

MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, October 2025

Antoinette Beenders: The Secret to Success Is Showing Up



Antoinette Beenders is an award-winning creative director and editorial hairstylist who works closely with the world's top couturiers, photographers, and models. As Aveda's Senior Vice President of Global Artistry, she inspires the professional community, mentors artistic teams, and works to grow Aveda's influence around the world.

Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Antoinette emphasizes the importance of having great energy, heart, and a great attitude, all with the foundation of hard work, consistency, and hustle. Listeners will be inspired by her advice about showing up and "putting on your big-girl panties."

- WC: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here, and I'm just thrilled for this opportunity to interview this amazing woman who, by the way, so many people for a very long time have said, "You have to track her down." And so, I finally came up with the plan that, *Okay, I'm going to reach out. She doesn't know who I am, and hopefully she'll say yes.* And of course, like it always plays out, she immediately said yes, and I'm just so grateful. And so many people, by the way, are very, very jealous that I have this time with you today. Listeners, I am sitting here with Antoinette Beenders. So, Antoinette, thank you so much for saying yes to this.
- AB: Well, my absolute pleasure, Winn, and thank you for the opportunity. And by the way, I did know who you were. *[Laughs]*
- WC: *[Laughs]*
- AB: So, do not underestimate yourself, my friend. *[Laughs]*
- WC: You know, I'm doing something right.
- AB: I'm absolutely thrilled to be here and spend some time with you and maybe get to know a little bit about you as well. I love meeting people. I love meeting new people. I'm a lifelong student of life, I'd say. So, yeah, thank you for the opportunity.
- WC: This is just beautiful. And, okay, so I have some things that I want to share with our listeners about who you are. Obviously, I'm going to read a lot of this. So, Antoinette is a Dutch-born visionary and award-winning creative leader and hairstylist who is a passionate custodian of the Aveda brand. As Senior Vice President Global Artistry, Antoinette inspires the professional community, mentors multiple artistic teams, and works to grow Aveda's influence around the world. Antoinette spent 15 years as Aveda's Senior Vice President Creative and was responsible for the corporate creative vision and direction. As a testament to her vision, Antoinette has received over 25 of the industry's highest accolades,

including—get this— British Hairdresser of the Year as well as the Icon Award from the North American Hairdressing Association, known as NAHA. A whole lot more and we're going to talk about the awards and why that's something important for seasoned professionals to focus on. Drawing on her experience as a world-renowned creative director and editorial hairstylist, Antoinette works closely with the world's top fashion designers, photographers, models, and creative talent to develop dynamic beauty concepts and striking images that combine high-fashion sensibility and environmental consciousness. I want to know what that means, because I like that. Whether partnering with Stella McCartney or Iris Van Herpen, leading backstage teams at Paris Couture Week, or developing new styling products, Antoinette holds true to her vision of telling a story with every creative endeavor. Man, that was pretty incredible.

AB: That was a lot, wasn't it? [*Laughs*]

WC: I know, but how does that make you feel, like, hearing that? I'm sure you had something to do with creating that, but to hear it back to you, how does that make you feel?

AB: It's really crazy, actually, because it's, to me, every element of what you spoke about, it's like a picture in my mind. I'm very much a picture person, and it kind of brings me back to when I did that or that, and already things that I've been doing since you've had the information. So, yeah, it sounds a lot, but I think once you do what you really love, you kind of just get on with it, you know? I know I had to give you some information about myself, but I've been doing this for a very long time, Winn. [*Laughs*] I started in the industry when I was 14, you know, and I'm 59 now, so that's a long time.

WC: Wow

AB: And I've been really at it, as we say in London, been at it every day, and I still do. So, once you work with your passion and you work hard and you do that for a very long time, then things happen, you know? So, I think that's the result of it all.

WC: You know, I think that some people think that if you're at it for a certain number of years, that one day you can just sit back and it will just automatically come to you. The phone will always ring. You don't have to hustle anymore. Is that true for you?

AB: Absolutely not. I think, when I look at my career I can see, like, you know, the late '80s, early '90s years. And then you kind of go through the rise and then ideally you like to stabilize. And if you don't stay at it, you can have the demise. But to literally keep stable or try and climb to the next level, that takes a lot of work. And I've been very fortunate, I think. Well, I somehow created it without me realizing, because my career started in the '80s in the Netherlands. I'm sure we'll talk about it a bit more. And then I moved to London, where I really—the '90s was my first round one of my career, let me put it that way: where I won British and London and all that kind of stuff. And then I became a creative director. So, I went to a different career for 15 years where I didn't enter the awards. I didn't do collections every—you know, I did collections for Aveda, the company I worked

for, but not like trade collections. It was more consumer focused. And then I realized after 15 years, I really missed that. So, then I went back into the trade again and kind of am now enjoying my second career in hairdressing. And I think that also has really helped me with the longevity of my career, because people in the UK know me from my London days. And now I, of course, live in America and I'm an American. Now all the American people get to know about me. So, it's quite fascinating. I kind of like thinking back at it. It's quite interesting.

WC: I do want to get into your personal story, but based on what you just said, that so you—for 15 years, you were kind of focused, not behind the scenes, but you were training and mentoring other teams for the Aveda company. And then you said at one point you missed that creative side and stepped back into it. Do you feel like had you not stepped back into it, that maybe you would have lost some of your passion for the industry as a whole?

AB: I'm not so sure. I think it's like the same as standing behind the chair every day and do the same clientele. It's very easy to kind of think, *Oh, it's Mrs. Smith again, and she wants a bob and she wants this*. It's up to you to keep yourself entertained. I always used to say, "Yes, I have Mrs. Smith and I'm very proud and grateful that Mrs. Smith is still coming to see me after 10 years. And instead of cutting her bob with a pair of scissors, I'm going to cut it with a razor today, just to keep myself entertained more than anything." And Mrs. Smith really appreciated that because she had this constant burst of energy on her head. And I think at the end of the day, if you think about it, it's all about energy. But the beautiful thing about this, Winn, with this kind of starting in the career, then becoming a creative director and then back into the trade, is that during my 15-year tenure as creative director, I very much focused on photography, video. Yes, I was the creative director and working with teams, but I was very much in charge of the campaigns of the Aveda brand. And taking all that knowledge, those 15 years, I then applied to the trade. And I think that gave me a tiny little head's up because I understand what companies are looking for. I understand a little bit more, from a consumer and a trade point of view, what the world out there would either like to see to be inspired or to buy a product, let's be honest. Or a service.

WC: So, it became part of your job to then get into the photography side of it. I mean, how did you learn that? And I've heard that a lot from some very, very creative, successful hairdressers that are like, "You know what? I need to be behind the camera myself." I heard that from Robert Lobetta. I heard that from David Raccuglia. Is that kind of where you thought, you know, that you have a different eye, you're seeing something different than what the photographer is seeing and, therefore, it was important for you to get behind the camera?

AB: Well, first of all, I'm a daughter of a photographer and I married a photographer.

