

MASTERS Audio Club, August 2014

Martino Cartier: “Don’t Be Ordinary, Be EXTRAordinary!”



Martino Cartier is a celebrity stylist and international educator whose award-winning salon gathered millions of fans after appearing on Bravo TV. Martino and his team have been featured in magazines, award shows, and major hair shows. His nonprofit organization, Friends Are By Your Side, provides no-cost wigs to women who have lost their hair from chemotherapy and grants wishes to children. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Martino shared many inspiring messages, including “Don’t be ordinary, be EXTRAordinary” and how to use your setbacks as a driving force in your life.

WC: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here. Welcome to this issue of MASTERS. I love what’s happening in the beauty industry right now. MASTERS—I’m actually coming up on 20 years that I’ve been doing this.

MC: Wow.

WC: And I was trying to figure that out. I think I said this in the last interview—I was trying to figure out—I was thinking, *Oh, it’s probably like 14, 15 years old*, and then I looked back at the date that I interviewed Vidal Sassoon—was the very first person that I interviewed.

MC: Wow.

WC: ‘Cause I thought if he tells me yes, nobody is going to say no to me after that.

MC: *[laughs]* That’s right.

WC: So I just went for the top. I’ve got to get Vidal to say yes, and he did. But it was 20 years ago, in February it’ll be 20 years. And now because people are, like, they’re wanting to have recordings of the people that they love the most. They want to capture that message.

MC: Totally.

WC: When people hear you on a stage they’re like, “Oh, well it was so great. I want that on tape. I want that on” —tape?

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: “I want that on 8-track!”

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: “I want that on—.” People want to take it. They want to listen to it over and over again. I’ve done that with my mentors, the people that I love the most. I want to hear it over and over again. And so now I’ve got these scouts out that are out and about and that’s what happens. Somebody came back and said, “Winn, you have to interview this guy. His energy was over the top. His message is over the top. What he’s doing with his power, his influence, his celebrity is all in just the best vein of what our beauty industry is all about.” And so I’m sitting here with Martino Cartier. Welcome to MASTERS.

MC: Well, thank you so much. This is an honor, believe me. Today I’m so happy that I got to hear you; literally life changing. So this is an honor. Honored to be here.

WC: Thanks. But that’s what people said about your presentation, and I think it was a year ago that they heard you.

MC: That’s right.

WC: And usually, one or two people. It was quite a few people that said—and I can’t believe that I didn’t know who you were.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: I mean, I thought I was, you know, pretty good at keeping my nose out there of snooping around of who’s hot and who’s got great messages. And so, thanks, first of all, for taking my calls and my emails. You didn’t know who I was and yet you said yes to this. So thank you.

MC: Absolutely. Listen, one of my mentors, John McCormack—so when I sent him an email and I said, “Hey, you know Winn?” He was like, “Do I know Winn!” You know, so yeah.

WC: He’s a good guy, too.

MC: He is.

WC: You know, he and Maryanne are just long-term mentors for me and for many people in the industry, and that’s what you’re doing out there, you know? You’ve had a salon since 1998. So you’re not, you know, new to this.

MC: Yeah.

WC: You’ve been doing this for a while. Just so our listeners know, you have two salons in the New Jersey area, correct?

MC: Yep. One in Washington Township and one in Cherry Hill.

WC: Okay. I think you said 50 employees?

MC: Mm-hmm. Yep.

WC: Okay. And then you also have a product line that you sell on the—

MC: Home Shopping Network, HSN.

WC: What's that like?

MC: It's awesome. It's a rush, you know? When you have ADD and ADHD and there's like six cameras and, "Look here, look there," and the call lines are coming in and people are calling from all over the country for tips and tricks, it's a good feeling. A lot of energy.

WC: So what's the product line?

MC: So we have, like, all volumizing products. So there's, like, dry texture sprays and hair sprays. And they're all fun names, like Sealed with a Kiss, Sex'd Up, Morning Sunshine Dry Shampoo. So it's just fun. And it's really energizing. I love it.

WC: And the name of the line is?

MC: Martino Cartier by Amika.

WC: And you developed this?

MC: Part of the products I developed.

WC: Right.

MC: Part of them Amika, you know, did. We partnered up.

WC: Right.

MC: But, you know, it's just fun. It's fun. And I'm also the face of Keratin Complex. I don't know if you knew that or not.

WC: No, I did not know that.

MC: So, for six years.

WC: How many jobs do you have?

MC: Four.

WC: Okay. *[laughs]*

MC: Four jobs. And, yeah, I've been their international artistic director for six years. I do all the trade shows and, you know, all of the distributor events, and that's a big joy as well. Yeah.

WC: Well, I can see why you're out there. I mean, you totally got—you've got the look, you've got—

MC: Thanks.

WC: —the energy.

MC: Thank you.

WC: You've got the perfect—so, Home Shopping Network. So it's not live, it's recorded?

MC: No, it's live.

WC: It's live?

MC: Five-second delay, that's it.

WC: Okay.

MC: If you choke, you've got five seconds to redeem yourself. Yeah.

WC: Okay. And how long is the spot that you're on?

MC: It depends. Sometimes you're on for 28 minutes, sometimes you're on for 12 minutes. Sometimes you're only on once a day, other times if you get a "Today's Special," that means you start at midnight, it's the featured item of the day, and you're on, like, every couple hours 'til midnight; 24-hour run.

WC: Are you serious?

MC: Yes.

WC: How do you do that?

MC: Lots of coffee. Lots of sugar-free Red Bull. Yeah.

WC: And are you doing hair?

MC: Yeah.

WC: And you're doing models and so—

MC: Sometimes you're doing blow dryers. Like we did an event with Disney before and, I mean, it's amazing. They bring in the sets of *Maleficent*. They have, like, Angelina Jolie's costume was there, you know?

WC: Oh my goodness.

MC: And we were doing blow dryers and so you're demoing how to blow dry and why this blow dryer is so great, and then after that we went to the premiere with Angelina in L.A.

WC: You dog.

MC: It was amazing.

WC: Congratulations.

MC: Yeah. Thanks, that was a couple weeks ago.

WC: You didn't get to touch her hair though, did you?

MC: No. I stood really close to her but I didn't get to touch her hair.

WC: Dang it.

