

## GMSB 249

[00:00:00] **Antony Whitaker:** Hello and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host, Antony Whittaker, and it's great to have you here with us today. Video versions of our podcasts are now available on our YouTube channel. So if you want to put faces to the names and head on over to Grow My Salon Business on YouTube and like, and subscribe to the channel.

[00:00:25] **Antony Whitaker:** So let's get on with today's episode. There are many ways that a career in the hairdressing industry can evolve, and one of them is to become an educator. And like everything else, the role and responsibilities for hairdressing education have changed dramatically over the last few years, largely through social media and the various online learning platforms.

[00:00:47] **Antony Whitaker:** And that's led to a rise of the independent educator. Now today's guest is DJ Muldoon, who has made a great name for himself, both in the online world and face to face for being a fantastic educator, especially when it comes to cutting hair. In today's podcast, we're going to discuss, what does the life of the independent educator look like?

[00:01:09] **Antony Whitaker:** We're going to talk about the impact of social media and what is the key to becoming a great educator and lots more.

[00:01:18] **Antony Whitaker:** So without further ado, welcome to the show DJ Muldoon.

[00:01:22] **DJ Muldoon:** Hi, Antony. Nice to be here. Thanks for having me.

[00:01:25] **Antony Whitaker:** No, not at all. I've been looking forward to this. I mean, I look forward to having all my guests on the show, but, um, I've been wanting to talk to you for ages because in many ways, our careers have sort of, trodden a very similar path, but we've never, um, crossed paths before. So it's great to have this opportunity to talk to you.

[00:01:43] **Antony Whitaker:** I, you know, I often think that's the thing about podcasts because the whole purpose of them is to, is to get a bit intense and to get to know people really quickly.

[00:01:52] **Antony Whitaker:** Whereas if I came up to you in a social situation and started asking you all these questions, it would be like. Wow, that's a bit heavy. Why don't you just, why don't we just work up to the sort of relationship?

[00:02:02] **Antony Whitaker:** So anyway

[00:02:02] **DJ Muldoon:** there's no, there's no beer involved.

[00:02:05] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, exactly, exactly. Now, um, I'm based in the UK, you're based in, uh, the US in San

[00:02:13] **Antony Whitaker:** Diego. And I think I'm correct in saying that you grew up in your parents salons and school business in the UK and then you moved to San Diego in the US when you were 16.

[00:02:27] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, I'm always curious to ask this question of people like you and in a funny sort of way it's people like me as well because, again, similar. And it's this, do you think of yourself as English? or American?

[00:02:39] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah.

[00:02:41] **Antony Whitaker:** You're English

[00:02:42] **DJ Muldoon:** all the way. Yeah, I am. Definitely. Yeah, for sure.

[00:02:45] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Well, see, I thought, I thought you were going to say American because you're not 16 anymore.

[00:02:51] **DJ Muldoon:** No. I , no I'm 48 now. So I've been here longer, a lot longer. Um, but I still feel as I'm English. I think I was in England long enough to have that established. And then when I went into the workforce, I worked for an English company so, that kind of helped too.

[00:03:08] **Antony Whitaker:** that's true. Yeah.

[00:03:09] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. I thought you were going to say that. I think I'm American now because I knew you weren't 16 anymore. I thought you would have made that transition. And so I was going to ask you, what are

the, what are the main parts of the 16 year old from Sheffield? that still remain? So, so how would you answer that?

[00:03:29] **DJ Muldoon:** I mean, I think, you know, um, being an only child and just being with my parents, I was still very English, very British. So everything we did was very British, very English. I'm a massive Manchester United fan. So I'm always connected to football and all the sports in England. And the music was always very British and English influenced.

[00:03:53] **DJ Muldoon:** So I always felt English, even though I'm in America. My accent's a little bit different now over the years, but yeah, I'm still very, very British. I'm proud to be English too.

[00:04:06] **DJ Muldoon:** All right. Well, here's a little bit of a test for you. Uh, what is the first thing that comes to mind on these questions? Okay. This will determine whether the audience think you're English or American, right?

[00:04:17] **DJ Muldoon:** Okay.

[00:04:18] **Antony Whitaker:** favourite TV show?

[00:04:21] **DJ Muldoon:** Uh, all of all time

[00:04:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah,

[00:04:24] **DJ Muldoon:** only fools and horses.

[00:04:25] **Antony Whitaker:** Oh, okay, so that's very English. Okay, all right, favourite comedian?

[00:04:32] **DJ Muldoon:** favorite comedian are, well, I could go either way here if it's American, I'm going to go with like Chris Rock, something like that.

[00:04:40] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah,

[00:04:41] **DJ Muldoon:** Uh, English. I mean, I grew up in the seventies and eighties, so you've got like Les Dawson and characters like that, you know? So yeah.

[00:04:51] **Antony Whitaker:** okay, all right. What about favourite fashion icon?

[00:04:56] **DJ Muldoon:** Uh, fashion icon, uh, probably Yohji Yamamoto.

[00:05:01] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. Okay. So, so that's neither England, British or American.

[00:05:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, and, and last one, I think you've already answered this one. Uh, I would know. Well, yeah, favorite sport, football. You said Manchester United. So

[00:05:14] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah, yeah. Football, soccer as they call it over here.