WC: Oh!

AB: Let's start with that. So, I've been in the studio since I was two years old. But also, I call myself the photographer without the camera. That's really what I am.

WC: What do you mean by that? I mean, like, that sounds fabulous. But what does that mean for you?

AB: What does that mean? That means it's like, it's my vision. So, the photographer literally does the click. So, I will decide on the pose, on the hair, on the clothes, on the makeup, on the backdrop, on every single thing that goes into that image. Because, to me, each image is a story. And that's why it was so important to be, as a creative director—you know, being a creative director is all about taste. When you're a creative director for a company, it's that company likes your taste. They want your taste. And it's important that you're consistent with that taste. So, it's also very important then when it comes to creating imagery, whether it's video, tone of voice, whatever that might be, that it's your voice, your vision. And that's why Horst, the founder of Aveda, brought me in originally. He's the one who brought me in, in 1997, I believe it was. Yeah.

WC: Wow.

AB: To kind of—because he already knew he'd sold to Estée Lauder at that time—for me to continue what he was kind of trying to do.

WC: What advice do you have, then? Because I know that people are going to be watching this and listening to this simply because of who you are. People want to duplicate the type of career that you've had in terms of the photography, the image that you put out, winning the awards that you have won. So, what advice do you have for those artists, those creative people who maybe are not taking full responsibility of what the photographer is shooting? So, you said you were a photographer without the camera. Do you feel like maybe some artists are giving up some of that control and they really, really need to step behind the camera and take over that aspect of it as well?

AB: I think it depends what the end result you want it to be. So, if you want it to truly be your vision, then it's important that you direct the shoot, hence the word “creative or art director.” If you like the service or the look of the photographer that you've hired, then they can enhance your look as well. It depends a little bit on what you try to get out of it. I must be the ultimate control freak, which I'm very happy to admit, because for me, I'm very black and white. I know exactly what I want and I remember every single picture. I can do shoots where I shoot four and a half thousand images. I remember every single one—

WC: Really?

AB: —and I can go through and edit and go, “It was that one.” And I keep going back to that shot.

WC: Really?

AB: Because it's just something, yeah, I'm a bit weird like that. I just know what I like. I don't, how can I say this? It is what it is. Like it's not that, and it's very hard for me to get talked into something as well. Like I know exactly what I like. I always have done that.

WC: Well, you said it earlier that Aveda is paying you, so to speak, for your taste. So, you'd better be very clear and stern on what that taste looks like, what that means.

AB: Mm-hmm. Plus, it needs to be a complete marriage between what I feel is beautiful and what they think is beautiful. I mean, the end of the day, I always say I am part of Aveda and Aveda is part of me.

WC: Wow, that's beautiful.

AB: I don't think I could do it any other way. Like Aveda taught me—Horst to start with. Then we've had some other presidents in between. And now with the return of Shane Wolf, Aveda as a brand has taught me a lot of things about life, about holism, about sustainability. I remember coming to this industry in 1995, you know, smoking 20 cigarettes a day. No, actually that was in the '80s, I believe it was. Whereas one year into Aveda, I wouldn't touch cigarettes ever again. So, it's had a huge impact on my life. That's what I'm saying. I'm part of Aveda and they're part of me.

WC: Wow. If we can go back, then, to your career.

AB: Okay.

WC: So, you started, you say at the age of 14 or 15 in Holland?

AB: Fourteen. Yeah, I'm Dutch. Yeah. Yeah. Fourteen.

WC: Okay, 14. And you were called what's called "a Saturday girl."

AB: [Laughs]

WC: Tell us what that is and how did you get into the salon?

AB: Its funny, yeah, I know. It's interesting. You don't use that term in America, but a Saturday girl is someone who has no qualifications and helps to shampoo. And only come in on Saturday, hence the term *Saturday girl*, and they make coffee. So, an extra help in service of the client.

WC: Okay.

AB: And it's, it's really like a junior, you know, before you go to a college or to a school.

WC: Okay.

AB: So, I started in Holland, like I said, when I was 14, because I come from a family with terrible hair. I've got like three and a half hairs on my head. And my mum used to always go to this hairdressing salon in the Netherlands. And in those days, like '80s, everybody had a perm, remember? And it was blowed—round brush blow-dried out. So, my mum used to go every weekend to the hairdresser, who happened to be one of the top hairdressers in the Netherlands. And I was just so blown away by that whole process of transformation, I think, that I asked my mum, "Can you not ask if I can go and be a Saturday girl?" And that's how it all started.

WC: Wow.

AB: Yeah.

WC: Well, by the way, you have more hair than I do. So—

AB: *[Laughs]* No comment.

WC: Okay. To get some perspective on that, right? Okay, well then, keep going. So, at 19, you moved to London. Tell us about that.

AB: Yeah. So, what happened, so 14, so I was at school, you know, like a normal school, high school, I suppose you call it over here. At 16, I ended up going to hairdressing college because I knew straight away. And it was one day a week. You'd go one day a week to the college and then the rest of the week you worked in a salon. So that was kind of the system that was over there at the time. And that was very much based on the French kind of hairdressing systems but it was also kind of quite outdated. So, you used to have to do finger waves and roller sets. And I'm like, *That's not really what I want to do*. But then when I worked in the salon during the week, I saw all these really fun haircuts and colors. And I thought, *Yeah, yeah, that's where it's at*. And I was lucky. I worked in a salon that invested a lot into education and they used to go and see the British hairdressers. And the British hairdressers used to come to the Netherlands to do demonstrations and my boss used to take me to these demonstrations. And that's where I saw the Trevor Sorbie artistic team one day. I was like, *Now that's what I want to do*. I didn't even know that existed.

WC: Wow.

AB: So, I saw this incredible team, looking super cool on stage, doing haircuts I'd never even dreamt of.

WC: Right.

AB: And I'm like, *Yeah, that's what I want to be at. I want to be, if I'm going to do this, I want to be part of the best in the world so I need to be with the best people*.

WC: So, from start to finish, tell us, what is that system of training? So, from start to finish, to then be licensed, how long is that? How many years is that?

AB: Two years.

WC: Two years. Okay.

AB: But I'm not sure if that's the same still. I know that here in America, you can go to school for 10 months and you're licensed.

WC: I know.

AB: It's like, it freaks me out a little bit, to be honest. But anyway.

WC: I hear you. I hear you. In London, you saw Trevor Sorbie's team.

AB: No, they were in the Netherlands. They came to do a seminar.

WC: Oh, okay.

AB: Because, you know, Europe is tiny. So, you go on a plane for 40 minutes, you're in the Netherlands from London. So, they came over, late '80s. London was

super cool. Of course, they showed up in all their glad gear and they're like looking great. And I was like, *Oh my God, that's what I want to do*. Cause I knew—I don't mind being behind the chair, but I knew I wanted to do more than being behind the chair. I knew that from a very, very young age. I always wanted to do something. I didn't even know it was with photography at the time because I did my first photo shoot when I was 14 with my dad, because my dad was a photographer.