MC: I know. Would have been nice, right?

WC: Yeah.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: So, where's Home Shopping Network filmed, then?

MC: It's in Clearwater.

WC: Here in Florida.

MC: Florida, yeah.

WC: Okay.

MC: Yeah. It's amazing. You would love the CEO, Mindy Grossman. She has been *Forbes* magazine top 100 women in the country for years. She's a force and she

just loves to invest in people and build their dreams, and she's a great mentor, person to be around. She's very influential and her husband's always on Bloomberg. He's very intelligent and they're just good people.

WC: Wow.

MC: You know?

WC: Congratulations.

MC: Yeah, thanks.

WC: So spell out your week or your month—

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: —for me. I mean, so you're doing this and then how much are you on the road doing shows and then how often are you in your salon? Are you still taking clientele in the salon?

MC: I am. And I have a son, by the way, who will be 15 in September.

WC: Wow.

MC: So, yeah. And he lives with me. So I try to work in the salon Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. But between HSN, between Friends Are By Your Side and Keratin Complex, I fly twice a week, sometimes three times a week.

WC: Okay.

MC: Last Tuesday was my craziest day ever. I had to go out to San Francisco to do a distributor event, and then I had to be in Tennessee but there was no flights from San Francisco to Tennessee so I flew back to Philly to go to Tennessee just to film with a TV show on TBN with Michael English. I shared my adoption story and then flew back to Philly. So basically it was San Francisco, Tennessee, and Philly twice in one day.

WC: Oh.

MC: And my kid, he's like, "Dad, I just don't get it." I said, "Brigade, you will get it. When you want the things in life that you want, you know, when you want something as bad as you want to breathe, you know, that's when you go get it." You know, and, I work four jobs, you know? We grew up, we didn't have a lot growing up, you know? I was the kid that couldn't go on his senior trip 'cause my parents didn't have the money.

WC: Right.

MC: You know? And I didn't get to wear the clothes that the other kids wore. I was always made fun of. I was last. I was a nerd. You know, I got jumped in high school. That's this lump on my head, never went away, that's the scar. You know, and back then if you would have said to me, you know, "One day, you're not going to be last anymore. One day you're going to be first." I would never have believed you. And then, today you say you barely graduated high school. Me, too.

WC: Right. *[laughs]*

MC: I had Ds and Fs.

WC: Yeah.

MC: And my principal, when I graduated, gave me \$50 in a card. And I'll never forget it.

WC: Why?

MC: Kevin Clifton.

WC: Just ...?

MC: Just because he just, I guess—

WC: Saw something.

MC: —he saw something, you know? You know, so it just—I never dreamed that being a professional hairdresser would give me the life that I have today. You know, my first car was \$250 at a yard sale. It was rust and prime. And if you lifted up the mat, you could see the street through the holes, right?

WC: Right.

MC: Now I have a \$255,000 Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder.

WC: Really?

MC: And I never went to college.

WC: Wow.

MC: And I barely could read a book in high school 'cause of my ADD, you know?

WC: Right.

MC: It's just amazing. It's just so cool to see that this industry is more than I ever dreamed.

WC: Yeah.

MC: You know? It's just—I never realized it.

WC: You mentioned you're adopted and you have a wonderful story that I would like to have you share. And I just want to give our listeners a, kind of a, preview—we're going to go all over the place today. So, we're going to talk about this organization you called Friends Are By Your Side, or as you call it, the FABYS.

MC: FABYS, yeah.

WC: FABYS, which F-A-B-Y-S. Friends Are By Your Side. So, congratulations on that. We'll get into that. And then he also gave me, like, four topics or so.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: Who knows what we're going to call this issue: Don't Be a Pigeon, Be an Eagle; Don't Be Ordinary, Be EXTRAordinary; Use Your Setbacks to Be Your Driving Force. So there's lots of things that we're going to cover here today. So just everybody, buckle yourselves in and let's get going here.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: So, just—I saw the video on your adoption story, where you bring your—

MC: Yeah.

WC: —adopted mother and your birth mom.

MC: It's pretty cool, huh?

WC: Yeah.

MC: Yeah.

WC: So tell that story.

MC: So when I share this story at a show or when I shared it last year at the Experience, I always say that my motivation comes from a story of a little boy. And I don't tell them that it's me, you know? And it was a little boy who was given up for adoption. His mother was pregnant in Egypt and the family brought her

here to terminate the pregnancy. And she was too far so she was forced to keep the baby. And when she gave birth, the family took the baby from her, put him into foster care, into an orphanage, and they told the orphanage that they were taking the mother back to Egypt to marry the father. So when this little boy was now six months old, still in an orphanage, he was adopted by an Irish family. His name was Martin, they named him Martin. And clearly I don't look Irish.

WC: Right, no, no, no.

MC: So it was a little rough, you know? Anyway, my mother was amazing, that raised me. And when I was four, five years old, she explained to me that I was Egyptian and that I was special and that she got to pick me and she told me about Moses. And she said that my birth mother's name was Miriam, and Moses' sister's name was Miriam. So there was this common thread. And as a kid, you know, my brain was just trying to—*What am I Moses?*—you know? Like, it was just a little wild for me. But she said I was special and that all she knew was that my mother's name was Miriam and that she named me Baby Boy Ayad. And that's all we knew. And that she went back to Egypt. So, in 1986 I'm 11 years old and I didn't get along with my father growing up. He was very unhappy with his own life and he would try to be a dad and he would say things that were mean and nasty and then he would feel bad and try to be the good guy, you know? So he would go from bitter to better, from bitter to better, you know? But he would just say, you know, you know, "You're a—." It would be curses. But you know, he would just tell me, you know, all this stuff: "You stupid son of a duh-duh-duh-duh," you know. "You're never gonna amount to anything. You're so—." And here, I'm thinking, *I'm adopted. I was already given away, now I got this father who's like a tyrant.* I mean, I just hated my life. So 1986, my mom buys me this movie called *An American Tail*. She doesn't even know what it's about. She just knows it's a cartoon movie. And I'm watching it and it's about a little mouse named Fievel who loses his family, and James Ingram wrote a song called "Somewhere Out There."

WC: Right.

