

GMSB 233

[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:** Hey, it's Antony here. And welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business Podcast. And in case you don't already know, video versions of our podcast are now available on our YouTube channel. So, if you want to put faces to the names, then head on over to Grow My Salon Business on YouTube and you can watch them there.

[00:00:48] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, my guest on today's episode is Mario Verrilli from Onari Hair Salon in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

[00:00:57] **Antony Whitaker:** In today's podcast, we're going to discuss some of the challenges that the hair and beauty industry faces, the importance of creating clarity for your team's career path and why ongoing personal development is important and so much more.

[00:01:12] **Antony Whitaker:** So, without further ado, welcome to the show, Mario.

[00:01:16] **Mario Verrilli:** Thanks, Antony. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm so excited. I've been looking forward to this for the last few weeks and love your podcast. I think I told you it's been the beacon of light for me the last 2 or 3 years since the onset of COVID. So much gold in here and really looking forward to more of the episodes.

#[00:01:34] **Antony Whitaker:** Good, fantastic, that's very nice of you to say, I really appreciate that.

[00:01:37] **Antony Whitaker:** So, um, Mario, before we start, let's do what I do with most people on the podcast, and that's sort of effectively get them to, uh, introduce themselves. So, who is Mario Verrilli Give us your sort of two-minute backstory and then we can dig into it.

[00:01:52] **Mario Verrilli:** Sure. So, I'm Mario Verrilli. Originally from a small mining town up in Northern Ontario, Canada, which is four hours north of Toronto. I moved to the city of Mississauga because I was inspired by editorial work after travelling to London, England and New York City and seeing the opportunities in the city.

[00:02:09] **Mario Verrilli:** So, I moved here, uh, 25 years ago, opened up a salon three years later, uh, married, got three kids. So always busy, always learning, uh, never a dull moment.

[00:02:22] **Antony Whitaker:** Good. Okay. Right. Well, that puts everything into some context. All right. So, um, I like to find out with, uh, different salon owners, um, just a few questions around opening a salon and a sort of one question I like to ask people is at what point did you know? That it was the right time to open a salon. Was it always something you were going to do?

[00:02:41] **Antony Whitaker:** Or was it, you know, like some, uh, aha moment all of a sudden where you, you know, thought, you know what, I'm going to do this on my own. An opportunity was presented or something. So, talk to us about that.

[00:02:52] **Mario Verrilli:** Well, I'm glad you asked that question Um, it, part of, part of the reason I wrote the book too, is there was no other option in order to be respected as a hairdresser, especially in a small mining city. Where, you know, leaving university to go to be a hairdresser.

[00:03:06] **Mario Verrilli:** There was all sorts of jokes and that sort of thing. And the only way you got respect was if you owned a business and were perceived to be making a lot of money. Uh, so that was always in the cards for me, right from the day one. When I left university, I thought I'm going to go to get into hairdressing.

[00:03:23] **Mario Verrilli:** Part of the appeal was the entrepreneurial opportunities I saw. So that was always one of the goals. Uh, when I knew it was the right time, um, I guess not to sound too spiritual, but there's an internal voice telling me to move it. And where I was at the time, um, when I left Suburban and moved to the city, uh, there really wasn't a career path.

[00:03:47] **Mario Verrilli:** Like, like we're seeing today where there's a structured career path and there's written black and white, uh, how you get

here to there. It was just, here you go. You've got three months to get on the commission and. Go for it. Okay. And if you, if you don't, you're out of here. So, I, I felt I got as busy as I could be with my two hands, and I, I didn't see where else.

[00:04:10] **Mario Verrilli:** The only other step, or the only other option was what we've been taught also by society. And even in, in cosmetology school, there's the whole thing of you, you know, you go to cosmetology school, work in a salon, and then open up your own. So, I didn't know any other option.

[00:04:25] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Looking back on that now, what do you wish you'd known before you opened a salon?

[00:04:33] **Mario Verrilli:** Well, in some ways I wish I knew and some ways it's better. I didn't because

[00:04:37] **Antony Whitaker:** exactly. Yeah.

[00:04:39] **Mario Verrilli:** yeah, I wish I'd known, you know, what, what other training I would need to be a salon owner. Cause it's a completely different skill set. Um, but in a way, I mean, I'm glad I didn't know that because I wouldn't have done it if I knew everything I had to do.

