wrap up. Uh, whereabouts can people connect with you on Instagram or any other social media channels?

[00:56:41] **Johnny Othona:** by all means, if anyone wants to connect, feel free to email. Any of any of our information on info Allilon education dot com or gone Allilon plus dot com and have a look at any of our content or go on our Facebook page Allilon education or Allilon education instagram.

[00:56:57] **Johnny Othona:** You'll see constant stuff that what I'm doing, where we are, what [00:57:00] we're up to. Um, we love connecting people.

[00:57:03] **Johnny Othona:** So it's Allilon education on all of our media, Instagram and Facebook.

[00:57:09] **Antony Whitaker:** Got it. Okay, well, listen, I will put those links on our website, uh, growmysalonbusiness.com and in the show notes for this podcast, no matter where you're listening to it. So if you're listening to this podcast with Johnny Othona and have enjoyed it, do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone and share it to your Instagram stories.

[00:57:29] **Antony Whitaker:** And don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple podcast that while you're there. So to wrap up Johnny, thanks for being on this week's episode of the grow my salon business. podcast. It's been great having this opportunity mate.

[00:57:41] **Johnny Othona:** I thank you for your time and hopefully the listeners have enjoyed it. Um, thank you. I appreciate

[00:57:48] **Antony Whitaker:** they will. Cheers, buddy.

[00:57:50] **Johnny Othona:** See you, bro.

[00:57:51] **Antony Whitaker:** Thank you for listening to today's podcast If you'd like to connect with us you'll find us at [Grow My Salon business.com](https://www.growmysalonbusiness.com) or on Facebook and Instagram at [Grow My Salon business](https://www.facebook.com/growmysalonbusiness) And if you enjoy tuning into our podcast make sure that you subscribe like and share it with your friends Until next time this is Antony Whitaker wishing you continued success