[00:05:18] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, of course. Okay. Uh, and, and last one then is a favorite musician or band.

[00:05:26] **DJ Muldoon:** Oh, that goes, there's so many for me to choose from, um, favorite musician or band growing up, my favorite band is Queen. Um, so I always loved Queen, but I'm a huge music fan. So like I come from more of a, an era of music. So kind of like, post punk, you know, that kind of era, new wave. Um, I'm a huge fan of like all the Manchester scene from the late 70s, early 80s.

[00:05:54] **Antony Whitaker:** Right.

[00:05:55] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. That make sense.

[00:05:56] **DJ Muldoon:** Gonna say like New Order, Depeche Mode, that kind

[00:05:59] **Antony Whitaker:** Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah, Good. Good. yeah,

[00:06:01] **Antony Whitaker:** Well, you're sounding very British then. Okay.

[00:06:03] **Antony Whitaker:** So I was going to say, I looked at your Instagram feed before we jumped on the call. There's a picture of your dad taken in the sixties and he looks like something out of Oasis, which is a

[00:06:11] **Antony Whitaker:** great picture.

[00:06:13] **Antony Whitaker:** It's, it's a fantastic

[00:06:14] **Antony Whitaker:** fantastic haircut. He looks fabulous. Yeah. Okay. so it'll be good for everyone to, you know, understand who DJ Muldoon is. Uh, as I said, you're based out of San Diego, um,

[00:06:28] **Antony Whitaker:** and you've got a, Salon slash school slash workspace called The Factory. Um, tell us about that. Tell us about The Factory.

[00:06:38] **DJ Muldoon:** So The Factory came around after I, um, I used to work with Paul Mitchell, a product company, which everyone should know about. And, um, I left Paul Mitchell in 2010 and I didn't really want to work for, another product company at that time. So my, uh, obvious step was to become more independent. And so I needed a space.

[00:07:03] **DJ Muldoon:** So I wanted a place where I could teach out of cause I'm predominantly a teacher. I've never really worked as a stylist and I wanted to continue with filming and that kind of, um, medium of education. And, uh, the obvious choice was to probably open a space where I could do everything. but I wanted to build a team of people that wanted to do what I do.

[00:07:28] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, so, uh, we opened a salon as well. So it's, uh, I'm in here right now. I'm on the upstairs part, which is where we have our studio. And then downstairs we have the salon, which is, uh, seven chairs. It's in downtown San Diego. And, uh, yeah, it's a really cool creative space, but, it's my sandbox. Let's put it that way.

[00:07:49] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. It looks, uh, it looks a good space, you know, um, as a, as a sort of a creative hub. So, do you do clients in there yourself? Like behind the

[00:07:58] **Antony Whitaker:** chair, you've got a regular clientele.

[00:08:00] **DJ Muldoon:** I have like five people that I do their hair and that might include my parents.

[00:08:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. Okay.

[00:08:07] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah.

[00:08:08] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay.

[00:08:09] **DJ Muldoon:** I'm quite unique. I was trained to be a teacher. So I've always kind of been the educator, but I'm obviously teaching stylists, so I wanted a place where I could get involved.

[00:08:21] **DJ Muldoon:** And see what people go through every day when, you know, who I go and teach. So that's why we did the salon.

[00:08:28] **Antony Whitaker:** So, so does The Factory double up as a school environment as well? Some days of the

[00:08:35] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. Yeah. So, yeah. So we do a number of classes throughout the year here in The Factory. Um, and when we're not doing education, it's a work in salon.

[00:08:47] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. And who looks after the, the business side of things?

[00:08:52] **DJ Muldoon:** The business side is, uh, actually run by my parents. They still, uh, are actively involved. Um, I'm mainly involved in the education side of things. So I run the, that part of it. Um, so it really is a family business and, it's

[00:09:08] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah. And so you were telling me before we pushed the record button that your dad has got back behind the chair.

[00:09:15] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, I mean, he's been doing hair for a long time

[00:09:18] **Antony Whitaker:** and he still has that passion to

[00:09:20] **Antony Whitaker:** get back behind the chair and work with clients.

[00:09:22] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah, he does. I mean, my dad's 78 now, so I feel like. Yeah, he's probably doesn't want to do it as much as he used to, but he still actively does, you know, a handful of clients and stuff. So yeah, he, he enjoys that part.

[00:09:38] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. So how many staff do you have there?  
We'll

[00:09:42] **DJ Muldoon:** we've got, uh, five people.

[00:09:45] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. And so do they, are they employees or is it

[00:09:49] **DJ Muldoon:** They're employees of the, of the salon. And a few of them are actually educators with me. So they travel around and help me teach and stuff.

[00:09:58] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. Okay. Well, it sounds, it sounds like a, a great concept. And I mean, I obviously haven't seen it except for on social media and it looks like a, you know, a great, uh, creative workspace to be in.

[00:10:11] **Antony Whitaker:** So Yeah. As you called it, you'll run your sandbox Now, I know that aside from having that base as an education space, you travel a lot, you're on the road a lot as an, as an independent, uh, educator, talk to us about that side of your business and what that looks like.