[00:04:57] **Mario Verrilli:** And being a business owner has just developed me personally in so many ways. That I don't think I would have developed myself the way I would have working somewhere else.

[00:05:09] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Now you just mentioned, uh, the book, and I've been lucky enough to, read your book, and I thoroughly enjoyed it It's got a very interesting title, uh, the fall of the hair salon and what to do about it. A step-by-step guide to the future of the beauty salon industry.

[00:05:27] **Antony Whitaker:** So, tell me about the message that's behind the title and, uh, and why did you, uh, decide to write a book?

[00:05:36] **Mario Verrilli:** Well, yeah, that's a loaded question. But yeah, starting with the title, um, I felt, you know, even if we go back to before COVID, I saw changes happening within the industry, um, right around 2012 or so. I don't know to be exact, but it was around then that I saw, I used to run my salon where you either cut hair or you colored hair.

[00:05:57] **Mario Verrilli:** Or you specialized. Cause I wanted to treat it like a, uh, almost like a dental practice. And we had specialists here and they, they only focus on one thing just for my own experience as a hairdresser, uh, to be great at all of it is, is really difficult. And there was always, I was always gravitated towards the cup and I could see people who loved the color more.

[00:06:16] **Mario Verrilli:** So, it just, it just worked. And I saw how efficient salons were when they operated that way as well. Um, so what happened around 2012, I guess it was the introduction of the homebrew. And then we started seeing the cut becoming, you know, the hair started becoming a little longer, but the trends became very long.

[00:06:36] **Mario Verrilli:** And I mean, as beautiful as that is, it's just become almost everyone. That's all you see on Instagram is the long mermaid waves and balayage.

[00:06:44] **Mario Verrilli:** And it's, when I started back in 95, I mean, there was so much variety. we saw it go from long hair to. All these celebrities cutting their hair off, and there was just such a variety of long hair shags, uh, short bobs, graduated bobs, beautiful pixies, anything went, and it was beautiful.

[00:07:01] **Mario Verrilli:** It was a really amazing time, and I just saw the difference around, you know, 2012. It just started to change, and you couldn't get a specialist who was cutting hair alone busy enough. They had to do both, so I changed the business model to have all stylists do both, uh, and then if they wanted to specialize, they could choose. Which now I think is probably the better route because that's actually how I started. I did both and then I got busy enough that I asked my boss if I could specialize in cutting alone. And he was all for it because we passed off the color to other stylists. Uh, so why I wrote the book was I guess what you looked at the beginning where, you know, why I started a salon.

[00:07:41] **Mario Verrilli:** It was partly, that was the message I received right from the beginning because you weren't good enough if you didn't own a salon and that isn't the message, I think we should be telling people. I think. The real message is be the best you can be because you're the, you'll have an amazing career regardless of where you own the salon.

[00:07:58] **Mario Verrilli:** If the salon is what you want, that's great, but that doesn't mean you're not as much worth without it. And I believe that was the

message that, that I received. And I still see it now with the, I think I saw the suites around that time too. Around 2012, uh, I started seeing these commercials on YouTube, these little animations, and it was like, why make all the money for the boss?

[00:08:20] **Mario Verrilli:** And as if the boss were evil and be your own boss and have a sweetness is glamorous lifestyle. And they were painting this bad picture of the salon. And I mean, without the salon, where does everybody start off? Where, where do you begin if there's no salon? So that was the purpose of this book and why I called it the fall of the hair salon.

[00:08:41] **Mario Verrilli:** I really wanted to get people's attention by saying the fall of the hair salon. What is that?

[00:08:46] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. That's interesting. So, um, the sweet thing as, uh, all of our American audience will know is that it's been a rapidly, growing business model. And it's definitely right for a lot of people. It's not right for everybody. Uh, is it the same in Canada? Is, is the sweet thing as prevalent or is it like a bit of a slow burn?

[00:09:04] **Mario Verrilli:** It's, it's not as prevalent, but it's becoming so we saw it after COVID, uh, an increase with the suites and solo salons is the big one that's moving in and opening up other locations. And I got to talking to them and it's, it's funny, their strategy is to position themselves right where there's a high concentration of salons established ones that they can pull from. And, uh, I was approached once several years ago, just before. I guess around 2015 was the first one that opened up, it's called JC salons and they approached me and I, I thought, you know, let me, let me go explore this. Let me see what this is all about. And I took a tour and I asked the gentleman, I said, why are you approaching me though?