MC: You know? So I'm watching this movie as a little kid and I'm bawling my eyes out 'cause I'm like, *What if my mom's looking for me?* You know, here I am with this father and it was just awful. And my mom felt so bad and that was the first time in my life that I cried out to a God that I didn't know, didn't even know if he was real, I didn't know who he was. So I just cried out and I said, "Just help me find my 'somewhere out there.'" So I'm 11, 1986. I'm in school. I'm a nerd. I'm always made fun of, didn't fit in, lived a depressed life. Again, didn't think I was meant to be happy, you know? Then I get into high school and my guidance counselor really took a liking to me, and I would share with her about my father and my struggle with suicide thoughts and all these awful things. And she said, "When you turn 18, I'm going to help you find your birth family." So I turned 18 and I was a senior in high school, and the principal, who loved me too, even though I was

always in trouble, gave us an excused absence. And I was born in Jersey City. We knew that too, obviously. So we drove to Jersey City, me and my guidance counselor, and we drove—

WC: Did your adopted mom know this was going on?

MC: Yes.

WC: Oh, okay.

MC: Yes.

WC: Okay.

MC: She was very supportive.

WC: Got it.

MC: Yeah. My father, not so much, you know?

WC: Right.

MC: So we drive down JFK Boulevard in Jersey City to get to Journal Square, which was where the Vital Statistics Department was, okay? Drive down JFK Boulevard, we get there, my guidance counselor does all the talking and she says, "You know, he lost his birth certificate." She doesn't say I'm adopted. The guy goes in the back, gets out this old book, and he's fumbling through it, and he finds my, you know, birth certificate. And he's getting ready to make a copy for us, which we were hoping would have information, and as he's getting ready to do it he says, "Wait, a minute. You're adopted. These records are sealed. I can't give you this information." Well, that just put me in a depression like nothin' before. She felt horrible. I went home. I was so mad at the world, mad at everyone. And I took my mother's car—she had a little Jeep Tracker—and I took it in the woods. I put a hose in one end of the muffler, the other end in the window and just started the car. And I woke up in a hospital with my mother bawling her eyes because a park ranger found me. And if it wasn't for him, you know? So, I just hated my life and I just thought that was my destiny, you know? And then one day, Oprah Winfrey was coming to Walmart where I live in New Jersey and she was doing a book signing. So I waited eight hours. I thought, *You know what? Oprah can help me find my birth mother.* So I wait eight hours and I write on a little piece of paper, you know, "Please help me find my birth mother. I'm adopted from Egypt and I need your help." So I was four people away from her and I said, "Would you please pass this? Would you please pass this?" And she got the letter, put it in her pocket, and I never heard from Oprah. So now, I'm like, really, like, you know, this is just never gonna happen. So then June 5, 2005, that time in my life, I finally had let go. And I went to a public high school

and I remember one time going into my principal's office ranting and raving about a teacher that, I don't even remember what she did, but I know that he said to me that, "God will fight for you, you need only to be still." And me, with my crazy ADD and everything, I'm only still when I'm sleeping, you know?

WC: Right, right, right.

MC: So June 5, 2005, I have this dream that I'm in Egypt and I see this woman and I just know she's my mom. And I went up to her and I said, "Is your name Miriam?" And she said, "Who are you?" And I said, "Were you in America in 1975?" She said, "Who are you?" I said, "Baby Boy Ayad." And she cried. She said, "I named you Ayad 'cause it's my last name." And I woke up. I was sweating. I was crying. I knew it was real. I knew that it was real. So I went online and I started googling Miriam Ayad and I found out Ayad really is a last name. And all these years I couldn't figure that out. It just blew my mind. I knew it was an answer, you know? So, anyway, I had called the state of New Jersey a number of times and this time when I called—they would always tell me the records were sealed—I got this woman by the name of Delores Helb and she said, "Look, I'm gonna look in your folder. I can't promise you anything, but I'll see if there's any unidentifying information to these sealed records." That day she went in my file and she discovered a letter that my birth mother wrote in 1986, 21 years before the dream when I watched that movie and cried out.

WC: Wow.

MC: And that letter sat in the state, no one sent it to us. It just sat there. You know, bureaucracy at its worst. And I said to Delores, you know, when she called me, I'm shaking, like, "This letter's 21 years old? What does it say?" You know? And she's like, "You need to come down here with your ID." So long story short, I get down there—oh and I had to wait a whole weekend, 'cause it was a Friday when we called—and the letter said, "Dear My Son, I want you to know why I leave you with another family, because I have no choice. My family shamed me but I love you. I am your mom and I will never marry. I'll never have another kid and I will wait for you at 2554 JFK Boulevard, Jersey City, the rest of my life." With her phone number. So the same street my guidance counselor drove me down at 18, we passed her apartment building. My life was *An American Tale*. It was just like the movie. So, when that happened—yeah—when that happened it was game on. And I knew that there was—my life had value, promise, and potential. And she told me about my father. She said his name was Farouk. Imagine that? I'm a hairdresser and she said my dad's name's Farouk. *[laughs]*

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: I'm like, jackpot, you know?

WC: Right.

MC: Anyway, I went to Egypt, found my dad. I have two half brothers and that's when it became game on in my life.

WC: Wow.

MC: So that's my story. Crazy, isn't it?

WC: So you have both mothers in your life now?

MC: Yeah, they're amazing. My mom that day, when I got that letter, I went and picked up my mom that raised me, we went to Jersey City, an hour and a half away my whole life, you know? Knock on the door. It was like my dream and my birth mother said to my mom, "I was always afraid that you would reject me." And my mom said, "Because of you I have a son. We're sisters." It was the best thing that ever happened to me. It was the best thing 'cause I thought I was, like, somebody's trash my whole life, you know? So that's my story.

WC: I can't imagine what that reunion was like.

MC: It was just—it taught me so many things. It taught me that, like you said today, what you put out there—I mean, I put it out at age 11 but that letter was written when I put it out there. It took me 21 years to get it, but it couldn't happen by chance. There's no way in hell that that happened by chance.

WC: No.

MC: You know? So, it just made my faith even greater and it just made me realize that we all have a dream, and how bad do you want that dream? You know? And the setback of it was, you know, I always say to people, "Look, it's the drawback of the bow that drives your arrow." So what's your drawback in life that you can use that to propel you to just fight and never quit and be an eagle and never give up? You know?