[00:10:33] **DJ Muldoon:** So, um, what I do is I travel, I think about, let's see, I have the calendar over here about 40 days a year.

[00:10:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Right.

[00:10:44] **DJ Muldoon:** I put them on the calendar and what I do is I offer them up to people in the industry, salons, schools, whoever, and, um, they book up with that. And I actually, I now work with a product company, so I split my time between Evo So 20 days I give to Evo, and then 20 days I do independent private education.

[00:11:07] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay.

[00:11:08] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, yeah, so I'm pretty much a full time educator, um, but just travel each weekend.

[00:11:14] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. So, as an educator, do you, like, sort out the venue? Do you sort of go, okay, here's the venue, it is in ABC City, and you just post to your huge social media following that I'm here doing a seminar for the day, uh, and then people book direct through you, or do they contact you and say, we want to bring you to ABC City, and they fill up the room?

[00:11:40] **Antony Whitaker:** How does that work?

[00:11:41] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah, yeah, that's kind of how we do it. Um, when I do my own classes here, then I organize everything. Um, but then when we do the private classes, it's just, you book me, book my time and you organize everything. I show up, I do the class, I leave just nice and cushy

[00:11:59] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah,

[00:11:59] **DJ Muldoon:** would say.

[00:12:00] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, gonna have to explain that one. Okay, so, um, behind you, uh, directly behind you, we can see, uh, the signage, which says knowledge destroys fear.

[00:12:16] **Antony Whitaker:** is that the name you've given your education platform? Because it is a really good, um, expression and it sort of underpins everything you do.

[00:12:25] **Antony Whitaker:** So, so talk to us about, about that.

[00:12:29] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. So knowledge destroys fear is the, the moniker, the name that I, I use for my education. Um, it kind of started years ago. Um, I heard the term knowledge is power. You know, we hear that a lot and I just used to think about like, well, what, what power is that? What power does it give me? And you know, my thing, I always used to be super fearful of what I was doing.

[00:12:56] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Um, because I didn't know my way around everything at that time. And then obviously the more educated I got, the more confident I got, the more that fear subsided. So I kind of just replaced the word power with fear. Knowledge destroys fear, you know, it gets rid of it. And I, I named a class that when I was in Paul Mitchell, actually.

[00:13:16] **DJ Muldoon:** So it started a long time ago, but then when I became independent, I just thought I would name my class knowledge destroys fear. But then I thought it would be a great idea to just name my business that so my education is called knowledge destroys fear

[00:13:31] **Antony Whitaker:** what is the key to being a great educator? You know, I've sort of been looking at you through the eyes of Instagram and, uh, you're a great educator. Like, what, what is it, what is the key to that? Because



a lot of people will be listening to this or looking at you or already know you and thinking, I want to do what he's doing. but very few people can do it. so what's the key to it?

[00:13:58] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, my, my thing is you've got to be in the right place. So the education is paramount. I was very lucky. I was at, um, an amazing place at an amazing time amongst absolutely amazing people. And I realized quickly that to be any good at this, you really need to know and be in control of it. And to do that, the education was paramount, but I was in an environment where I saw that happening.

[00:14:28] **DJ Muldoon:** I could see the best of the best doing what they were doing. And so to me, the education was, was the first thing that I had to get through. And. You know, then it's, it's understanding what an educator is, you know, it's not a platform to necessarily show off. It's not, it's not really about you. It's about the individual who's watching you, who's trying to learn from you.

[00:14:53] **DJ Muldoon:** So to me, it's, you know, simplifying things. It's to get rid of unnecessary, superfluous information that doesn't need to be used. So that the message could be very clear. So to me a translator is a, an educator is a translator, excuse me, you know, you're, you're translating that language. Into everybody's learning language and not everybody is the same.

[00:15:20] **DJ Muldoon:** So you have to, you know, simplify it.

[00:15:24] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, I love that. you mentioned Yojhi Yamamoto before, uh, the designer. I have a, a quote of his that, uh, I absolutely love. It was just a, a sentence that he said in a, in an interview. I think it was in the eighties. And as soon as I read it, it, it leapt off the page to me as being something that's very relevant to cutting hair.

[00:15:46] **Antony Whitaker:** And what he said was, the art of the minimum requires a maximum of discipline. And I think whether you're talking about interior design or clothing or hair or whatever, that there's so much in that, you know, there was something you just said, you know, when you were talking then about an educator and you went straight to that thing of saying that it's not about me. It's about them.

[00:16:15] **Antony Whitaker:** And I, I just wanted to throw my hands in the air and go hallelujah because you see so many people that they get that bit wrong and they think it's all about them and the unusual way they'll hold the hair or the, do you know what I mean? They'll do all sorts of stuff to make it about them, but it's actually not about you.

[00:16:38] **Antony Whitaker:** it's, it's about you in the context of. How well do you impart that knowledge and information

[00:16:46] **Antony Whitaker:** and you do that by it not being about you. So there's that humility that has to

[00:16:52] **Antony Whitaker:** come across. And I think that comes across in your, in your whole approach and your whole demeanor, the way you sort of talk and the way you do stuff. You don't make a big fuss about it. It's just pared right down to the simplest core elements.