[00:09:44] **Mario Verrilli:** I have a salon and he said, well, 60 percent of our tenants are salon owners that just couldn't deal with the people management and want to be on their own. And I thought that was interesting. Uh, I thought that that was interesting because they, they, their marketing message is completely different.

[00:10:00] **Mario Verrilli:** It's making this law in order to be a bad person and making all the money. So why work for him or her?

[00:10:06] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. It's interesting what drives it and it is different in different countries. So, you know, the sort of impetus behind it, but yeah, without a doubt, I hadn't heard, uh, 60%, but I had heard that there were quite a few salon owners that get to a point in their career where, do you know what, they sort of say, I can't deal with the staff thing anymore.

[00:10:24] **Antony Whitaker:** And, uh, I'd rather just work by myself and here's a readymade opportunity to take me and my business and work in a, a cubicle, uh, and just not have the bother of staff meetings and staff training and apprentices, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And I can understand why there might be some people at certain points in their career where they decide that that is what they want to do.

[00:10:45] **Antony Whitaker:** Again, I think that that's one thing that's important here is to, to not. Talking absolutes, you know, that it's different for different people in different countries that at different times of their life, but something you said at the beginning there, which I thought was really interesting about how we'd always sort of been led to believe, or you'd always been led to believe that you had to have any real credibility and success

[00:11:09] **Mario Verrilli:** That's right.

[00:11:10] **Antony Whitaker:** that you had to be a salon owner and that just Yeah. isn't the case. You can be very successful working for someone else. If you're working for the right person who, you know, puts a good business together and looks after you and trains you and you know, you can do very well economically out of it as well. You don't have to go and open your own business.

[00:11:31] **Antony Whitaker:** And, you know, maybe for some people that is sort of painted as the inevitable next step. And what you're saying is that that shouldn't be the case, that it shouldn't be seen that You know, the next step once you're qualified and you've got some clients is to now go and open your own business because it's sort of in some ways, um, that destroys the business from within, you know, like the salon industry is its own worst enemy in a lot of cases, you know, and so painting

[00:12:01] **Antony Whitaker:** the alternative of being an employee as a positive thing is a good thing to do. And I think that, you know, tell me what your thoughts are about this, but, you know, there's been a lot of sort of

pushback about validating you've alluded to it already. You know, saying that the salon owner is the bad guy, the boss is the bad guy.

[00:12:22] **Antony Whitaker:** He's taken all your money, as a way to get people to sort of naively think if I go and work in a suite, I get to keep everything myself. And then, you know, a very big percentage of them realize that that's just not the case.

[00:12:34] **Mario Verrilli:** So, what I wanted to say was that the hairdressing industry is always being reinvented. Um, I've been in it for over 40 years and the changes in 40 years have been phenomenal. And, and the latest change is. This huge rise in the independent salon owner, the salon suite that, you know, there's a lot of different terms used to essentially describe the same thing.

[00:13:00] **Antony Whitaker:** And I think one of the positive things that it's doing is it's making the traditional salon owner reassess. Well, what does a traditional salon look like?

[00:13:10] **Antony Whitaker:** So, in a way, this independent movement has made it. Traditional salon owners go, okay, what do I need to change? How do I need to reevaluate my business to, you know, succeed in the 21st century? Uh, what are your thoughts about that?

[00:13:24] **Mario Verrilli:** yeah. So, um, I, I believe having that as part of the career path is a very important piece, uh, because what I, from my experience, what I found is that, well, number one, talking to other industries. I've got clients that are investment advisors and what I found was they're self-employed under an umbrella of a large company.

[00:13:45] **Mario Verrilli:** And they get a 40 percent commission, but they're working part of a team. They're still part of a team and it works. Um, I have a neighbor that's a dentist and her and I often talk, you know, both business and I, I rolled this talk, the idea of having independent artists in the salon. And she said, well, dentists do it all the time.