WC: So, you were 32 then, right?

MC: Mm-hmm.

WC: I'm doing the math right?

MC: Yeah.

WC: And the belief that you had from high school and just feeling like an outsider and, as you said, trash.

MC: Trash, yeah.

WC: Was that still with you? Was that belief system still with you at the age of 32?

MC: It was. I mean, you know, I thought when I met my birth mother—if that day ever happened—that I would be complete. You know? I thought that. And then when it happened I didn't feel complete. When I felt complete—after that happened—was when I first stepped on stage with Freestyle Systems as a platform artist. I did it for him for a few months before I went to Keratin Complex. And when I shared my adoption story for the first time at a hair show and people started crying and people started coming up, telling me how it touched them and that they had a similar story or—that's when I felt complete. And I realize, wait a minute, the only way to make it in life is if you give back.

WC: Yeah.

MC: This is my pulpit, you know, for lack of a better word, being behind the chair. So, that's when I started Friends Are By Your Side, 'cause I realize it's my therapy. See, like you say it's a choice to be happy, and it is. So for me, when I'm helping a woman with a wig, when I'm granting a wish for a child, when I'm talking to a hairdresser saying, "You can be that amazing hairdresser behind the chair. You can build your book," that's my therapy. If I sit on the couch, again, like you said, and just watch some television show, that's when your demons and your mind start to attack you. The only way to fight them is to do good. Good fights evil, you know? So it's just amazing.

WC: One of my mentors, Marianne Williamson, used to say that every business is a front for a church. And she wasn't talking about a religion.

MC: Right.

WC: She was saying it doesn't matter what you do; what you do is just kind of the platform that you use to then go do what you're really supposed to do.

MC: Yes. Yeah, I agree.

WC: So whether you're an accountant or, you know, flinging pizzas or cutting hair in a salon, yeah that's—well, he looks like a hairdresser but that's not really what he's doing.

MC: Yeah.

WC: He's just cutting hair but it's a front for something bigger—

MC: Totally.

WC: —and something better.

MC: I get it. I agree.

WC: That's happiness in life, you know? When you realize, you know, your purpose is a lot more than what you thought it was supposed to be.

MC: I can't even believe it.

WC: So we just get to use hairdressing, we get to use what we do to then, you know, get into people's minds and people's hearts and then have a purpose.

MC: Yeah.

WC: Well then, let's talk about, then, Friends Are By Your Side. The FABYS.

MC: Yeah.

WC: So how did that come about? First of all, it's a legitimate—

MC: 501(c)3.

WC: —501(c) nonprofit organization.

MC: Yep. With no overhead.

WC: That you founded.

MC: When you said that today, I'm so connected to you today because it just, for lack of a better word, just twists my you-know-what when I hear about a charity that—'cause I love to give. I told you, it makes me feel good. We all love to give, you know? We just don't know where to give.

WC: Right.

MC: So that's why I give to St. Jude's because, you know, no child gets turned away.

WC: Right.

MC: You know? But anyway, when I was at Intercoiffure and I met John McCormack and I just fell in love with John and Johnny and Maryanne. And at the time, Maryanne was going through breast cancer.

WC: Right.

MC: So I had said to John and Johnny that I wanted to surprise her and I wanted to put together a foundation called Maryanne and Friends. I said, "Why not?" We have all these friends at Intercoiffure. I was in the Cutting Council. I said, "It's

brilliant.” We’re not giving back, let’s do it and watch how your salon grows. It’s like, you know, it’s a full-circle thing. You know, you give, it comes back. Press down, shake it together, run it over, you know? So Johnny and John were like, “Wow.” He’s like, “Yeah, that’s pretty cool. It’s going to be a lot of work though.” I go, “We can do it.” So I put together this website. I have a song written called ‘Maryanne and Friends,’ blah, blah, blah. And I launched it at Intercoiffure Etoile and everybody thought it was beautiful. We lit 600 candles, you know, to honor all the women in the world that were battling breast cancer. And we did this, it was gorgeous. Maryanne is a very private person and it started to grow really quick. So it was too much for Maryanne because she was still trying to heal, she was still being a wife and a mother. So I said, “You know what? You were the catalyst. You’re the reason I wanted to do it.” Because I love Maryanne and I wanted to honor her but I also didn’t want to create a burden for her. But it was okay, it all worked out, because that setback of me thinking, *Oh, I did this and now it’s causing her grief*, was the drawback that made it become Friends Are By Your Side.

WC: Right.

MC: ‘Cause when I did it for Maryanne, it was just for breast cancer.

WC: Right.

MC: But then, afterwards, women were calling about ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer. And I thought, *You can’t turn anybody away*.

WC: Uh-huh.

MC: So we changed it to Friends Are By Your Side, which just helped women and children fighting cancer. So it’s wigs for women and wishes for kids. And what sets us apart, I told you, we have no red tape. Our poster child, a little girl named Kiki, which when we talk about Kiki—you know she was turned down for a wig by another foundation and that’s how we met her. So we did the wig for her and I asked her, I said, “What do you really want?” ‘Cause I kind of felt like the mom wanted the wig; she was 11 and she said, “I want to meet Justin Bieber.”

WC: The little girl?

MC: The little girl.

WC: Or the mom? *[laughs]*

MC: *[laughs]* Maybe both. But the little girl wanted to meet Justin Bieber. And that’s like, back then, it was two years ago, was when he was really popular. It was almost impossible. I mean, another foundation that’s real big in granting wishes, there was a nine-year wait. Well, Kiki didn’t have nine years to wait.

WC: Right.

MC: So seven months we tried, through social media, making videos. And we wound up being able to buy meet-and-greet tickets from somebody online for \$5,500 and on November 4th, Kiki met Justin Bieber, sat front row on my shoulders—it's been my profile picture on Facebook since—and seven days later she passed away.

WC: Wow.