[00:17:08] **Antony Whitaker:** You know,

[00:17:08] **DJ Muldoon:** I saw a, I saw a quote, you know, we're talking about quotes and it's always inspiring to see a quote and it. What gets me every time it's an Albert Einstein quote. And he said, if you can't explain it simply, you don't know it well enough.

[00:17:21] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah,

[00:17:22] **DJ Muldoon:** And that always resonates with me as an educator. And that's what you have to get to to perfection is to get to the simplicity. To get rid of the unnecessary.

[00:17:31] **DJ Muldoon:** Like you said, where it's not about yourself, you know, I was very fortunate early days at Vidal Sassoon teaching, I was teaching an advanced class with a colleague and in this class was a certain gentleman and he, he always came to these two classes every year and it was kind of famous that this guy would take these classes.

[00:17:54] **DJ Muldoon:** And if you were teaching his class, it kind of meant you you're at the top. You know what I mean? You were doing pretty well. So I'm teaching the class and I guess I'm just showing off. You know, I'm, I'm doing this disconnection and that dig and this and all that. And he pulls me aside

afterwards. And he says, he said, you know, it's really nice to see that you can do all these things, but realistically, you need to stop tap dancing.

[00:18:18] **DJ Muldoon:** And he said a few extra savory words as he said that, and it really like hit home. You know, it, he said, you know, it's, it's really not about you. It's about me. It's like, how can I take what you've just done? Back to Oklahoma and use that in my salon and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. And all this other stuff. And it just really hit home.

[00:18:37] **DJ Muldoon:** And I was, you know, I was like 20 years old. I'd just started teaching. So it was the best piece of advice I could have got at the right time. You

[00:18:45] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, yeah. I mean, I remember similar sort of things happening to me and that, you know, when I used to teach people, I realized that, you know, that expression, people teach what they most need to learn, or it's something like that, is that, to be a really good teacher, it's not just being able to do something.

[00:19:09] **Antony Whitaker:** I mean, I, I can always remember when I very first started hairdressing and I've mentioned this on the podcast before, where. I worked in a salon, I mean I'd only been hairdressing three months at the time, and there was a guy who worked in the salon who was really good at doing hair. And I knew nothing about hair.

[00:19:24] **Antony Whitaker:** I didn't come from the family, hairdressing family like you have or, I'd literally not even been into a salon before I started my hairdressing journey. And, I was watching this guy cut hair and I knew what he was doing was good. Um, and I said to him, basically it was like a graduated bob. Okay. So, you know, this beautiful graduation in the back.

[00:19:44] **Antony Whitaker:** And I remember just looking at it and I said to him, how do you do that? Like, how do you get hair to, to sort of do that? It was just, I was blown away by it. And he looked at me and he, he just went. It's feeling and I thought, Oh, wow, I'm in

[00:20:02] **Antony Whitaker:** trouble. Do you know what I mean?

[00:20:04] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:20:05] **Antony Whitaker:** And I realized afterwards that, you know, like anything, there's a technique and you can teach technique and

[00:20:13] **Antony Whitaker:** to to be a good teacher, you have to sort of strip away, you use the great expression. The tap dance. You've got to strip away the tap dance and you've got to break it down into its most pure, simple form and communicate it. And you do that beautifully, you know, on the work that I see you do

[00:20:35] **Antony Whitaker:** Whether it's the diagrams you do or the way you talk about stuff. You strip away all the unnecessary stuff and you just get to the, you know, the essence of what it's all about. So, um,

[00:20:47] **Antony Whitaker:** I, I don't mean to be talking on your behalf. I want you, I want you to talk about that. So what would you add to that?

[00:20:54] **DJ Muldoon:** you. No, I, I think it's, that's the most important thing is it's all about simplifying it. You know, to me, like when I was learning to teach at Vidal Sassoon it was a lot of feeling, you know what I mean? There was that element to it. You had that feeling, that creativity, but there has to be a technique behind it.

[00:21:16] **DJ Muldoon:** But it wasn't until I went to like Paul Mitchell and they were like, they had like systems in place to teach teachers. And that's the first time I ever really saw like a lesson plan in front of me where you have like an open template and you can fill that template out and. You know, if you're teaching anything, you've got to teach the what, the why, the how, and the when.

[00:21:38] **DJ Muldoon:** And that always helped me, like, make sure I'm teaching the what, make sure I'm teaching the how, why, and when. And then as I gained more experience, I realized that the number one question I'd always been asked was, what if, what if I do this? What if I do that? Well, what if it's done on this hair? What if I cut on the inside of the fingers or the outside?

[00:22:02] **DJ Muldoon:** What if this, all these, what if questions? And I always used to answer the question, well, just try it. You know, if you, if you want to know what happens, have a go at it. And I just started teaching a lot more what if. And I feel that that's kind of, simplifies it even more, you know, it gets rid of a lot of stuff that you don't need.

[00:22:24] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, without a doubt.

[00:22:25] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah.

[00:22:26] **Antony Whitaker:** I don't know how long you've been behind the chair doing here, but there was a definite shift and you'll be aware of that shift. Well, it didn't happen overnight. It sorts of morphed; you know, 80s hairdressing was very different to the 90s. And as we got into this century, I can't believe I'm saying the century, but, you know, as we got into, you know, the two thousand, um, there's been predominantly long hair. all over the world. Do you know what I mean? It's been a thing basically now for 20 odd years.