[00:14:05] **Mario Verrilli:** We have dentists that work here and they work in the neighboring city, uh, called Burlington, which is about 30 minutes away. Um, and that's common practice. So, I guess just look into other industries, industries to see how things can be done. And I think if we did that, that's

where maybe, you know, working for someone, but not having to open up your own salon will still give that credibility to that.

[00:14:31] **Mario Verrilli:** This is a profitable industry. It's, it's a good career path, right? As aside from, okay, well you have to own this salon. That's the only option.

[00:14:39] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, no, good point. Uh, and I like the fact you said like the dental practice does it, the medical practice full stop, there's a lot of self-employed people working under one roof, same with legal firms, same with accountancy firms, same with you know, architectural firms. Um, and I've done a couple of podcasts where I've talked about, those different business models and how we should, as an industry, you know, look to other professions and see how they structure it.

[00:15:03] **Antony Whitaker:** That it doesn't have to mean that you go out and do your own thing on your own. You can be very successful within, uh, part of something bigger. Um, what, what's the business model that you have in your salon business?

[00:15:17] **Mario Verrilli:** So, uh, I started off with the, the traditional commission hourly, then moved to commission model.

[00:15:24] **Mario Verrilli:** Uh, but we have a tier of commission. So, they, you know, we start at 40%. And it goes, jumps up to 45 would be the next level, 47, uh, 50, and then 52 would be the highest, uh, based on, you know, certain key indicators. Uh, it doesn't, it used to be based on like the time of the company, but really, it's about, it's about the results that they're producing.

[00:15:47] **Mario Verrilli:** I know what it takes to build and develop someone. Uh, there's a lot more than it's, it's, it's, it's a few years of development time to get them to become productive, uh, aside from the technical training. Um, I have a pretty good track record for retention. I've had multiple people with me for almost 20 years. Uh, several that have been with me past 13 years.

[00:16:08] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, let me just talk to you a little bit about, uh, the motivation and people management side of, uh, your business.

[00:16:17] **Mario Verrilli:** The fun stuff.

[00:16:18] **Antony Whitaker:** let me, let me start by asking, how do you get your team? Productive because there's a lot of great little gems of wisdom in your book about how you build a productive team. What are some of the things that you'd share there?

[00:16:33] **Mario Verrilli:** Um, I think the biggest thing is, is clarity, clarity being number one, uh, when people are clear about what's expected, uh, and they're clear about where they can go and what they need to do to get there and what they receive in return, uh, that being the biggest, I don't want to say motivator, I don't know if that's what motivates them, but it, it, it probably could, because if they know they want to end up here, they know what they need to do.

[00:16:55] **Mario Verrilli:** And now they're clear to go there. They've got a clear path to go there. Where when you don't have, uh, a clear structured career path for them, they're just going to wander and some might be successful, a lot won't. Um, so I think that, that being the number one piece is, is clear expectations. And, uh, number two, how you communicate.

[00:17:18] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, that is, that is really important, giving people some vision of the future. And, I was talking to a salon owner. I think I might have mentioned this on another podcast and he was employing a young lady. And, uh, she was very young, 17, 18 or whatever. And she'd already started working in another salon.

[00:17:36] **Antony Whitaker:** And after nine months, she decided to leave there because she was just being used as a glorified cleaner. And she came to my friend's salon for an interview. And, uh, my friend said, you know, and she brought her mother with her. And, uh, he was saying to me and you know what it's like, Antony as soon as they bring their mom, you know, it's always a problem and we laughed about it.

[00:17:59] **Antony Whitaker:** But then we were sort of talking about this and he said that the mother was asking questions like. And what point should she be expected to be on the floor? And what sort of training would she be doing at the six-month mark? And what sort of things were she being taught at the 12-month mark? And as we both said, when we were having about this, he was like, yeah, that's exactly.

[00:18:24] **Antony Whitaker:** What we should have in place, you know, and he didn't at that time have that in place, but we were talking about the clarity that you've just alluded to that as a business owner, if you're going to employ people, and this is, this again comes back to what we were talking about before with the frustration of, uh, uh, of salon owners.

[00:18:42] **Antony Whitaker:** You know, looking at staff leaving, going independent, going into sell on suites, et cetera, but not being prepared to wear some of that blame for, well, actually, why are they leaving me? And what can I do to reinvent the traditional, you know, employee employer based business model to make it work for them?