MC: So, again—I got goose bumps—you know, we're making a difference as hairdressers because it's all of us hairdressers together that repost, re-Twitter, you know, re-Instagram. You know, when I started Friends Are By Your Side we had like 12 salons and everyone said we couldn't do it. It would be too much work, "How are you going to run that?" All these questions. And I—they'll fall into place. Let's just do it. Right? You know? So now we have hundreds of salons. We're in eight countries. Australia just had a big expo at the Sydney hair show; big booth, they did it on their own. You know? And it's just—and we make it fun. When a woman comes in with kids and she's going to lose her hair, you know, she's crying, the kids are all sad. I'm like, "Yo, guys. We're gonna turn this frown around." And we crank up the music, we give the mom a Mohawk first. We give them colored hairspray to spray the Mohawk crazy colors. We let them shave the rest, wash her hair, get suds all over. And now those tears turn into laughter. And we video it, we post it online, and it inspires more salons to join and more women can know where to go. And by the way, last week, the American Cancer Society recognized us.

WC: Wow.

MC: And they put us on their website. It was like—

WC: That's huge.

MC: Yeah, it was amazing. And I don't think I told you this, either. When we first started, our very first Disney trip was sponsored by Paul Mitchell. First one, before any other manufacturer had recognized us.

WC: That's cool.

MC: Yep, they did. So.

WC: You know, it's not the first time that we hear that hairdressers are the ones who make things happen.

MC: They do.

WC: You know, if you want to—first of all, hairdressers know everybody. I mean, sitting—you're a very successful, well-known, respected hairdresser. Who sits in your chair? Probably the best lawyers, the best accountants—

MC: CEOs, yep.

WC: —the best politicians, the best—you know? So you're connected. You're connected to your community and you can easily get things done. So that's what they say: if you want to meet Justin Bieber call a hairdresser.

MC: It's true.

WC: Somehow hairdressers will make it happen.

MC: We had a little girl—I just posted her on Facebook—Emma. Last year we granted a wish: she wanted to meet a princess and she was at Children's Hospital, Birmingham, Alabama, too sick to go to Disney. So we couldn't get Disney to fly Cinderella in so we found this company in New York and we flew Cinderella, Jasmine, and Peter Pan to Children's Hospital. I flew down to meet Emma, and they sang and they danced and the news came and she felt like a little celebrity. Let's go a year later, I look on Facebook and I see Emma took a turn for the worse. And everybody is saying they're sorry to her mom, and I call her mom. I said, "Amy, what happened?" And she said, "Emma was sent home on hospice." Now, she's five, this little, beautiful girl. And I said, "Why?" And she said that her reoccurring brain tumor, there's only eight slots for this special chemo that could help her, not guaranteed, and those slots were full. So they sent her home on hospice. I said, "Wait a minute. You're telling me there could be hope for her but they sent her home on hospice?" She said, "Yeah." So I said, "Let me call you back." I called Mindy Grossman from HSN, who's friends with Marlo Thomas from St. Jude.

WC: Oh geez.

MC: She calls Marlo and within 36 hours, guess where Emma is? At St. Jude.

WC: Because of a hairdresser. You.

MC: Okay? So that's what I'm saying. It's like, it's just hairdressers have so much at their fingertips that all they have to do is believe that their life has value, promise, and potential. Because once you believe it, it's like you said, it's the law of attraction. You could be atheist, you could be agnostic, you could just be deaf. And if I take this glass in my hand and let go of it, it's gonna fall, whether I believe in gravity, whether I don't believe in it, right or wrong. So it's like, you just have—once you get it, I tell you. And you have to re-get it. Like, I get it. But today you made me get it even more, you know? So you have to constantly recharge yourself and just—I don't know, it's just spectacular.

WC: How do you recharge yourself? I mean, I tell people, you know, ADD was the best thing that ever happened—

MC: Me, too.

WC: —to me ‘cause it’s energy.

MC: Me too.

WC: To me, it’s energy.

MC: Yes.

WC: I—

MC: Me, too.

WC: —my whole life, “Winn, sit still.” I can’t sit still.

MC: My mother—

WC: How can you just sit there?

MC: My mother said, “The same mouth that got you in trouble as a kid has made you who you are today.” Right?

WC: *[laughs]* Right.

MC: *[laughs]* But I get recharged from people like you. You know, I get recharged from having a two-hour phone call with John McCormack. I get recharged from having an hour phone call with Mario Argenti, you know, or Mindy Grossman or her husband Neil. That’s how I get recharged. And then I get recharged by, you know, when you have ADD you come up with these crazy ideas. We did a Send Cancer to Hell video. I’ll send it to you.

WC: Send?

MC: Cancer to Hell.

WC: Okay.

MC: It’s ahh-mazing.

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: When I tell you. We had a 50-foot steel lift with CANCER in 27 foot of letters. It said CANCER with a 25-foot bonfire, right? And we did it to Katy Perry "War." We licensed the song, and we had 350 people that were affected by cancer, cheering. And when the chorus went, "I got the eye of the tiger," the CANCER fell down into the flames. It was so empowering for people, you know, that *hate* cancer. You know? So, you have to just be extraordinary and not ordinary. You know? And I tell hairdressers that all the time. You know, if you're having a pigeon moment in your salon and you're doing, like, a crappy blow dry in the back because you're like, "Ugh, I hate my life. The client's not going to see the back of her head." And you turn out an ordinary blow dry, no one's going to say to that client, "Wow, I love your hair." And the reason I want hairdressers to be extraordinary and not ordinary is that so people will know them that they don't know.

WC: Right.

MC: And I learned that because there is a president of Temple University and he had to write a speech for graduating, for pharmacy school. And he said, his story was, "I'm not good at writing speeches. So I thought, *Let me call someone who is really good*. So I called President Obama." And he said, "And President Obama didn't call me back! You know why? Because he doesn't know me. But I know him." And when I heard that, I went, "Wow." If every hairdresser did something extraordinary so when those clients leave that salon, those clients talk about that hairdresser, now there's going to be so many people that know that hairdresser that they don't know them. So when those clients, those people need a change, when they're sick of that pigeon hairdresser and they want to find an eagle, guess what? They're going to call you. It's not about what you know and who you know. It's about who knows *you*. I hate when you hear those stories, they say a leopard never changes its spots. Well, they're wrong. When a dog gets old, does it get gray hair? Sure. So does a leopard's spots.

WC: Yeah.

MC: You know, I hate when they make it so negative, like you can't change and you can't—you can change.

WC: That's the worst statement: people can't change.

MC: Ever.

WC: Well, then we should all just give up.