WC: Wow.

AB: And I taught myself how to braid because remember the film *10* with Bo Derek?

WC: Of course, of course.

AB: A little bit controversial now perhaps, but I was so blown away by the textures and I'm like, *I got to learn how to do that*. So, I practiced on my friends and my very first images that I ever did was a girl with waist-long hair with, cornrows. Yeah? And that's how I got into the whole thing.

WC: Do you still have that image?

AB: You know what? I was looking for it the other day. I think I need to go to my father's attic to have a good rummage around to see if he still has that.

WC: Wouldn't that be great for you to have all of that?

AB: Yeah. I mean, I have a lot of it, but you know, I've also moved so many times that things break or go missing or you know what it's like. So, I saw Trevor Sorbie, the team, and I'm like, *That's what I need to do*. And I thought, *Well, if I want to make a career in this industry, I need to move to London and I need to learn English*. So, I went home and I never forget it. I said to my mum and dad, I put them on the couch and I was crying. I said, "Mum, Dad, I'm going to move to London." [Laughs] And then when my dad said, "Okay," after he kind of got over the shock of it all, he said, "But if you go, you go for one year; you're not coming back. You've got to give it one year chance."

WC: Wow.

AB: "Otherwise you haven't tried."

WC: Good for him.

AB: And boy, was he right. That first year was the hardest ever.

WC: Wow.

AB: Yeah.

WC: So, speaking of that first photo, I was telling you before we started recording that I was chatting with Ruth Roche this morning.

AB: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm

WC: And again, she's one of those people that are jealous that I get this time with you and she just has so many wonderful things to say about you. But I remember

Ruth Roche saying that her first photo shoot—because people, they see your success, they see her success and they're like—

AB: Mm-hmm

WC: “Oh, well, you know, her first time out, you know, she won NAHA. Her first photo shoot—”

AB: Oh wow.

WC: “She got that accolade.” And I'm sure people think that about you as well, right? You're just overnight success and it was just so easy for you. And Ruth would tell the story that her first photo shoot happened in the back of a Chinese restaurant in Santa Barbara, California, and I'm like, “Hey, can I see those photos?” She's like, “No, you can't.” *[Laughs]*

AB: *[Laughs]* I've got an album somewhere with some really dodgy photos, too, trust me.

WC: Those are kind of fun, you know, but, but we'll keep those hidden, right? Yeah, got it.

AB: Well, the thing is, with photography, you know, I don't think anyone can expect to do a photo shoot and have the most amazing collection on the first attempt. That's just not going to happen. Let's be honest, unless you've been assisting somewhere for a number of years or whatever . Or you're extremely talented, you know, and if you are that talented, please DM me.

WC: Yeah, right.

AB: But yeah, I know photography: the more you do it—and this is one of the things that I love about imagery. And imagery, I know I'm a hairdresser, but imagery is my passion. Hair is not the passion. It's the imagery that is the passion. So, I love creating knowledge of the whole; that's what Aveda means. The whole thing, you know. For me, the hair is just as important as the clothes or as the lighting or as the model, or for me, it's very much about imagery, hence me becoming a creative director was a very natural thing for me to do.

WC: I'm guessing that that's really good advice for those who are listening to this as well: that maybe all they are focusing on is the hair and they aren't putting the same thought—

AB: Mm-hmm

WC: —into the clothing, into who the photographer is, into every other aspect of creating that image that they want.

AB: Yeah. I mean, I take it to a whole other level. I will do castings with 250 people. I want to make sure I get the best face.

WC: Wow.

AB: I get really OCD. Yeah, because I've already worked out the picture before I'm going to shoot the picture.

WC: Wow.

AB: And then once, because I always feel, and it's funny, Winn, you mentioned it yourself. You really prepare. It's the same with shows. The minute you prepare, really prepare, properly prepare, then you can handle whatever comes your way on the day. The minute you don't prepare and you get unexpected things thrown at you, it's a disaster. So, I've learned over the years that the more prepared you are, the better the result. Whenever I teach that it's, it's true.

WC: Do you drive people crazy with that?

AB: Oh, all the time.

WC: *[Laughs]* Oh, I found my people. You and I can start a support group. We drive people crazy.

AB: Oh, I love it. Well, yeah, but it's because you have a vision, right? You know what you want. And I don't compromise. And it's funny because, one of my mentees, Allen Ruiz, who's doing phenomenal, by the way, now. He always says the thing I've learned from you is you never compromise. I'm like, "Yeah, I never compromise." However painful it can be. Trust me. It's so much easier life to compromise, but it gets you just there. And I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in there.

WC: Wow. Well, how did that play out for you, then, when you were not the boss, when you were not the one in control?

AB: Well, I made sure I worked with the best people possible.

WC: Okay.

AB: So, I had to learn it myself, you know, so I started hanging around with people. That's why I wanted to work for Trevor Sorbie. He had the best people in the world.

WC: Right.

AB: I worked with Eugene Souleiman for 12 years, Damien Carney, Kenny Franklin, Vivienne Mackinder.

WC: Wow.

AB: I mean, all of them. I was a little baby junior when they were at their height. Well, Eugene is still going, but so I was Trevor's assistant. You know, I came to London, knocked on Trevor's door, and said, "I want to work for you" in my broken English, and he sent me away. He sent me away. And I'm like, I went home and I'm like, *Excuse me, I'm coming back*. So, I went back and he goes, "I've seen you here before." And I'm like, "Yeah, and I'm not leaving." Talk about Dutch courage. "I'm not leaving." And he was so shocked that I said that; no English person had ever said that to him. He said, "Okay, I'll take you on." And I became his assistant.

WC: Okay, right then and there, you just delivered some super important advice, especially as I'm thinking about the thousands of future professionals that I get to work with that are attending my schools. Because, you know, they put it out there one time. You know, "Well, they said no. Trevor said no to me and therefore

that's the end of it." And I hear what you're saying and I think maybe I do the same thing is, I don't even have a position available, but somebody is so determined that they are going to work with me and I'm like, "Well, maybe they see something that I don't see. And so, okay, let's give you a chance. Let's give you an opportunity."

AB: You know what I've learned, Winn, is that it's all about energy. So, if you come with open heart, hardworking, the right energy, the right attitude, you can become whatever your heart desires. If you come with, "I don't want to do it," like a negative attitude, you don't want to do this, you only want to work from nine to five, you're never going to get anywhere. Let's just be honest. So, if you want to win awards, want to—whatever it is that you—it's nothing to do with hairdressing even. In life, you show up and show them what you're made of. Because, you know, there's no one else like you in the world. We're all unique and different. So, if you are your true authentic self, whatever that is, you go for it.

WC: Wow. Again, incredible advice. You know, before we start talking about your switch over to Aveda, because you met Horst. What was the main thing that you gained that you learned working with Trevor Sorbie and his team?