[00:19:01] **Antony Whitaker:** And a lot of that comes down to that key word you just said. Let's give people some clarity. Let's give them a vision of the future of that. This is our training program. This is where you'll be at in six months. This is where you'll be at in 12 months. This is when you'll be on the floor. This is what you can expect from me.

[00:19:14] **Antony Whitaker:** This is what we'll expect from you. So yeah, I think, I think you sum it up with that, with that one word. Um, so, okay, let me, let me ask you this question. How do you handle? Because I know from our conversation that you've got a lot of that clarity. You've got a lot of those systems and structure in place.

[00:19:31] **Antony Whitaker:** How do you handle non performers?

[00:19:33] **Mario Verrilli:** That's a, that's a tough one, but, um, so, well, the biggest thing is we, we have regularly scheduled meetings and we know we're going to review. They're meant to be coaching meetings. Um, you have a conversation, what, what, what I took me 20 years to learn was how that conversation early on and in a very soft way, it doesn't have to sound like you're going to be fired because that that was how I was taught you need to let them know that if you're not hitting the mark, you're out of here

[00:20:03] **Mario Verrilli:** It doesn't have to be that, uh, stern or come across that way. Uh, but if, if, if you have the conversation and again, it's given them clarity, this is what is expected by this time. If it's not, we're going to have to reevaluate your, either your position in the company or whether you're a fit and that, that tends to be the way to handle it.

[00:20:24] **Mario Verrilli:** And, and. I like to, I've only had to do that once where the person just wasn't a beautiful soul, but they just weren't meant for the industry. And I had to gently just say, you know, maybe this isn't for you, but maybe we can find something for you here

[00:20:39] **Mario Verrilli:** and then you can decide, right?

[00:20:41] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, yeah, exactly. And there's nothing wrong with doing that. You owe it to them. And it is being clear right from the get go is what you've said right from the beginning.

[00:20:49] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, okay. Uh, let me ask you about young people, you know, Gen Z as a salon owner today, you know, you've had a salon for 30 odd years. Um, what are the changes that you see?

[00:21:00] **Antony Whitaker:** We've been talking a lot about this interwoven with every every question that we've talked about really, but what are the changes that you see in Gen Z compared to previous generations in the workforce? You know, when you get a 17, 18-year-old coming today to start with you, how are they different to, you know, equivalent 10, 15, 20 years ago?

[00:21:23] **Mario Verrilli:** okay. Um, well, interesting, because I've got. The youngest I would have would be a 20-year-old. I don't, I don't usually have. I've had some teenagers, but usually they would be a very part time entry, entry level just to give them some exposure to the field. Again, just that education piece for me is really big, so I want to make sure they're serious about this.

[00:21:43] **Mario Verrilli:** Uh, but with Gen Z right now, I've got to tell you, I've got two of them that I've just hired in the last year. And they have been two of the best hires I've had in probably 10 years.

[00:21:56] **Mario Verrilli:** And so

[00:21:57] **Mario Verrilli:** we've got these, we've got these two new ones, and then I've got a team that I've had for, you know, there's a couple that are both 13, they've been with me 13 years.

[00:22:07] **Mario Verrilli:** So, between these two cohorts, or if we want to call them a cohort, um, there was a period where before COVID, you know, we would hire, and there were some beautiful things about this generation. And

then there were some challenging things. I mean, there was anxiety that I noticed was the big piece that was different and, uh, them not knowing how to manage it.

[00:22:31] **Mario Verrilli:** And, and, and that's where I started introducing some personal development into our training, uh, to help with that. Uh, but right now I've just, I've got nothing but amazing things to say about the two that I've just hired. They've just, uh, I guess maybe it's because my time in business, I've learned to be more clear or get better at clarifying what needs to be done and they're going for it.

[00:22:52] **Antony Whitaker:** This was I gonna ask you. Um, it's great that you've got, because a lot of, a lot of times Gen Z are bashing, you know, and, uh, I, I don't bash them very unconsciously because I've got two children that are in that generation and they have a phenomenal work ethic, as I've set up. plenty of times on this podcast.