MC: Right.

WC: What's the point of this interview right now? *[laughs]*

MC: Yep, 100%. I just, I disagree with the world. I disagree with the “they say” and “they say.” You know, be different. Make a difference. And, you know, when you’re that person that says, “Oh, I wish they would do this or I wish they would do that.” Well, you be the person.

WC: Right.

MC: You know? There’s a song that said, you know, “I cried out to God and I was like ‘Why is this happening and why don’t you do something about this and why don’t you do something about that?’” And God said, “I did. I made you.”

WC: Yeah.

MC: Go do something about it.

WC: Do something. *[laughs]*

MC: You know? *[laughs]* Yeah, so it’s just great. It’s just great.

WC: I just love your whole message of doing extraordinary, you know? ‘Cause people play small. You know, “Ah, they don’t need me. I’m not going to volunteer. I’m not going to show up. I’m not gonna—”

MC: Imagine if everybody did that.

WC: It just serves no one. Oh my gosh.

MC: Yeah, yeah.

WC: Yeah. I remember we had Magic Johnson in as a speaker and somebody asked the question—because he has a huge staff of, who knows, he probably has four jobs or—

MC: Right.

WC: —400, who knows what. And his nonprofit and everything else and somebody asked the question, you know, “How do you motivate your people?” He’s like, “That’s not my job.”

MC: Really?

WC: Yeah. He said, “That’s not my job.” He’s like, “They’re supposed to come with that.” You know, he says, “My staff,” he’s like, “did I pay you on time? Is there air conditioning in the building? Am I abusing you?” You know, I mean—

MC: Wow.

WC: —meaning, that’s what I’m doing. You’re supposed to show up with the motivation. So not only, “I want a paycheck but I want you to motivate me, too.” Really? Really?

MC: *[laughs]* Wow.

WC: People need to start showing up.

MC: I agree.

WC: And what you’re saying right now, just be extraordinary.

MC: Have you seen the video about wanting it as bad as you want to breathe? Have you seen it?

WC: No.

MC: Short version is there was a kid who wanted to be successful and every time he turned around he hit another brick wall. So he was getting ready to give up and he saw this little flyer with the tabs you rip off and it said, “Life Coach” with a phone number. So he calls the life coach and the life coach says, “Meet me down at the shore, five o’clock in the morning.” So the guy wants to be an athlete so he thinks like, you know, he puts on his sweat pants, his hoodie, his sneakers, and he goes down to the shore and there’s nobody there. And it’s another brick wall. So he yells out, “Hello?” and he hears a voice out in the water and it’s a man. He says, “I’m here, come follow me.” So the kid looks at this old man, he thinks he’s crazy. It’s dark out, it’s cold, there’s sharks. Who knows, right? So he starts walking towards the man and the further this kid walks towards the life coach, the further back the coach goes. Before you know it, the water is at their chin. And the old man looks at the kid and he says, “I want you to close your eyes. Just listen to the sound of the waves. Listen to the seagulls. Just relax for a minute.” Reluctantly the kid does and when he does the man dunks him under water. And he’s holding him down and the kid is fighting to breathe, fighting to get up, fighting to—he wants to beat this man up. When the man finally lets him go, the kid’s freaking out and the old man looks at him and says, “When you want to be successful as bad as you want to breathe, that’s when you’ll be successful. This lesson is over.”

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: And that’s what I tell hairdressers. When you want to build your book as bad as you want to breathe, you’ll build your book. I hate when they call or they Facebook and say, “Martino, I’ve done everything and I can’t build my book.” And I say, “What’s everything?” “Well, I gave out some cards. I ...” You know, all this stuff, right? I say, “That’s not everything.” Everything is go to Barnes and Noble’s and put your card in every bestselling book. Because one of those women that

opens that book is going to say it's a sign. And she might send you ten people. Be extraordinary. Be creative. You know? And love what you do. Love it. Like you said, TGI Friday, that's a joke. It's all the stuff that they say, doesn't fit us.

WC: Yeah. We're very lucky in this industry.

MC: Oh, you're not kidding.

WC: Yeah.

MC: It's awesome.

WC: So, expand more on this "Don't be a pigeon, be an eagle." Tell us that 'cause that's great.

MC: So I feel like there's two types of hairdressers, and we kind of switched it to three. I say, you know you're a pigeon or you're an eagle. And sometimes the transition is peagle. You know, part pigeon, part eagle. It's the fence person, you know? So what's a pigeon? A pigeon is, you know, the receptionist that says, "ThankyouforcallingMartinoCartierSalonwouldyoumindholdingplease." And puts the phone down.

WC: Right.

MC: Doesn't wait for you to finish. You ever order pizza and get that, and it just sets you on fire, you know? Like, so what if you said, "Thank you for choosing Martino Cartier Salon. Would you mind if I placed you on hold or would you like a call back?" You know, we started doing that and it was a game changer because some people would say, "You know what? Could you just let them know I'm running a little late? I hit some traffic." They don't want to be on hold for 15 minutes listening to your, "Thank you for calling Martino Cartier Say-lon." You know, those recordings we have?

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: You know, so that's the one but the shampoo girl's my favorite. You know, the pigeon is the one scrubbing—I wish you could watch—scrubbing so hard you'll hear the bracelets going. Scrubbing so hard and you're talking to the girl next to you, going, "Do you believe that? He hasn't texted me back yet. Like, he knows I have cramps, like, I can't believe it. Da-da-da-da-da." And you're not even paying attention. You're just there and that woman in the chair is never going to go to you once you get your book.

WC: Yeah.

MC: But the eagle is the one that says, “How was your visit last time? How was your color? This is what I’m using on you today.” Maybe it sets up the sale for the hairdresser. It’s all those little things. The worst pigeon is the one that sits in the back room. You know, I always say pigeons have no purpose. So what do they do? You know, they peck, they poop, they make a mess. Well, when you sit in that back room, what are you doing? You’re ruining your career as a hairdresser. You can’t build your book. It’s like cancer in the salon. You sit back there and read *The Secret* or you read about Kim Kardashian’s rear end.

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: Right? That’s what they’re either reading.

WC: Right.

MC: I say, “Listen, you want the secret? Get up off your butt, get out there, and go build your book.” You’ll never build your book reading a book in the back room.