[00:23:00] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, and long hair can be beautiful. you know, uh, I've got two daughters. They've got long hair. My wife's got long hair. Long hair can be beautiful, but from an industry perspective, it will change. It always changes. And, uh, it's a long time coming. And the result of it being a long time coming is that we have a generation of young hairdressers now who are not competent with cutting hair, uh, to the degree that a generation was that maybe learned 20 years ago. And they're not competent because they don't do enough of it because there's not enough short hair about, but they're very good at coloring. Uh, they're often good at dressing hair as well. Um, but it does create a problem because there's a lot of Women that will often come up to me who know my background as a hairdresser and they'll say to me, Antony, where can I get someone that can give me a nice little fill in the blank, you know, short, croppy, graduated, Bob, basic layer,

[00:24:00] **Antony Whitaker:** whatever it is, you know, pixie sort of haircut, where, where can I go? And it's a challenge because as a generalization, no matter where you are, there's a young generation of hairdressers that don't necessarily want to do that. But sometimes it's out of fear that they don't know how to do it. So talk to us about your experience around that.

[00:24:24] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. I feel like what's happened is the industry became more kind of, uh, without lack of better words, fad, you know, there's like fad things, like I'm a specialist with this, or I'm a specialist at that. And it became more of like, I'm good at cutting a shag haircut, or I'm good at cutting graduated bobs, or I'm good at doing pixies.

[00:24:48] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. And so, or it's like, I'm good at doing vivid hair colors and that's all I do. Do you know what I mean? So you're not necessarily doing the full gamut of everything. You're just picking one particular thing and becoming a specialist. So once that, that fad or that trend kind of rolls into something else, then I feel that that's where it becomes a little bit trickier for that person because they've put all their eggs in that one basket of just being that particular specialist.

[00:25:17] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. The way I like to teach and the way we, you know, craft hairdressers, precision hairdressers, we like to teach the art of how to control the haircut, how to actually cut hair and not make it just the specific particular haircut. Um, and that's kind of like how I see it. You know, it's, you're dead right.

[00:25:40] **DJ Muldoon:** There's been a massive change. Um, I grew up in the eighties, but I did hair in the, started hair in the nineties. the So my mentors were like, you know, Tim Hartley and Mark Hayes and that generation of haircutter. So we were learning to cut hair like fabric and understand the flow of what hair is. You know, it's an organic material that moves around.

[00:26:04] **DJ Muldoon:** It's not just going to stay in a picture. It's not, it's not Instagram. It's not Tik Tok. It's, it's going to go out there and it's going to live a life when you're not involved. So it has to look good when it's moving, you know, And I feel a lot of hairdressers nowadays don't really do that. They make it look good for the picture, for the moment in time when it's on Instagram or whatever social media platform.

[00:26:29] **DJ Muldoon:** And we lose focus of the fact that, you know, your, the Testament of your work is not what it looks like when it leaves. It's what it looks like when it comes back.

[00:26:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah,

[00:26:39] **DJ Muldoon:** That's kind of my thoughts on that.

[00:26:41] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah. When you were starting out. it was sort of the era, and I know you didn't start hairdressing in the UK, um, you know, that you would, you went to beauty school in the U. S. and then through the Sassoon organization,

[00:26:57] **Antony Whitaker:** whereas in the U.K. it was like an apprenticeship that you did.

[00:27:02] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah.

[00:27:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, and the whole way education's done in the U.S. is, is obviously, it's different, that everyone goes through beauty and, uh, beauty schools can be great, um, but I, I keep hearing about how there is a real push to reduce the amount of hours in beauty school.

[00:27:22] **Antony Whitaker:** And I know that you are based in California. I know that, uh, it, it was 1500 hours. It's now been reduced to a thousand hours.

[00:27:29] **Antony Whitaker:** And if you only wanna do hair, it's a 600 hour component. At Beauty School, well, 600 hours. If you're doing 40 hours a week, you're being spat out the door of beauty school in 15 weeks. being told that you're a hairdresser.

[00:27:44] **Antony Whitaker:** Well, what impact do you see that having as you travel around as an educator? Because you and I both know that in 15 weeks, you're not going to learn a whole lot.

[00:27:58] **DJ Muldoon:** No, I feel it's been like that. I mean, ever since I came to the United States, that's how I saw the industry was, you know, it's, you just go to school, get your license, and then you're legally allowed to, you know, do hair. You've done all the necessary legal components, the, the red tape. Stuff, the health stuff that they want you to get through.

[00:28:22] **DJ Muldoon:** And unfortunately, I always remember like there wasn't much, you know, technical nuance or information for hair cutting or color. It was just like this basic thing that you have to get through to be legally allowed to touch hair. So we're talking about techniques that we use like 40, 50 years ago, but they would still do in the test.

[00:28:44] **DJ Muldoon:** And as I travel around, I see that, you know, that kind of lack of, um, time spent behind the chair learning, you know, I see it all out there. And then if we're going to reduce the hours again, then it's only going to make it, you know, it's going to even compound on that, you know, so I, uh, I

believe that you do need that time and that education, uh, behind it, um, an apprenticeship of some sort.