[00:23:12] **Antony Whitaker:** And so, it's like everything, you cannot make absolutes about any generation, any group of people. So, I'm glad that you've got two that are, you know, doing really well. Let me flip that question on its head and say, how are you treating 17, 18-year-olds today as employees compared to how you might've treated them 10, 15, 20 years ago when you first started out in business?

[00:23:34] **Mario Verrilli:** That's a good question. Yeah. Um, you know what? Actually, I don't, I don't think I'm treating them much differently.

[00:23:42] **Mario Verrilli:** I don't think, uh, they're, they're, sorry, there was, I think it's maybe I'm, I've got two, the two that I have are not the norm because I did, I should back up here. I did have a couple where I'd hired them.

[00:23:55] **Mario Verrilli:** They say, you know, I can only work this day. They would tell me the terms. And I would try and clarify, well, you know, we can work with you and down the road, we can do every other Saturday. Uh, and then when I, when, you know, I'd give them a shift, they'd, they'd cancel it or, or, or what have you. And so, then I would reduce their hours and then they would come to me for more hours.

[00:24:15] **Mario Verrilli:** So, there was this sense of, you know, everything's for them for the taking, right? That, I guess. Getting back to that, but I think I'm

just getting better at articulating what I expect in a, in a very positive way and it kind of weeds out what's not going to be a fit,

[00:24:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So, you're a lot more

[00:24:34] **Mario Verrilli:** I don't think I'm treating, I definitely am more flexible.

[00:24:36] **Antony Whitaker:** you know, there's more, there's more flexibility built into, like you just said, those magic words every other Saturday off, um, I'm thinking 20 years ago, if someone had said to you, I want every other Saturday off, you would have burst out laughing and rolled around on the ground, you know

[00:24:50] **Mario Verrilli:** That's right.

[00:24:50] **Antony Whitaker:** because I would have, but today it's like, yeah, and do you know what I mean?

[00:24:55] **Antony Whitaker:** It's like, doesn't everyone want that? Yeah. So, so, so that's good. And that's what I mean about the reinvention. Yeah. Yeah. Of the traditional employee employer model that's got to be made to look more attractive in order for people not to think that the logical next step is to go out and open your own business so you can be really successful working for someone else.

[00:25:14] **Antony Whitaker:** And there's lots of really good examples of that. Um, a few things before we start to wrap up. One of the things I want to ask you about is leadership. What's the, what's the most important thing? Uh, I think you said you had a salon for 29 years, so that's, you know, that's a long time, a lot of lessons in there.

[00:25:31] **Antony Whitaker:** What's the most important thing that you've learned as a salon owner or a salon manager?

[00:25:36] **Mario Verrilli:** The most important thing is communication for me. I wish I would have learned that right from the beginning. It took me years of struggling with it to realize how poor communicator I was, uh, and then communicating with empathy, to give an example of, uh, I've got someone who's been with me for a long time, uh, almost 20 years now.

[00:26:00] **Mario Verrilli:** And, you know, they would bring up points and meetings and, and, and God bless this person because I think they were the, the one that would get me to see things from the other person's perspective. And I think because I was a stylist myself, I wouldn't, I wouldn't take in what they were trying to tell me.

[00:26:15] **Mario Verrilli:** I'd be like, well, I was a stylist too. I know it, you know, and then that was keeping me from communicating effectively with this person and other people because I was a stylist. I knew what needed to be done. Uh, so yeah, I'd say humility and communication are the number one skill you need as a leader.

[00:26:34] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, good, good. The two go hand in hand. Okay, um, what's the biggest mistake you've made as a business owner?

[00:26:43] **Mario Verrilli:** Biggest mistake was. Interestingly enough, you just touched on it earlier where I had, I didn't realize how I've changed. I didn't even realize it myself. I've changed is where before was my way the highway. And I mean, you need to have that as an owner. You need, everybody needs to know who's in charge to this day.

[00:27:03] **Mario Verrilli:** It can't be a democracy. However, you've got to learn how to be flexible. You definitely learn. How and, and, um, I was better at that. I stepping back, I'm getting there now, still learning, but learning how to see things from other people's perspective.

[00:27:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, that's really important because I'll talk to a lot of people who have been in the industry, you know, 30 years and they'll just start rattling on about when I was a boy or when I was an apprentice, and it's like, honey, tell somebody cares, like, because it's just irrelevant, like, it's a different time we live in with different, like, expectations, different way of thinking, working, living, different technology.