AB: Wow. Okay. Where do I start? I mean, first of all, here's me, little Dutch hairdresser. Well, I wouldn't even call myself a proper hairdresser in those days. Went to London. Let me put it this way. Before I left London, I was a manager of a salon. Can you believe it? At 18.

WC: Wow.

AB: And the reason why I was a manager of a salon at 18 in the Netherlands was because the manager before me went on holiday for two weeks, or vacation, you call it. And they asked me to run the salon for two weeks and our takings were double by the time she got back. So, she lost the job and I became the manager. That's how it worked.

WC: [Laughs] I love this.

AB: Yeah. So, when I went to England, I literally went from being a manager to becoming a junior. I went down in rank. And at 19, that's hard to swallow because you think you're the be-all of all. But I knew that if I was going to invest in my career, I had to knuckle down for a couple of years because that will then help me, you know, and have more of a longevity. In the Netherlands, where I come from, by the time you were 21, you were old in our industry because they had to pay you more money than an 18-year-old.

WC: Wow.

AB: And I thought, *That will never happen to me. I'm going to become that good that they're going to pay more for me.* That's kind of, because I'm also very businesslike and have been from the beginning because my dad was a photographer, my mum was an accountant, so I think I got a little bit from both. So, when I moved to London, of course I had to go back to being a junior. I did everything for it. You know, like I found all the models for the school. I stood outside Oxford Street, a top shop at the time, asking people, "Would you like a

free haircut? Would you like a free haircut?" And then bring them all over to the academy for Eugene and Trevor to cut all their hair off kind of thing, you know. And what I learned from that is how to find models and good models. What else did I learn? One—I had to be completely retrained because I was taught the French way in Netherlands, I had to relearn the Vidal Sassoon way, because that was the Trevor Sorbie way. Or Trevor's way was a derivative of Vidal Sassoon, so it was completely different. And it took me a good six months for that to click. So, I learned how to cut hair there, for sure. But the other thing that I learned from Trevor, he started taking me on photo shoots because I had not my family over there. You know, I was a foreigner, right? My family was in the Netherlands. All I did was work so I was always available. And so, I was always, "Okay, I'll do this, I'll do that." So, of course you get picked. If you're always available, people will want to work with you and they'll take you somewhere. So, I ended up going with Trevor on photo shoots everywhere. And then I used to become friends with the assistant of the makeup artist and the assistant of the photographer and start doing my own shoots at the weekends on my days off. And that's how I learned and became, you know, this whole editorial thing. And then I learned how to teach because, in the Netherlands I was taught, like I said, the French way, had to relearn everything. So, I started making it simplified and became a great teacher because I had a very basic way of teaching cutting hair. I literally related everything to a house and I started teaching that on stages and people go, "Oh my God, I get this now." Because I was one of those hairdressers that sat in an audience not understanding all that jargon that was going on onstage. So, I simplified everything and people go, "Oh, we get it now. Easy. I can do a bob. I can do a graduated bob," because I made it simple.

WC: Wow.

AB: And then he taught me how to be on stage. mean, hey, listen, no training. One day, Vivienne Mackinder, she was ill or her dad was sick or something, and Trevor said, "You go onstage now." He just threw me on stage. And I went on stage. I said, "Well, I've never done this before." He said, "Just let your hands do the talking," he said, and I went, "Okay." So, my hands did the talking. A month later, I was sent on a plane around Scandinavia and demonstrate every weekend to lots of different hairdressers representing the Sorbie brand.

WC: Wow. Wow.

AB: So that was really fun. And also he—I think what I learned from here, the hunger, you know, to enter the awards at such early ages, you know. Because Trevor was the first and only hairdresser, of what I remember, who's actually won British Hairdresser of the Year four times. No one else has ever done that.

WC: You know, little sideline here. I mean, it's kind of sad for me to even say this, but there are new kids in school or new kids in the industry that don't even know the name Trevor Sorbie.

AB: I know. I know.

WC: Do a shout out about that. There's just—to know your history, to know where you came from in terms of what this industry is all about. Can you—better you than me to deliver that message.

AB: Well, I think what we mustn't forget that hairdressing is a craft. Yeah? So, a craft is built upon generations. A craft doesn't just happen overnight. And in order to really truly understand craftsmanship, you need to look back into the history of the industry. The name Trevor Sorbie, the name Vidal Sassoon, you know, Horst Rechelbacher, there's so many incredible craftsmen and women that have done it before us that you can learn from and actually make your things go quicker. Because what I learned is that whatever took Trevor 40 years to learn, took me 20 years to learn.

WC: There you go.

AB: Took my assistant 10 years to learn.

WC: Wow.

AB: Because it's this amalgamation of knowledge. And then the trick is to add your own stamp, your own taste, your own style to it. Because I've worked with hairdressers and in my teams, I see it. People have won NAHA four times—or multiple times, won lots of industry awards, but they haven't found their style yet. You see, if I look at my career now, I think where I'm most useful for is that top 1 percent of the industry that really wants it and has done a lot, but I can help take them to the next level. And I love that because I love talking to people that have tried a lot of things out already. Because I'm also a Virgo, so I'm incredibly detailed. And I love taking someone like an Allen Ruiz or Luis Gonzalez or the next generation of these incredible hairdressers and go with them on a shoot and I can just stand there and say, “Okay, what about if you did that?” Or like give them tiny little nuggets. “What about if you did that?” And they go, “Oh my God, that's—yeah, yeah, yeah, you're right.” I love doing that because it's the amalgamation of my experience that I can then hand over.

WC: Wow.

AB: And I really enjoy that.

WC: Such great advice. By the way, while you have been talking, I don't know if you've noticed, I keep on looking to the side because I'm taking notes.

AB: Oh, that's fine. We can talk for hours.

WC: And one of the notes, I'm making this ongoing list of all the jobs that you have had.

AB: *[Laughs]*

WC: Because I think that that's a great message as well. You don't have to have just one job in this industry of standing behind the chair. You talked about you were a manager, a teacher, an artistic director, a creative director, a photographer, doing stage work as well as a hairdresser behind the chair.

AB: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. But I think all those jobs made me who I am today.

WC: There you go.

AB: Having understanding, you know?

WC: So, in 2005, you moved to New York City to become the global creative director for Aveda. Talk to us about that time in your life, what you were responsible for. How much were you out of your comfort zone during all of that?

AB: Oh, where do I start? I mean, basically what happened in 2004—at the end of 2001 November, I won British Hairdresser of the Year after six years of trying.

WC: Right.

AB: I didn't have the Ruth Roche effect, winning in one go. No, it took me six years, but I was going to win that thing, whether it was going to kill me or not. So, I won it in 2004. And just to put it in perspective to the listeners is that for me as a foreigner to win British Hairdresser of the Year and as a woman was unheard of. because there's only one other woman who'd won it before me, which was four years before that. But it had all been men and I've got no issues with men, women, what have you, but it was a huge accomplishment because us girls weren't seen like we are today in those years. Whenever I was at Fashion Week, at most me and Odile Gilbert were the only two women.

