

HOW MISTAKES SHAPE YOU AS A SALON OWNER

By Lisa Conway



The lesson is hidden in the mistake. It's what shapes you as a salon owner. How you respond to the lesson is what matters most. Being open and honest with yourself and your team about your mistakes is a challenge. But that transparency will set you free. Here's how.

“EVERY DAY, IN EVERY SALON, THERE ARE A MYRIAD OF MISTAKES TO BE MADE AND VALUABLE LESSONS TO BE UNLOCKED.”

Every salon I've ever coached has done some dumb stuff. They never tell you about it straight up. Once we've built rapport, they start opening up about when and how they paid what I call "dumb tax".

While they're feeling a little embarrassed, I'm feeling a lot excited. For me, it's a breakthrough. I know it's time to take the learnings up a notch and really bring it home.

If mistakes are how we learn then the more mistakes the better, right? Let me explain.

Business can be damn tough and all-consuming. And it's mega scary, too. Some things are scarier than others. You almost need to be suited up and wearing safety goggles to look at your financials and check your account balance. Most people loathe this side of salon ownership. They opt to just give it a glance, never truly understanding where the money comes from or where it goes.

It's a disaster waiting to happen. How do I know? I'm guilty as charged.

Like many salon owners, I had no interest in the

money side of my salon. I only wanted to do the fun stuff, the bits I was already good at: making the clients happy.

One of my biggest mistakes was not knowing where the money was being made. I had no idea which services or which team members were pulling in the most dollars. I didn't know who was plodding along or who was turning straw into gold.

That's how it was – before I learnt the lesson of knowing your numbers.

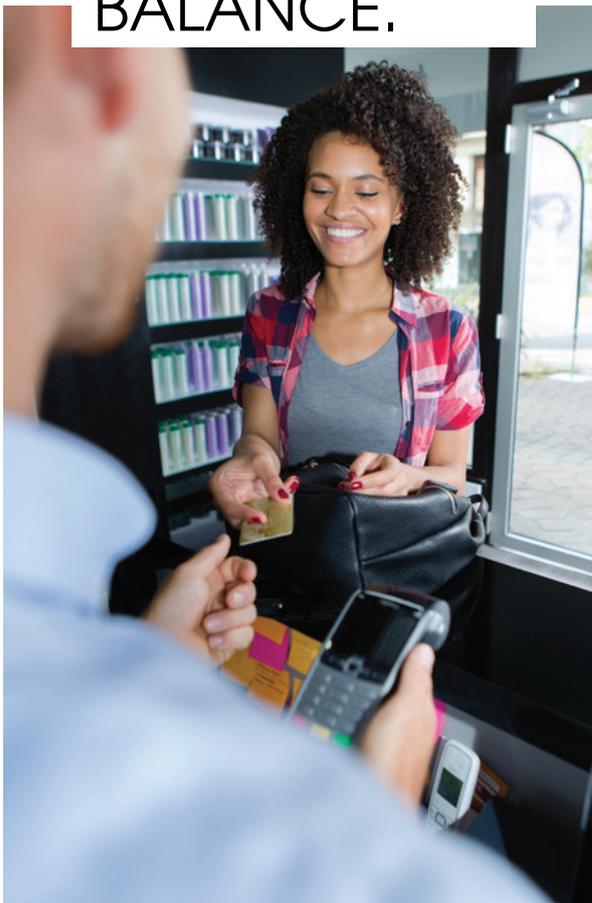
One of the challenges to learning is that people tend to only share once they succeed. That's great and inspirational, but it's only helpful to a point.

Nobody tells you when they're actually in struggle street. You only hear about it once they've turned the corner and are keen to share how great it feels. Naturally, you're going to think you're the only one who doesn't have their stuff together. Wrong!

Let me tell you – way more salon owners don't have it together than do. Every day I see the



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side of salon ownership that people are hesitant to show.

Every salon is unique, but many of the fundamentals and learning opportunities are “same same”. And being open and transparent will help you understand the learnings, lock them in and make lasting changes that shape your business.

Start with your team. Tell them you don’t have all the answers, that you’re working it out as you go. Does the thought of doing that making you squirm? Trust me – transparency will set you free.

When you believe that you’re the only one making mistakes, you feel like a failure. That’s not helpful to you or your salon team.

Start seeing every mistake as the lesson you need to make the learnings stick. The more mistakes, the more you learn. Here’s the key: don’t keep making the SAME mistakes over and over again. Face up to the mistake, learn the lesson and move on to the next thing.

Here’s an example. I see many salon owners hiring people based on their looks alone. They think the LOOK will be great for their upmarket cosmopolitan salon, rather than seeking out someone with passion for the role and hunger to learn.

The truth is that long legs don’t mean a thing if they don’t have the right mindset sitting up the top. Like the star on the Christmas tree, the right mindset is the shiny bit you must have. Grooming, you can teach. Passion, you can tweak at best.

It’s a costly mistake to keep repeating over and over. Yet, many salon owners do just that.

If you think you’re the only one making these sorts of silly mistakes, think again.

That’s why it’s critical to network and share your truth with like-minded people. Maybe you’ll be struggling with the exact same thing. Maybe you’ll make someone’s day by sharing the truth. And maybe someone will make your day, and give you the courage to

keep going when you feel like giving up.

I once started coaching a salon owner who was struggling financially yet desperately wanting to pay her team more.

I asked her this: You hardly pay yourself. Why are you so focused on paying them more?

She confessed that she’d already told her team pay rises were coming and was too embarrassed to admit things weren’t as shiny as they should be.

After many conversations, I asked her to call a meeting and come clean with her team. She needed to tell them she felt like she was drowning and ask for their help.

It took some convincing but eventually she opened up. There were tears all round. Not tears because there was no pay rise coming – tears because her team loved her and had no idea things were so tough. They were desperate to help.

Together they hatched a plan to raise the bar on client care. Boy, did they succeed! They achieved awesome results because they were ALL invested.

They took on all the learnings and soon the salon was on track, for the first time ever. Everyone knew exactly what to do, when to do it and, most importantly, WHY to do it. They worked as a team. The salon owner got a wage, there was money to reward the team and they have never looked back.

Every day, in every salon, there are a myriad of mistakes to be made and valuable lessons to be unlocked. The key is understanding that those mistakes shape you as a salon owner. They help you create the freedom of time, incredible team and substantial money you deserve.

For more salon team wisdom, email me at lisa@zingcoach.com.au, visit my website, find my video tips on YouTube, join Cub ZING or read my latest book *Your Salon Retail: the no-nonsense, no-hype guide to kick-arse retail in your salon business*. www.zingcoach.com.au