[00:27:50] **Antony Whitaker:** So, you have to, you use that word before empathy, you know, you have to be flexible, you have to have empathy, you have to have humility, you've got to communicate, um, You know, you've got to be prepared to admit when you roll, make mistakes and learn, but there also has to be that line. Do you know what I mean?

[00:28:08] **Antony Whitaker:** It is, it is your business, Mario. It is you responsible for the rent. It's like, you know, it's not a, uh, a workers cooperative. Unless it is a worker's cooperative where everyone's putting money in to part of that business at the end of the day, you know, you're still, um, the leader, you know, the owner and the one on the hook, um, in the book, you quote a lot of different influences.

[00:28:33] **Antony Whitaker:** I want you to talk for a minute about how important reading and personal development has been in your career progression because I think it's had a big impact.

[00:28:45] **Mario Verrilli:** Definitely. Yeah, no, definitely. Without a doubt. Um, especially as, um, anyone who's in a creative field and there is an element of entrepreneurialism, even if you're working for someone, um, whether you work for someone or not, or in a creative field, it doesn't matter. I think we all need from time to time to hear something said, could be the same thing, but it's said from a different person, a different voice, uh, words of optimism.

[00:29:13] **Mario Verrilli:** It's, it's just, uh, so important to feed your mind. Like you'd feed your body. You wouldn't feed it fast food every day. If you want to stay healthy and if you want to stay positive, you've got to feed yourself. Surround yourself with positive people, listen to positive people like this podcast for me was one of those things during, during a traumatic event where I didn't even realize how traumatic it was until we came out of it.

[00:29:38] **Mario Verrilli:** And I realized, wow, I was traumatized by what happened, but what got me through it was I actually started reading more. So, I was probably reading 2 or 3 books a month, at least. Um. And now that's become a habit. I mean, I've always liked to read or listen to books. I, I like to listen to them at, at the same time too. Uh, but yeah, reading, going to events,

[00:30:00] **Mario Verrilli:** getting outside of your familiar environment and, and getting uncomfortable is, is so important. Uh, and my, I mean, I was always very, a timid person growing up. Uh, didn't like to try new things. And I find I'm getting more comfortable getting uncomfortable and. It's, it's so important for, especially what we went through to get past that.

[00:30:25] **Mario Verrilli:** So, I mean, if you're not doing that, I mean, it could be the difference between a mental breakdown and, and coming through it stronger.

[00:30:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. I love that quote. Um, it's sort of been my favorite quote for a few years now. I don't know who, who first said it, but I can remember when I first said it, first heard it. It was that quote about get comfortable being uncomfortable. And I just thought, wow, that's a really important, you know, way to look at the world because the world changes so fast.

[00:30:53] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, you look at the world, your parents, your grandparents lived in. It was a very slowly evolving world. The world and the speed of change now is just phenomenal. And so, you have to be prepared to constantly be questioning how you do things. And that is what we're Quote, you know, get comfortable being uncomfortable, um, I think is, uh, it just sort of clarifies it perfectly that if you want to succeed, get comfortable being uncomfortable, be constantly prepared to learn and evolve and adapt.

[00:31:22] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. A couple of quick ones before we wrap up. What advice would you give to someone who is in an apprenticeship? Or in a beauty school, what advice would you give them?

[00:31:35] **Mario Verrilli:** Uh, so the advice I would give and what I would have loved to hear was number one, find the best salon. Or one of the best ones in your neighborhood to work at, uh, because they're the best for a reason and they'll teach you what we just talked about getting comfortable with being uncomfortable because that's how they're, uh, the, the top salons are usually the most progressive and they train the rest of the industry that's where a lot of people start off and open up their own salons and they've learned it from usually the best.

[00:32:06] **Mario Verrilli:** Um, so always surround yourself from the best, never stop learning. Uh, take as many workshops as you can, uh, and get out of your city. That's really important too. Even if you're from a big city, maybe go to a small city just to see the difference. And by doing that, I mean, I've, I've been to a lot of classes where I've invested money and I, it was, it was for lack of a better word.