WC: Really?

AB: So, it was quite an achievement for me, as well as being Dutch, the end of the day. There was no other non-British person who had won British Hairdresser of the Year. And then the great pleasure it gave me, a year before or something, I won not only British but now I also won international because I can't allow going for British anymore. So I'm the first British Hairdresser of the Year that also won international. That gives me great joy because I think I'm the first one who's done that. But anyway, it doesn't matter. That's a whole side gig. So, I win British Hairdresser of the Year. Dominique Conseil, the president of Aveda, decides he needs a hair person to run creative for Aveda. So, he comes to London and he goes, "Hey, listen, I want you to move to New York." I'm like, "I don't think so. I'm not going." [Laughs] I was working for Aveda at the time but I was, "I don't want to move from Holland to England." I now have a husband who was British. I'm like, you know, "I don't need to move to America." And he goes, "Now listen," he said, "you can work in London if you like, why don't you do this? You do two weeks London and then two weeks New York or three weeks London, three weeks New York. And then when you're in New York, what you do is like you start running the creative for the entire company." What that means is campaigns, packaging, store design. I mean, you name it, the whole creative shebang. I'm like, "Okay." "And then when you go to London, you can do your clients and do all your hair bits." I'm like, "Okay." So, I did that, not realizing what that meant. I said yes before I really understood the job. So, I showed up in New York. He had given me his office because he'd moved to Minneapolis at that point. I had the biggest office on Sixth Avenue; I'll never forget it. And everybody suddenly had to listen to me. It was fascinating. And they said, "What are we doing?" I said, "We're going to stop using every picture that's been produced in

the last two years. We're going to change from now on." And that completely changed the look in three months of the brand and gave it more of an editorial feel and more fashion feel. And really, because at end of the day, like I said, my vision is very much knowledge of the whole. It's never just been knowledge of the head. In London, I had become known to start photographing models with bodies rather than just a head and add fashion. Like, I used to work with Alexander McQueen and many other designers and I used to use their clothes for shoots and shows. So, it became very much part of my storytelling. So, and that's what I did for Aveda. I started creating collections for them, campaigns, and gave it a very different look. very un-corporate. Very edgy at that time for them. And it was great. And then I moved, you know. Then I'd go to London for three weeks and stand behind the chair.

WC: Okay. So, now I want to go back and I want to look at the transformation of that imagery. Cause you said within three months, all of a sudden—like, I'd love to see that before and after of how that transitioned. So now all of a sudden you're working in graphic design, package design, store design. I mean, how much experience did you have in any of that?

AB: Zero.

WC: Oh my gosh. Okay. Well, talk us through that.

AB: They bought me for my taste.

WC: There you go.

AB: Remember, I told you creative direction is taste. It's all about taste. It's your vision. So, I knew what the Aveda branding had to look like. I knew I had a vision for it. I knew what I wanted it to be. I took everything outside, for a start. I started photographing all the models in natural locations. And then I used to do collections for the trades at the same time, which we shot in studio, but all the campaigns were outside. I traveled the world. Shot in Nepal, India, you name it, I've been everywhere and shot everything on location. I mean, I must have been completely mad. Can you imagine shooting campaigns on location with weather?

WC: Oh my gosh, yeah.

AB: I did it all. I used to travel with wind stoppers. Can you believe it with wind stoppers?

WC: Oh my gosh. I don't even know what a wind stopper is. What's a wind stopper?

AB: It's almost like a little tent, like a vertical tent that you hold in order to block the wind. Wind blockers, wind blockers is the name.

WC: Geez.

AB: Yeah. So, I learned, I tell you, and I did the hair on the job, too. So, art directed, I creative directed, and I did the hair. Because I knew what I wanted. And that's kind of how the whole thing came about. And then we started, you know, some big campaigns. I did my first TV commercial. This is how this went. I was in India on location and I said to the guy, David, I said, "David, just film everything. I don't

care what it is, just film everything. Behind the scenes, during the scenes, after scene, before, that area, just film it all. We'll deal with it afterwards." And when we launched Invati, which is our one of our brands within brands for hair loss, I ended up shooting it in India because it was all based on Ayurveda. And we took all the behind the scenes, turned it into a TV commercial, and it was their first \$55 million campaign.

WC: There you go. I'm sure that was very, very interesting to see.

AB: So, apparently I was the biggest return on investment in the history of Estée Lauder at that time, which was great. So then suddenly they realized, "Okay, she knows what she's doing."

WC: Wow.

AB: So that was good.

WC: So, at one point you even worked with Leonard Alan Lauder, right?

AB: Oh, yeah.

WC: Who was everybody—

AB: Leonard Lauder, yeah.

WC: American billionaire, philanthropist, art collector. It was he and his brother, Ronald, who were the heirs to the Estee Lauder companies founded by their parents, Estée and Joseph Lauder. So, what was that like working with him? Didn't he just recently pass away?

AB: Yeah, he did, unfortunately. Yeah, he did. What was interesting, I actually met Leonard many times backstage before big shows but never had the opportunity to really speak to him until there was the memorial for Horst. And Horst and Leonard were quite close. So, Leonard shows up at the memorial and I'm there and I'm like—and I heard he does this course about equity building and branding. And I thought, *You know what? I want to be on that course. I'm just going to go and ask him.* So, I walked up to him. He was sitting there by himself. I said, "Mr. Lauder, my name is Antoinette, I work for Aveda. Thank you, first of all, for being here and, you know, honoring our founder. But second of all, I hear that you do this incredible course, a six-week course about equity and branding. And I would love to be a part of that." Lo and behold, a week later, I got the invite.

WC: Wow, wow.

AB: *[Laughs]* And I was the only creative out of plus 19 marketing people. Yeah, I actually have the plaque at home. And he taught me everything about branding and brand building. And I was just so grateful and so lucky that I had that opportunity because this man was phenomenal. I always say I've had three mentors. I had Trevor to teach me hair, Horst to teach me holism, and Leonard to teach me business. And unfortunately, you know, Horst passed, then Trevor last year, and then Leonard not that long ago. So, yeah. Sad but true and I'm incredibly grateful that I've had all these three men in my life, I really am.

WC: So, I want to switch gears a little bit. You've traveled to Nepal multiple times to support female communities.

AB: Yeah.

WC: Can you share with us what that's about?

AB: Yeah, absolutely. During those years, we used to, for our holiday gifts, we used to have boxes made in Nepal because Aveda is about sustainability. And basically, we had these female communities in the Himalayas. And they used to go up in the mountains, into the Himalayas, and collect this lokta wood. And then they used to like—I'm going to say it for power of words, it's a big kind of washing machine, open-air washing machine-like thing. And it became like a papier mâché. And then they used to spread it on screens and dry it in the sun, in the Himalayas. And then you have a piece of paper, like lokta paper, which lasts for thousands of years. And then they used to dye it and we turn it—then send it to America and we'd turn them into boxes. And I thought, *Okay, I need to tell that story*. So, the only way could do that is to go to Nepal and have a look. So, I went to Nepal. What they didn't tell me is that these women, they literally, truly live in the Himalayas.