[00:29:13] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, so I, I'm not really for downing the hours of school here. I think it should be more if anything, um, so that they can get the necessary skills. Now I was very fortunate. I went to a school, I went to Vidal Sassoon as a beauty school. So I did all the necessary stuff, but I got all the Vidal Sassoon haircut and education and the color education and that, and then Paul Mitchell, the school started to come around.

[00:29:40] **DJ Muldoon:** So it has elevated. But if we're going to reduce the hours, then I just see it being such a, it's just a waste of time then. You're just doing the, the necessary legal things so that you can legally touch someone's head without being sued. Um, you know. So, to me, I, I've never been a big fan of how they do it over here in the States.

[00:30:04] **DJ Muldoon:** But it is what it is, and it works for how they do it here. Um, if anything, it, it helps my business. Because. People probably need a little bit more of that afterwards, you know, and I feel that's why there's quite a lot of independent educators here in the States. Uh, there is, there is a market for it.

[00:30:25] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. There's a need for it. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:30:27] **Antony Whitaker:** I mentioned social media before you've got 380,000 followers on your DJ Muldoon Instagram. How hard do you have to work at that?

[00:30:41] **DJ Muldoon:** It's funny because, uh, when I first started, I, uh, I just used it differently. I, uh, I just used it like, uh, you know, here's me, here's my family, here's what I do kind of thing. And then I think I got to almost a hundred thousand followers. So from 2011, I think it started until, uh, 2020, I think I got to like 90 something thousand followers.

[00:31:11] **DJ Muldoon:** And then COVID hit. And then I just obviously had a lot of time on my hands, like we all did. And I really started to look at other people's stuff, uh, which I'd never really done before. And I'd look at YouTube and I started to look at what people were doing and. And, uh, and the stuff that I'd never done, you know, I'd never got around to doing because I was, I



was so busy traveling and I, uh, I decided that every day me and my daughter would get on Instagram or we would do a live.

[00:31:44] **DJ Muldoon:** So I had my daughter film me in the living room and I just work on a mannequin every day, you know, just like a demonstration of Vidal Sassoon, you know what I mean? So I do that and I get home. Thousands of people tuning in because they've got nothing better to do than they're, you know, they're at home.

[00:32:01] **DJ Muldoon:** And all of a sudden, my following just went really quickly over the a hundred thousand mark, 200, 000. So then when all that ended, I made a conscious decision that I would, you know, turn this upstairs into a studio and I'd put a backdrop and I would make some reels, I would do like an upload of a reel a day and, you know, basically it's, it's kind of me giving back to the industry in a way.

[00:32:27] **DJ Muldoon:** But obviously at the same time, it's going to advertise what I do. And, you know, that just, you know, increased my popularity on social media. So that's kind of how I did it, you know, very organic using the education as the thing, um, and really taking the family off of it and maybe just making it more business oriented.

[00:32:48] **DJ Muldoon:** And that really helped.

[00:32:50] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah. Where do you think that social media is heading in terms of salon education?

[00:33:00] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, I mean, I think social media has become a major component in, in what we do now. You know, I literally advertise everything through Instagram. I educate pretty much everything that's not in person through Instagram. It's all done on a live of that. So I just feel it becoming like a massive, massive. More than it already is, you know, component to how we do.

[00:33:25] **DJ Muldoon:** I mean, it's responsible for a lot of people's incomes and a lot of businesses out there. A lot of, you know, independent educators or educators that are with product companies, they've got this opportunity through social media because they, you know, when I was young in the industry, it wasn't around, so there was no ladder to climb that way.

[00:33:49] **DJ Muldoon:** You had to climb the corporate ladder how we all had to. Um, you had to be the squeaky wheel, you know what I mean? And then you got oiled. Um, whereas the Instagram, you can showcase yourself and you can embellish everything. It's, it's incredible.

[00:34:05] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah. So, so how do you see the connection between that? Because Instagram is such a powerful tool, uh, and YouTube, um, you know, uh, all social media platforms, basically TikTok as well. Um, in our conversation before about shortening hours at beauty school, uh, apprenticeships, all that sort of stuff. How, how much of that has been picked up? in the fact that, listen, don't worry about it people are learning and learning well in some cases

[00:34:37] **Antony Whitaker:** because they've got, in some cases, that's the important thing to say, because they've got good educators, if they're following the right people on social media. Um, and you know, I'm not blowing smoke, but if they're, if they're following you, they're getting some good solid You know, information, but there are other people out there that are teaching all sorts of stuff that you just look at it and you shake your head that, you know,

[00:35:01] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah,

[00:35:02] **Antony Whitaker:** like, like you, you can only learn so much in a 30-second reel or something.

[00:35:07] **Antony Whitaker:** Do you know what I mean?

[00:35:08] **Antony Whitaker:** Uh, do you have any, Online courses that you offer or is it all face to face or social media?

[00:35:17] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. So we, I, I like to offer everything when I, you know, I feel like if you're going to offer education, you have to offer every platform as far as how they get their information. Cause that's how people learn now. It's just so quickly and everything's accessible. So they want that. So, you know, if you can't take an in-person class, then there has to be another option.