WC: Right.

MC: Right?

WC: Yeah.

MC: Read the book at home. So, you know, that’s the pigeon. And then the hairdresser pigeon is the one that, you know, “Oh, I’m booked for six weeks. No, I’m booked for six weeks. I’m booked. No, I can’t come in late.” I mean, “I can’t come in early. I can’t stay late. Da-da-da.” Go throw your scissors out, shred your license, you’re toxic to the industry, you know? The eagle is the one that comes in early, stays late, never says no, picks up the towel on the floor instead of stepping over it, you know? And it’s funny when we do these seminars of pigeons and eagles, I start out by saying, “Everybody go *brrrrrrrr*. You know? And they’re like, “What the hell?” You know? And I’m like, “Every time you do something that you think you’re being a pigeon, I want you to play that sound in your mind.” And guess what? It’s the worst sound you can make to someone that knows that illustration.

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: They get—they’d rather be called, like, you know, something worse than called a pigeon. But the eagle is the hairdresser that just wants to make a difference and wants to make you feel beautiful, not only above the scalp but below as well. You know? And they don’t use their ego or their attitude or the fact that they’re busy or the fact that they make a lot of money, you know? Maybe they’re humble. Maybe they’re happy. Maybe they want to make somebody else successful. That’s what makes you feel good, you know? Like, Robert’s a prime example,

obviously, you know, of an eagle. I mean, I see him stop and talk to, like, you know—he just, I don't know, he's great. He has great energy. And the peagle is funny. You know, I always tell people, like, "You know what? You're trying. You know, you're the fence person. You're the peagle: part pigeon, part eagle." You know? But the truth is, no one's really a pigeon because when they come to the shows, they want to learn and they're trying. You just have to get it. You have to lose all of you, you know? Lose all of you. And that's what I love about the culture and the brand. You always talk about a culture and a brand and Paul Mitchell's a culture. And I love when I hear that because, you know, being a hairdresser's a culture. It's a lifestyle. I used to tell people, "You know, if you want to lose weight, what do you have to do? Cut out carbs, no more frapamochachina, work out a little bit." And if you do that for a few months, you notice a difference, right?

WC: Mm-hmm.

MC: The minute you stop, the pounds start coming back on. Well, what about being a professional hairdresser? Stop going out of your house with your hair not done. Stop going out of the house without makeup on. Stop wearing dirty, stained Uggs and no one's going to stop you and say, "Wow, what do you do?" or, "I love your hair." "Oh, I'm a hairdresser." And then they ask you for a card, "Oh, you know what? I just gave my last one out." *Brrrrrrr*. Yeah, right!

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: You know? It's these things that—it's a lifestyle. To be a professional hairdresser is a lifestyle, and when you realize that, you will be so larger than life and you will be proud to be a hairdresser. Not when someone says, "What do you do?" "I'm just a hairdresser." Are you kidding? No way. You're a professional stylist. You're whatever you want to call yourself but you're professional and you're proud. You know? It's a shame, when you think of, like, "Beauty School Dropout—*[sings]* Beauty school dropout—you know? Back then, with the cigarettes hanging out of their mouth and blah, blah. They're the ones, that era, that kind of crippled the way people look at us. But it's different now. Hairdressers aren't looked like that—looked at that anymore, you know? And we're still raising the bar, you know? And all this stuff that you do at Paul Mitchell, all the fundraising, it's just more things that are raising the way the world looks at hairdressers, you know? Which is again why I love Friends Are By Your Side. You know? It's this game changer. It's the salons that are involved with Friends Are By Your Side—I told you, it's hundreds of them. Imagine you go into a salon. You see a woman come in. She doesn't even know the wigs are free because she's so emotional, she didn't even read that part on the website, you know? And you're sitting there and you watch this woman with her kids come in and you watch somebody shave her head and put the wig on and their motive is not to sell them the wig 'cause everything's free. And the woman finds out it's free and she's crying and hugging and happy. When that happens in your salon, you create an energy that you cannot replace. So now, when that woman leaves and goes to work and says,

“You’ll never believe what happened to me.” Now more people know you and you don’t know them and it all comes back together. You did good. You feel good. You do good. It’s just work hard, play hard, give hard.

WC: I think it’s important for salons and hairdressers and people in our industry to have those experiences on a daily basis.

MC: Sure, yeah, because you need to keep reminding yourself. Look, if hairdressers that came and saw you today, they left changed. But if they don’t keep, keep, keep, keep, keep it up, they’ll quickly forget.

WC: Mm-hmm..

MC: You know, it’s like sometimes it’s sad: hairdressers will be at a trade show and I’ll play a video of a little girl’s life that we changed or a little boy’s life and they’re emotionally touched for the moment. They will sign up for Friends Are By Your Side and quickly forget. And then when a woman goes on our website, “Find a salon near you” and they call that salon, the receptionist says, “What? What website did you find us on?”

WC: Oh my gosh.

MC: Imagine that.

WC: Heartbreaking.

MC: Yeah, it’s happened.

WC: Oh geez.

MC: It’s happened. A woman finds out she’d gonna lose her breast, she’s gonna lose her hair. She goes—the social workers at all the hospitals refer women to Friends Are By Your Side. And now that girl who was emotionally connected for a moment because she didn’t keep recharging herself—

WC: Wow. Heartbreaking.

MC: Yeah. We all have to recharge ourselves.

WC: See, people think that giving back is you attend a black tie fundraising cocktail party once a year—

MC: No way.

WC: —and, “I paid \$250 for this ticket and that’s a lot of money!” And, you know—

MC: They don't get it.

WC: —and they think that that's what they—you know, I mean, that experience that you just explained, that you just—

MC: Totally.

WC: —diagrammed so well of—so you have 10 clients in a day, if one of them was this VIP guest, one a day.

MC: Yeah. And it changes lives.

WC: Can you imagine the energy?

MC: Sure.

WC: In the salon.

MC: Yeah. And imagine if your clients know you're doing this. They're never going to say no to a dollar.

WC: Right.

MC: And we ask every single client that comes through our doors, every single one at both salons, "Would you like to donate a dollar or more to Friends Are By Your Side?"

WC: Really?