WC: Wow.

AB: So I had to trek for two days up in the mountains to get there.

WC: Wow.

AB: Yeah, I've done some really crazy stuff. So, trek for two days through the mountains, meet these incredible women. Because what happens, especially in those days, a lot of the men were sent to India to earn money because there was not as much work for them. And the women used to, you know, create co-operations with this lokta business. So, I did that for, I think seven times or something. And trying to make a Western-looking Christmas campaign in the Himalayas has been very interesting. Because of climate change, the snow line moves every year up and up and up. Every year we had to climb higher and higher. One point I had to nearly go to base camp to find some snow.

WC: Wow.

AB: I know, it's been insane.

WC: Wow.

AB: I can tell you some stories about that, but I think that's a different program.

WC: Incredible, these experiences you've had.

AB: Oh, amazing. Honestly, I'm very, I mean, I say I'm grateful, I've worked for them and grateful. And I was saying to my husband only last night, because we were watching a film and it was about something with Nepal. And I said, "Can you remember when we went there?" Like it's amazing how someone or something must have looked over us. Because, you know, it's pretty dangerous going up in the Himalayas, you know, with your team, go and try and take a few pictures, you know. Or I used to go and look for models in the villages. I mean, the most

incredible-looking people. And yeah, just go around the square somewhere and start looking like, “Oh, she's very beautiful.” Or maybe—and then I had to go and ask permission of the chief of the local village if I was allowed to photograph.

WC: Wow.

AB: Oh, I've had some situations but life experiences.

WC: Wow.

AB: Amazing, amazing. And the other thing that really taught me to go to Nepal, because we literally had to trek and sleep in tents because there are no hotels. And before that, I have to be honest, I was a bit of a five-star hotel girl. Well, that knocked it straight out of me, trust me. *[Laughs]*

WC: Yeah, well, I'm still a five-star hotel girl. So, there you go. I'm gonna hold onto that one.

AB: *[Laughs]* You go and try to sleep in a tent in the Himalayas with no bathroom.

WC: Oh my.

AB: Fascinating. I know, I've got some great stories.

WC: So, I want to also switch gears a little bit and talk about your awards. And I'm grateful that you are forthcoming about the awards that you have received and earned. And here's the reason why: a lot of people on your level aren't out there saying, “These are my awards.” You know, “Look at what I've achieved.” But how I look at it is you're a mentor and people look up to you and how can people know what they can aspire to if you're not forthcoming with everything that you've received and earned. So, I'm just telling our listeners, I'm dragging some of this out of you and it's for a reason: so that we can inspire other people. If she did it—and I think that's been the theme all along, you guys. If Antoinette did it, then, well then, so can you.

AB: Exactly:

WC: Of course, you have to have be up at five-thirty in the morning. I'm up at four-thirty, so maybe one day I'll catch up with you, right?

AB: *[Laughs]*

WC: Because this is what it takes. So, in 1995, you win British Hairdresser of the Year.

AB: That was 2000—that was 2004. In '95 I won—first of all, it was '90, yeah, '95, Avant Garde Hairdresser of the Year.

WC: Okay.

AB: Then London '96, London '97. And then I won Fellowship Hairdresser of the Year. The first ever, I just found out. Are you familiar with the British Fellowship?

WC: I mean, somewhat. Yeah. Because I have a lot of friends on your level.

AB: Yeah.

WC: You know, I'm not a hairdresser. I don't know if you ever knew that. I'm not a hairdresser. So, I'm like the stalker on the side trying to track you people down, right?

AB: [Laughs]

WC: To get your attention.

AB: You're funny. No, what happened in London, if you do win British Hairdresser of the Year, then the Fellowship, which is kind of this—it's not a union, it's like everybody was part of it. Then they give you the Hairdressing Award of the Year that they think the industry should have won. So, I was the first one to win that in '99. Then I won it again in 2003. And I think still today, the only one who's won it twice.

WC: Wow.

AB: And then in 2004, I won British, which was the big one. And then I went into my creative director phase and I won a couple other worlds. I mean, I think at that stage, I won about 10, 15, or something in my thing. And then, here's the crack of the story. I decided to go back into the trade, like I told you, in 2019. And I moved from upstairs in the offices to downstairs because I'm like, *Okay, I don't want to do creative at the moment. Let the new creative director take care of the team; I don't need to. I'm going to go downstairs so I'm not in the way.* I moved downstairs. I had the guy build a shelf on the wall to put all my awards up. Put all my awards up and I come in the next morning and every single one is on the ground, broken.

WC: Oh my!

AB: Every single one. All my awards that I ever won. Because a lot of them are glass or you know. All smashed up. And I stood there and I thought, *Well, first of all, they're only things. And second of all, you know, I know I've won them so it doesn't really matter whether I have a thing for it or not; doesn't matter. But what I could do is just go and win a few new ones.*

WC: [Laughs]

AB: So then, so this is how it started again. That's why I'm saying career number two in hairdressing. So, I decided to then go and enter the awards again. So, I won about 10 or, I don't know, I'm on award 29 now; a whole bunch since then. But the thing is, you've got to, you know, entering awards takes time and it takes effort. And if you enter like NAHA or British or International Hairdresser of the Year, you've got to like fill out dossiers that take me a day. I mean, this is no mean feat. It's a lot of work. So, yeah.

WC: I love that. I love the actual awards broke so you said, "I'll just go earn some new ones then." I love that. So, I have a very interesting question for you. So, in an industry that is majority women—

AB: Yeah.

WC: Because you said earlier that you were, like, the first female and usually it's male hairdressers, male artists who win these awards. Why is that, do you think that is? I don't even know how to ask the question without stumbling over my words.

AB: This sounds—I'm going to give you a really strange answer but this is how I found out. I ended up having two puppies. One was a female and one was a male. And I realized the male was pushy, was, you know, testosterone-y, and always had to be in front. And the female was a little subdued but if there was something outside, the males used to bark like crazy and the female had to sort it out. That's my answer.

WC: *[Laughs]* Oh my gosh. The fact that you said, "I have two puppies," I just started cracking up. I think you just said men are dogs. I think that's what you just said.

AB: No, I didn't say that. I didn't say that. This is how I found out the place of the female and the male, whether it's humans, animals, whatever.

WC: That's really funny.

AB: I think there's a similarity because we're in nature, right?

WC: Right. That's funny.

AB: So, when I look at—I think women are not very good in stepping in front and saying, "Hey, it's me." Whereas I think, and maybe I'm wrong and you can all DM me and tell me it's not the case, but I do think women are naturally a little bit more hold back and a little bit more like, "Let's make sure everything is good around us." And I just think that's nothing to do good, bad, or indifferent. It's just nature. You know what I mean? It's nature.