[00:35:42] **DJ Muldoon:** And obviously we're all on social media. So I give the option of, you know, taking a class online with me. And it's all advertisements

and all kind of bait, if you will, to get someone to come and take an in-person class, because we all know you're not going to learn. As much from just video than you will in person actually doing it with that person.

[00:36:07] **DJ Muldoon:** But the platforms that we have now make it so easy to actually teach online. So, you know, teaching on YouTube, teaching on Instagram, Facebook, whatever it is. I'm a big advocate of it because it is possible to do. But like you said, there are people that, you know, are out there that aren't maybe offering straight to the point, simplified education.

[00:36:30] **DJ Muldoon:** They might embellish it a bit more, you know, it's kind of like, it's always been like that. You go to the hair show. You can go see Vidal Sassoon, or you can go see Tony Ngai, or whoever it is. But then you've always got that one person that's up on stage dancing around and trying to show off and tap dance and da,

[00:36:47] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:36:48] **DJ Muldoon:** But that, that attracts to that kind of person that likes that, you know what I mean? So, you know, as I've got older and more experienced, I'm not as angsty anymore. I'm not really like against any of that. I think there's like something for everybody now, you know, and it's easier to access it than it used to be.

[00:37:10] **Antony Whitaker:** Hmm. Okay, um, working by yourself, I know you said you've got, you know, two or three people that you work with, sometimes they come away with you traveling, etc. But how do you, how do you stay relevant? Because, you know, when I was at Sassoon, when you're at Sassoon, there's a team of people around you that are constantly feeding off each other. Whereas when you're on your own, you start to lose that, and it's interesting, the industry at the moment, the way the industry's going, where a lot more people are, you know, working in suites and working, you know, as solo hairdressers, they're, on one hand, they're losing that team camaraderie, that energy that you get of bouncing off other people, but then the argument, I suppose, is about the social media thing, that with social media, you're never alone.

[00:37:59] **Antony Whitaker:** You're still seeing it even wider. You know, uh, influence of people, what are your thoughts about that as to how do you manage to stay relevant because you're effectively on your own?

[00:38:12] **DJ Muldoon:** I, I definitely, I surround myself with people and I find, you know, that was a big thing when I was younger, people used to say, surround yourself with the people you want to be like, you know, you got to be around them. Um, but yeah, I, I have a few people that work with me and I'm always constantly looking at what they're doing.

[00:38:33] **DJ Muldoon:** They're always telling me, you know, if something sucks or if something's good, you know, they're very honest. You know, um, I constantly keep my eye on what people are doing. You know, I'm always on Instagram as well. I'm on social media looking at what my contemporaries and my peers are doing. Um, I'm always, you know, I have a 17-year-old daughter.

[00:38:56] **DJ Muldoon:** She's always going to tell me what's cool and what's not,

[00:38:58] **Antony Whitaker:** Oh, well and truly.

[00:38:59] **DJ Muldoon:** you know what I mean? So I tried to stay relevant in those ways. As far as hair's concerned, I'm always a believer of like, it's always the classics. Nothing changes. So for me to stay relevant, it's maybe how I cut that classic haircut. So maybe I do it a different way.

[00:39:20] **DJ Muldoon:** You know what I mean? So whatever's trending, I will always teach what's trending, but I will do it, um, maybe a different way, something, uh, a different approach to that haircut than what you're used to doing so that it makes it a bit more fun to do for the individual. They're not just doing what they've always done or another version of that, you know.

[00:39:41] **DJ Muldoon:** So I'm always trying to stay relevant by switching things up a little bit. Um, I've never been afraid to change. And go with what's happening. I always, you know, I used to hate it when people moaned about things, like when things change, you know, when we went from VHS to DVD and then DVD to digital and all that, and you'd have people moaning about the change of things.

[00:40:04] **DJ Muldoon:** And it's like, you can't, you know, you have to go with it.

[00:40:07] **Antony Whitaker:** You gotta embrace

[00:40:08] **DJ Muldoon:** Once you start moaning about it, you're left behind. You're ancient.

[00:40:12] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Um, what do you see as the challenges being for the industry going forward as somebody who's out on the road in different salons? in different states, different countries. Do you, do you work outside the U S or do you work? Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

[00:40:29] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. Definitely. We, I was just in Europe last month. We did, uh, Germany and Holland and France

[00:40:37] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Fantastic.

[00:40:38] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah.

[00:40:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay.

[00:40:39] **DJ Muldoon:** And I'll be in, uh, I'll be in Milan in November. So yeah, we get around.

[00:40:44] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. So you get a good overview of things. So what do you see are the biggest challenges for the industry everywhere?

[00:40:51] **DJ Muldoon:** I mean, I think we touched on it earlier. It's like the, the, the kind of comprehensive understanding of haircutting. I'm a haircut educator, so I only can speak for that really. Um, and I just, you know, finding the, the skill levels are dwindling in the actual understanding of how to cut hair. We're becoming very good at cutting one particular thing, you know?

[00:41:17] **DJ Muldoon:** So it's like. It's like mass producing a one car, you know what I mean? It's the model T Ford all over again.

[00:41:26] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah.

