

Be as detailed as you like. The more time you put into developing these pictures and the notes, the more meaningful your message will be. It's about making your expectations crystal clear. The next time your reception desk is in disarray, all you need do is take your team member back to the photograph and ask them to use the image and notes to get it spot-on next time. Simple. Unequivocal.

I know ... what a great idea! I wish I'd come up with it. But I need to credit a friend. Let me tell you the story.

I offered my friend the option of staying in my home while I was away. He wasn't sure if he and his partner were going to be able to get away. I told him not to worry, the house would be empty anyway and he didn't need to let me know whether they'd be staying or not. When I returned from my holiday, I looked in the guest room and everything seemed exactly as I'd left it. I assumed they hadn't stayed. Then, in the kitchen, I found a lovely cookbook and a thank you note.

I was totally confused. When my friend confirmed that they had stayed, I expressed my surprise that the pillows on the bed looked like they'd never been moved. He laughed and told me that the pillows were so perfectly arranged, they'd snapped a smartphone photo before they hopped into bed the first night. Then, they used the photo to recreate my styling.

Yes, what a fabulous, clever idea!

I knew immediately that the same concept could be useful for creating salon systems. After all, we all have access to a smartphone and instant photography.

Another friend uses her smartphone when she parks in a multi-storey car park. She takes a photo of the exact number and level where she's parked, so she can easily find her way back when she returns.

You can use this concept in your salon in many ways. For starters, think about how you like:

- your towels folded
- your retail shelves stocked
- the tearoom cupboard arranged
- customers' coffee and cake served (or their wine and pretzels).

With a little thought, you'll come up with many more ideas. The true beauty is that you can tailor this tip to perfectly fit your salon and your preferences.

My second strategy is a logical response to salon owners who tell me they feel like they're talking and talking, yet nobody seems to be listening.

It stops them in their tracks when I say: "Maybe you're talking too much."

Think about it. People who don't say much are the ones we tend to take more notice of when they do choose to speak. Everybody stops and listens because it stands out above the "white noise" of those who talk incessantly.

I suggest you try saying less. When you do come to speak, ensure you have the attention

you need to be heard and understood. Speak calmly, quietly and without emotion. Trust me, try it tomorrow. I know you'll be surprised at the impact you have.

I learned this strategy from my husband, who was a secondary teacher. Let me tell you the story.

One day, I was shouting, from the house, at my twin boys to get off the back fence, that I didn't have time for busted arms. My husband explained that the boys were taking no notice of me because I was always telling them to do this or do that.

He suggested I walk over and get the boys' attention first, then look them straight in the eye and tell them that they are not to climb on that fence, not today, not tomorrow not ever. Then just walk away.

I did just that. They were still staring at me long after I'd gone back into the house. I felt like Arnold Schwarzenegger in the The Terminator

when he says, "I'll be back". Too funny. But, again, simple and unequivocal.

So, if you feel like you're always giving instructions and that most of them are falling on deaf ears, try this in your salon tomorrow. In fact, it's worth trying out in other areas of your life.

At its heart, is clear, succinct messaging that doesn't get cluttered with emotion. Say what you mean. Mean what you say. And never (ever) be mean when you say it.

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