WC: I'll take it. I'll take it.

AB: I don't really care about that. I just do me. I don't really care. Male, female, whatever, I don't care. Just you do you and go for it.

WC: I love the answer. Okay, so again, knowing that I was going to spend time with you today, I reached out to a couple of people, including our good friend, Vivienne Mackinder.

AB: Oh, okay.

WC: So, this is just last week. This is what Vivienne said about you: "She is determined, strong, kind, ethical, passionate, creative, exquisite taste as she cares immensely about people and the industry. She is an icon and a person I love and I adore. She bridges fashion and beauty in the most beautiful way. I'm fascinated by her creative process. She's been incredibly successful, surviving the corporate culture," which I want to ask you about that, "which is not easy as an artist to survive the corporate culture." Can you comment on that? First of all, how much do we love Vivienne. That's just lovely.

AB: I love Vivienne and am incredibly touched. I remember Vivienne moving to America. I mean, Vivienne is a personal friend of mine. She's an incredible woman herself. So, hats off to you and thank you, Vivienne, for this incredible

comment. I truly adore you and thank you. The corporate world. You know what? If you can survive behind the chair, you can survive anything.

WC: Really?

AB: Because it's about people knowledge. It's about people business. We're in the people's business. So, if you can deal with a customer behind the chair, you can deal with anybody in the corporate world.

WC: Wow.

AB: You've got to just know the rules in the game. That's all. And sometimes that takes a little bit. You see, what I've also learned is the corporate world needs the artist and the artist needs the corporate world. And the minute you kind of figure out how to sell that, Bob's your uncle, as they say in England.

WC: Beautiful. Okay, so another incredible guy, Chris Baran.

AB: Oh, I love him, too.

WC: This is what Chris said about you. "Antoinette puts together breathtaking, creative, and unique presentations like she did for NAHA and countless others. Audiences are mesmerized by her creativity and thought and execution." And, by the way, then he, like a typical educator and podcaster, he then goes on and dictates a bunch of questions for me to ask you. So here we go.

AB: [Laughs]

WC: So, Chris is going after my job now. Okay. So, he says, "What's the process you go through to keep it all unique?"

AB: I love it. Authenticity.

WC: Okay.

AB: So, to me it's about storytelling. Everything is a story. Like I just did Aveda Congress three weeks ago or something. And it's about coming up with a story headline and then breaking it down into pieces. Whether that's for a show or an image. When I deal with shows, it's very much like, okay, who's the audience? Funny enough, I just got off the phone, I'm going to India in December. Never done a show in India before, no idea. So, what I do, first of all, it's like, who's my audience? Let's find out who the audience is. Where is it? Like, what's the room like? What are the capabilities? And then it's a matter, okay, I need to show them technique. I need to show them—if there's big screens involved, I need to have incredible visuals. And then the creative direction part of mine comes in. And then I need a bit of entertainment. Like in my last show, I had two robot dogs. And I had someone from the Yawanawá tribe in Brazil doing makeup on stage for me. You've got to make it interesting for people to look at. Everybody can watch a haircut. Seriously, how many more haircuts can we watch? But give me the reason why, or if it's a trend, where does the trend come from? I think a lot of the times people go, "Oh yeah, I do this, *da-da-da-da*." Tell me why, or how did you come up with that idea?

WC: Wow.

AB: I want to understand. And that becomes suddenly interesting education. So, shows to me, education and entertainment mixed in a beautiful little coat of fashion and beautiful imagery. That's how I look at it.

WC: Beautiful. Chris also wants me to ask you, "What's the hardest part in that process?"

AB: Getting a budget. *[Laughs]*

WC: Okay. Very matter of fact.

AB: Oh, I'm Dutch. We're direct, Winn. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. The hardest part, my hardest part is I always make a show too big for the stage. So, then I get to the stage and it's like, oh, I need to reduce this down a little bit. *[Laughs]* It's not the first time that's happened to me. But yeah, no, it's getting it done in one go. The way I look at shows. sometimes it's like a Broadway experience, almost, mixed with a fashion show, right? And if you think of Broadway, you know, they practice for months, and then they get to do that same show over and over again. So, it becomes better and better. We, on the other hand, hairdressers do everything like that with an hour rehearsal on stage, if you don't push for more, because I always push for more. And we do it as a one off.

WC: Right.

AB: So, I think the trick now, what I've learned is I need to tour those shows so I can refine it. I'm kind of—what I'm doing currently in the United States is I'm going to 10, 12 of our top Aveda customers and do private presentations.

WC: Oh, man.

AB: Which are like mini shows. Yeah. And I'm doing the same one and I'm really enjoying it because I get to make it better and better and better. And I'm really enjoying that.

WC: Okay. So, do you ever go through a dry spell artistically or creatively or in business? And if you do, what do you do when that happens? How do you get re-inspired?

AB: I hate to say this. It sounds maybe a bit cocky, but no, I don't really, because there's always something else going on. And I also have learned that you don't always have to reinvent the wheel. You know? What I've been tending to do the last couple of years, I take what I've done and I try and make it better, but not night and day, just like a little bit and then a little bit and then a little bit. I find that seems to work much better. Because not everybody sees everything that you do anyway. Like if I do a show in London versus Minnesota or LA, there's different audiences. So, I know for instance, with NAHA, the Icon presentation, I had done that particular show or that segment at Aveda Congress, but it's a different audience.

WC: Right.

AB: So, I got my second run at it, which I really enjoyed.

WC: So, I'm going to switch gears again.

AB: Okay.

WC: Talk to me as though I'm brand new in beauty school. I'm brand new to the industry or I'm recently graduated, licensed, brand new in the salon. Because some people call them the microwave generation. Meaning, again, they want things instantly. So, what's the best advice that you have for that brand-new generation entering the professional beauty industry?

AB: Okay, well, I'm a big fan of reverse engineering. So, my first question to them is what do you want to do? Like, what do you want to be? Do you want to be a hairdresser behind the chair? Do you want to be an editorial hairdresser? Do you want to do shows? Or do you want to become Instagram famous? Because they're all different routes. And then reverse engineer it back.

WC: Okay.

AB: So, if you want to be an Instagram hairdresser, then you got to be on that phone 24/7. If you want to have a long-lasting career, and truly practice a craft then I'd say, go and work with the best person you can work with and learn from them and then develop your own style. But going to a school, it's like doing your driver's license. You learn how to drive a car. When you leave school, you're not there yet. You have to now learn how to drive the car on the open road.

WC: Great advice.

AB: And then the other thing I would say, one big or bit of: be your authentic self. You're unique. Do your own thing. Don't be like everybody else. Do your own thing. Because, I say this to models too, funny enough, because it's kind of similar. Everybody comes into a model casting and they all have hair down to here. They all look the same. Be different and you'll stand out. You know, whatever that different is to you, but just be different.