[00:41:26] **DJ Muldoon:** a while it's like, Oh, boring. What's what's the next look, you know? So I find that's one of the biggest challenges is trying to get everybody into the art of cutting hair, not the art of doing a haircut.

[00:41:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Exactly. It's that, that's, that's the expression. It's something like, uh, you know, teach people how to cut hair, not

how to do a haircut, a particular haircut. And that's the problem. A lot of people get locked into, well, I've learned this haircut and that haircut and the other haircut, as opposed to. I understand hair and how to work with hair. They're two different things, aren't they?

[00:42:01] **DJ Muldoon:** Yeah. So there's going to be a point where that will become frustrating because you know how to do five haircuts you do them every day. But you can't quite tweak them to that individual. So, you know, you're going to have some clients that are unhappy or unsatisfied, you know? So there's a, you know, there's that level to it.

[00:42:22] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Definitely. The last thing I wanted to ask you about was the, the sort of movement towards being more independent. Are you seeing, is that sort of continuing? Is it plateaued? Are you seeing the pendulum start to swing back? What's your sort of observations about that traveling around the

[00:42:41] **DJ Muldoon:** Well, I'll go with my own personal experience. Um, I mean, I, I, I noticed what's happening and I do see it. You know, for a while there, the independent thing was cool. It was very trendy to do. Um, for me, it was more of a personal thing. It wasn't something that I chose to do. I, I had to do it. Um, so I was kind of forced into the scenario.

[00:43:04] **DJ Muldoon:** Um, and it's obviously I was one of the earlier ones and it's been great to see people do it and, you know, to prove to everybody, to prove to product companies and to big corporations that. You know, through social media, we, we do have a voice and we do have a platform that we can showcase our independent skills.

[00:43:25] **DJ Muldoon:** Now with that, I also started to get in, you know, interest from product companies again. So, uh, you know, as an independent for the last 10, 15 years, I got to the point where, you know, every eight years, nine years, 10 years, I've always had this cycle of change and, you know, I left it out so soon after eight years cause I'd done what I wanted to do then I wanted to be some, do something different.

[00:43:53] **DJ Muldoon:** I did what I wanted with Paul Mitchell, then I did independent and I'd kind of done what I wanted with that. And I, uh, I, I got an interest in maybe just working with a product company again. So last year I

joined, uh, as an independent still. I joined up with Evo, um, haircare out of Australia. And, you know, now I have the kind of best of both worlds.

[00:44:19] **DJ Muldoon:** I can showcase my knowledge destroys fear, my independent education, but I also have this kind of vehicle behind it. That's helping me and that's Evo, and that's the, you know, one of the things being independent, you are truly independent. You do everything yourself. You pay for everything yourself, you know, and as somebody that works for corporations, after a while I started to miss that team atmosphere.

[00:44:46] **DJ Muldoon:** I started to miss that, you know, that somebody else paying for things and you just showing up and doing what you're good at. You know what I mean? You know, over the past 10 years, I've been the one setting up the room, making sure that the mannequins and the tripods get there and all that stuff.

[00:45:04] **DJ Muldoon:** I have a team of people behind me doing it, but we're essentially responsible for that. Whereas when I work with a product company, let's say Evo, for example, now. It's great because everything's done and I get to just show up, but, uh, you know, I wouldn't, I wouldn't get to do that if I hadn't have done the hard work beforehand.

[00:45:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah,

[00:45:24] **DJ Muldoon:** So right now I do see people kind of maybe jumping back into. The product world. We are seeing some of our independent educators powered by a product company now, but the great thing is it's the product company that they have chosen.

[00:45:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Hmm.

[00:45:40] **DJ Muldoon:** You know what I mean? So I like that aspect.

[00:45:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, good. Okay. All right, but let's, we need to wrap up. Whereabouts can people connect with you, uh, so that we take your 380, 000 into thanks followers to 385 or whatever. Uh, where, where, where can they connect with you on Instagram or whatever other social media channels you have?

[00:46:02] **DJ Muldoon:** Yes. So I have two pages on Instagram. I have my private page, which is knowledge destroys fear, and that's just an education page. And then I have my Daniel Joseph Muldoon. That's my regular page. And that's where I just showcase everything that I do, all my education, all my travels, everything that I get up to.

[00:46:20] **DJ Muldoon:** And that's where you can find me.

[00:46:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Good. Okay. Well, I'll put those links, uh, on our website, [growmysalonbusiness.com](http://growmysalonbusiness.com) and in the show notes for today's podcast. So if you'd like to help out the show

[00:46:33] **Antony Whitaker:** leave us an honest review on Apple podcast, your ratings and reviews really help. And I do read each one of them and don't forget to subscribe on Apple podcasts or Spotify or YouTube or wherever you're watching this.

[00:46:45] **Antony Whitaker:** So DJ, I'd like to just thank you for sharing so openly and honestly, and it's been good to have this opportunity to, uh, uh, to finally get to chat with you and find out what you're all about. So, to wrap up, DJ Muldoon, thank you for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business Podcast.

[00:47:04] **DJ Muldoon:** Thank you so much. It's been an honour. A real pleasure. Thank you.

[00:47:07] **Antony Whitaker:** Great. Fantastic. Thanks.