[00:32:30] **Mario Verrilli:** It wasn't a waste because I did get one little thing out of it. Uh, but it was hit and miss. I was, it was trial and error. So, I was. Taking as many workshops and some are great, some weren't, but that's part of it. Getting comfortable with failure too. That's, that's the key. You're never really failing if you're, if you look at it as a learning opportunity.

[00:32:49] **Mario Verrilli:** So that's what I took out of even some of the courses I took that maybe were not what I was expecting. I spent money on it and I didn't really get what I thought I would, but I always got something out of it. And then I determined what was good and what wasn't. That was the benefit of it.

[00:33:04] **Mario Verrilli:** and then if you're going to apprentice, uh, really have a level of respect for the person putting this all together, because you really don't know what it takes. It's like the expression, you don't know what it's like to have kids unless you've had them.

[00:33:19] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, yeah, exactly.

[00:33:21] **Mario Verrilli:** as having a business. I mean, there's so much that goes into it.

[00:33:23] **Mario Verrilli:** And the owner, maybe at times might, might not even, uh, acknowledge that they've got so much going on in their mind. Uh, you can't take that personally. That's just, just, but, but just know that they're doing a lot. If they're, if they're providing some sense of sort of training and a structured environment for you, there was a lot that went into that.

[00:33:44] **Mario Verrilli:** So, you've got to respect that,

[00:33:46] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, definitely. Okay. And just a quick one for you before we wrap up, what advice would you give to someone in your shoes, someone who's had a salon 30 years, they're in the industry. Still behind the chair, got a nice little team, et cetera. Uh, but it's hard. It's hard to get to that point. Um, and some of them feel burnt out and unappreciated, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:34:06] **Antony Whitaker:** What advice would you give to that 30-year-old, uh, 30 years in salon owner?

[00:34:12] **Mario Verrilli:** Okay, great question. Um, because you, you, you hit it. I, there were times where I felt burnt out and, um, I was maybe taking things personally and one of the big, the, one of the quotes that stands out to me is a Dale Carnegie workshop when I first took a public speaking workshop because I was terrified of speaking in front of people, uh, we had to get up in front and there was on the board, there were all these, his famous. I guess quotes or

whatever they, you call them, uh, and one was expect ingratitude. It's natural for people to being ungrateful. And that one just hit me like a ton of bricks because it was like, oh, okay. You know what? Not that it should be acceptable, but

[00:34:56] **Mario Verrilli:** expect it. And you'll avoid that frustration that, well, why?

[00:35:01] **Mario Verrilli:** I can't believe this person doesn't see what I'm doing. Or you get out of your head and it's not about you. So that's the biggest thing.

[00:35:10] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, okay, so look, we need to wrap up. Where else can people connect with you on Instagram or other social media channels?

[00:35:17] **Mario Verrilli:** Uh, so my personal Instagram, it's marioverrili1 and, uh, I've got a website you can go to, uh, it's onarebeauty.com and my salon website is onaresalon.com and the best way to reach me is, is by email.

[00:35:32] **Mario Verrilli:** Uh, I'm still traditional that way. I just, I love looking at mail and it's mario@onaresalon.com.

[00:35:38] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay, uh, and where can they order the book from?

[00:35:42] **Mario Verrilli:** So, they can order it on Amazon or they can order it at onaresalon.com.

[00:35:47] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay, so, um, I will make sure that I put all those. Links you've just given me in the show notes for today's podcast so they can find the book or they can connect with you. It's, it's a, good read. There's a lot of good little, um, you know, tips in there about running a successful salon today. So, um, I, I sort of managed to either get given or by, um, I'm quite happy to buy them, but I get given a lot of books.

[00:36:14] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, and you know, from within the industry and I love that, you know, as you said, a lot of people prefer to listen to books now as well. Um, but yeah, I'd encourage everyone to check that book out. So I'll put those links on, in the show notes for today's podcast and on our website, uh, growmysalonbusiness.com.

[00:36:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Uh, so if you're listening to this podcast with Mario and I've enjoyed it, do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone and share it to your Instagram stories. And don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple podcast app. So, to wrap up, Mario Verrilli, thank you for being on this week's Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[00:36:51] **Mario Verrilli:** Thank you so much, Antony.

[00:36:52] **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](http://GrowMySalonBusiness.com) or on Facebook and Instagram at [Grow My Salon business](#) 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.