WC: Such great advice. And you know, back to our good friend Ruth Roche. You know, she said for years she wanted to be the next Vivienne Macinder. She's like, "Oh my God, I'm short. I don't have a British accent," you know. And then she realized that's not her path. Her path for success is being the best version of her. I love that advice from you as well. Can you believe that we've already been chatting for well over an hour?

AB: No.

WC: So, as we start to wind this—

AB: We could chat for hours.

WC: I know. Okay, so I'm going to throw some of your quotes back at you to have you comment.

AB: Okay, do it.

WC: So, you say that your life's passion is imagery. What does that mean?

AB: Correct. Nothing gives me more satisfaction, pleasure, and I can't be more passionate about that three-second click of a camera. I know it sounds ridiculous.

And the reason why I like it so much is when you do click, it's a moment in time. You can never get it back. And that's why I love images. You can never get it back. It's a moment in time.

WC: Wow, I love that. I think somebody once asked you, "Do you ever get burned out?" And you said, "I don't get burned out, but I have been freaked out." What do you mean by that?

AB: *[Laughs]* Yeah, that's a good one. Oh my god, I've been freaked out many times. You know, being thrown into situations that are very unexpected. I mean, wow. Overwhelmed, you know? I mean, things can come at you and it's like, I always have to say to myself, baby steps, one foot in front of the other and work your way through it. Yeah, it's a lot. Sometimes it's a lot. But you know what? Rome wasn't built in a day, you know? You've got to just take it step by step.

WC: Do you still experience that on occasion when you're overwhelmed and freaked out?

AB: Oh, daily. Well, freaked out maybe is a little excessive, but overwhelmed. Yeah, I mean, I could be working on five, six different projects at once. And it's like, okay, how am going to make that work? How? And then I just need to like, okay, relax, you know. Take it easy. This is another thing I started doing, and maybe it's because I'm getting older. There's always a solution. It always works out. It's kind of weird. It always works out. And I don't know what that is. Is something in the atmosphere or something? It always works out. And I had to believe in myself for that because sometimes it's taken me years really to believe in myself. I never knew I was creative until about five years ago.

WC: What?

AB: Someone said to me, "Oh, you're so creative. I'm like, really?"

WC: Really?

AB: I had no idea.

WC: Wow.

AB: 'Cause I just do what I do. You know what mean? I don't think about it.

WC: It's the best version of you.

AB: It do what I do. Do what I think is right. So, you know, another freak out, my biggest freak out was COVID.

WC: Right.

AB: You know, the day I find out, can you all pack up and go home? And I thought we were going home for a week. Little did I know it was two years.

WC: Right

AB: Or a year that we didn't come in. And I was, like, how can I do my job from my living room? So, I had to figure it out. So, I decided, okay, you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna build a studio in my basement. You've just gotta be

resourceful, I think, you know? That was really my freak out. I really screamed that day, I think. I literally screamed.

WC: Wow.

AB: Because I was like, this is so weird. I've never had this before.

WC: You say that the secret to success is showing up and you even say that this is your motto. So, talk to us about that.

AB: Mm-hmm. Well, like I said, it's tenacity, it's doing it on a consistent schedule. If you do lots one year and nothing the next year, everybody's going to forget what you did last year. So, you've got to keep going. And I say last year; last month, I say now because the world's so much faster.

WC: Right.

AB: So, you need to be consistent. I think Instagram is a very good example. I'm not very good at it, but you need to be on it all the time. You know, you've got to be in your face, in people's faces to be there. So, be consistent and do it all the time. So, if you want to win awards, just enter all of them. Don't just do one and hope for the best. So, I helped this kid out the other day and he goes, "Oh, I didn't win." I said, "Yeah, well, I can't promise if you're going to win or not." And then he, of course, got nominated for five other awards. And I said, "Enter another award, enter this or that." And then he got nominated for five more. And he was like, "Oh yeah." I said, "Yeah, you can't just do one thing and hope for the best. Doesn't work."

WC: Wow. Okay, here's another quote. Actually, I think this is a sign in your office: Put your big girl panties on. I love that statement. What does that mean to you? Put your big girl panties on?

AB: Just get on with it. Get on with it. I mean, you know, life is not made out of roses. You've just got to get on with it. It's like, it's that consistency thing, you know? Show up every day. Get on with it. And if it doesn't go your way, make it go your way. I once got some advice from someone that was quite interesting. When I'd just moved to New York, I know had this guy who's a producer and I'm like, "God, I'm really struggling." I was trying so hard and trying to make it work. And he goes, "Look, why don't you just do it the way you want to do it?" I'm like, "That sounds so simple." And he was absolutely right. You do it your way. Isn't that a song? *I Did It My Way*. Or you do it your way.

WC: How often do you have to remind yourself of that, to put your big girl panties on?

AB: Weekly. [Laughs] Daily. Weekly.

WC: The fact that it's a sign in your office, that must mean that you need that message on a regular basis.

AB: Well, it's funny because my previous assistant put it in my office.

WC: Okay.

AB: And I actually thought, because it's not a very English or Dutch thing to say. And I was like, "Yep, you're right. Let's get on with this." I thought it was a really fun saying.

WC: Yeah, we can get away with it here in the U.S, right?

AB: I love it. I think it's great.

WC: To wrap things up, first of all, again, I could just chat with you. You're charming, you're adorable, you're direct. I really appreciate all of that.

AB: [Laughs] It's the Dutch coming out.

WC: Okay. That works for me. The Dutch, the Virgo, everything else that you got going on. So, do you have a final message for our listeners?

AB: I believe is—this is something Trevor Sorbie told me. Whatever you put in, the energy, the passion, the love, it will always come back. Sometimes when you're an assistant or you just joined school, it's hard and you think, *Am I ever going to get there? Am I ever going to get that graduated bob? Am I ever going to win an award? Am I ever—whatever.* It will, but you've just got to put in the love, the passion, and the energy. Don't expect it to arrive on a silver platter. It's not going to come. And if it does come, if you're one of the few that it does come in a silver platter, that platter is going to go away real quick. Because if you're not consistent, you're not going to last. So put in the love, put in the passion, the energy, and you will get there. I did it. You're talking to a girl from Holland who started in the industry at 14, who didn't even speak English. So, if I can do what I do today, you certainly all out there can do. You're in the land of opportunity. It's a no brainer.

WC: Beautiful. I can add nothing to that. Except thank you. Thank you so much for doing this. I'm so glad that I'm your new best friend. I really appreciate that role. So, thank you for that title.

AB: Oh Winn, it's been an absolute pleasure talking to you and really enjoyed hanging out with you. Really did. So, thank you very much. And again, you have an incredible reputation. I feel honored I am part of your series. And yeah, by all means, I'd love to spend some more time with you in the future.

WC: I look forward to that.

AB: Whether it's on camera, off camera, it doesn't matter. I reckon you and I can talk for hours.

WC: That is the absolute truth. So, thank you so much.

AB: Yeah. And thank you to your team as well. Thank you very much.