MC: "Helping us provide free wigs to women going through cancer." And they have to say the whole spiel. Because if it's a new client maybe they don't know what Friends Are By Your Side is.

WC: Right.

MC: That's how we provide these high-end wigs, these wishes that cost a fortune. Did you see the little girl whose father was dying of cancer in California? It was on CNN and she said, "My dad will never get to walk me down the aisle," So they put a fake wedding on for the 11-year-old girl. You have to google it. So it was amazing. The dad walked the girl down the aisle and the priest said, "I now pronounce you father and daughter." It was precious, right? So we stepped in and granted them a honeymoon at Disneyland 'cause they lived in California. You know? And it's like all these hairdressers helped make it happen, you know? We changed a life and in return, our lives are changed. It's like you said: Follow your dreams, the money will follow. Man, I can't testify to that more than anyone. Everything you said just—

WC: So how much of your energy and how much of your time is spent with Friends Are By Your Side?

MC: *[sighs]* I feel like I can't say all of it but even when I'm on HSN I talk about it. When I'm at Keratin I talk about it a lot. And I'll stop what I'm doing to do it. Like, and my clients have accepted that, you know? If a woman comes in and she's emotional and I've got two people waiting, they understand. Life's short, you know? Yes, your gray needs to be covered but this woman, this mom, is fighting for her life and I've made a vow to do this so if you want me to continue to be your stylist, you gotta work with me. And they love it. They get it. They get it. It's therapy for all of us.

WC: Talk to us about using your setbacks to be your driving force.

MC: So—

WC: You've shared a couple of your setbacks and what it's done for you now on how you live your life and—

MC: Yeah, I try to show hairdressers that instead of letting the setback be what drowns you, let it what feeds you life. You know, it's like the car when I was a kid that I would wind back and let go, it would go forward, right? Well, the car won't move unless you pull it back. So what is it in your life that you can use to make you a better person? You know, everybody has a story, no matter what. Maybe you're not adopted but even my son, you know. When my son was four years old, we were at a mall and he asked me for a quarter to throw into the fountain. So I give him the quarter, he holds it real tight. He grips it. He was almost like, vein popping out of his little neck, you know? He throws the quarter in the pond and I said to him, "Brigade, what did you wish?" He's like, "I can't tell you or it won't come true." Well, I pumped him. I said, "If you tell me and I wish the same wish, *[laughs]* two wishes are better than one." You know? And he says, "I wish that nothing would ever happen to my dad." Oh. I'm bawling in the mall. Like, a four-year-old thought that, you know? So the point of the story is that wasn't a setback but it's something in life that would now, as he's 15, if he gets a little attitude or maybe his grades aren't the best, you know, I remember that quarter.

WC: Huh.

MC: You know, when I need to have a little more patience with my son, I remember that quarter. I'll never forget that as long as I live. So what is it in your life that can make you a better person, which will make you a better hairdresser? It will make you a better employee, an employer, you know? It's—we all—that's the only way we learn. Man, how does a—even, God forbid, but think of a dog. You know, if a dog bites the furniture and you discipline it, what happens? It learns from that setback of being disciplined. It's something that simple you can relate it to. So I

just think that in life it's the ones that have setbacks, it's the ones that have trials, tribulations, challenges that make them better.

WC: If they'll use them for that.

MC: Yes, correct. Yeah. But if you don't, you drowned.

WC: Well, you were kind of sharing with us that your story of being adopted was your setback, that was your crutch, that was—

MC: Totally.

WC: —your baggage for many, many years.

MC: Twenty-some years I felt—

WC: Right.

MC: —like a loser. I had no confidence, which I still fight with and it's so funny 'cause Mary Rector did a cover with me and a couple other hairdressers for *Rising Stars* one time. And she said, "What is it that someone would never believe about you?" And I said that I was a nerd growing up and that I still lack confidence. You know, 'cause when you're on stage and you're rock starrin' it out, cutting the music, everyone thinks, "Wow. They just—." But inside, I still struggle with it.

WC: Yeah.

MC: And I'm glad I struggle with it because—

WC: That's the humility side of it.

MC: Yes. I want to be humble. I don't ever want to forget where I came from. I want to remember how hard it was growing up. I want to remember that, you know, I was always last picked on the dodge ball in gym, you know?

WC: Right, right, right.

MC: I was the one that, you know, didn't get to go to prom or—I want to remember that because now when I've got high school reunions coming up and I've got all these people going on Facebook, "Are you coming? Are you coming? Are you coming?" I'm thinking, *You didn't even want to look at me in high school.* [laughs]

WC: [laughs]

MC: And now, you know, and it just—it's cool, though. It's cool. It's—that reminds me of being better and not bitter, you know?

WC: Huh.

MC: It's like, you know, well guess what? That's okay. You're being nice to me now, so good. Thanks.

WC: So when I was 14 I was blinded in one eye.

MC: Really?

WC: And that was kind of like that crutch that held me back because my eye was weird, it looked weird, and now this is a prosthetic and it's—you know? And so it's—

MC: Really?

WC: Yeah, but it was just something that made me want to be behind the scenes and so people wouldn't—you know? 'Cause then it made me bad at sports, not that I was ever gonna be good at sports, but let's just say I was and I wasn't now.
[laughs]

MC: Oh wow.

WC: But it was because I have one eye. You can't—

MC: I would never—

WC: —can't see a ball coming at you with one eye—

MC: But you—

WC: —so, but I'd used that as my crutch for so long. Well now, because of that, my parents bought me a piano. I taught myself how to play the piano. Long story short, I then became a piano player for a couple of singers. One was this woman who then married Larry King, and Larry King wrote the foreword for my book.

MC: That's amazing.

WC: You know, so it's like, meaning I can connect the dots of how, you know, losing my eyesight got me to have Larry King write the foreword for my book. I can connect those dots because of that. And I just—

MC: Wow.

WC: Sometimes with people, you just wonder, how long you gonna hold onto this story? How long you gonna let this story that happened a year ago or 20 years ago, beat you up and be your crutch and be your baggage?

MC: So true.

WC: Sometimes the greatest wish is, gosh, I hope you get bored with this story.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: I hope you just get to the point where, like, “Oh, I don’t want to tell this story anymore. It’s just so old. It’s just—”

MC: Yeah.

WC: But then to tell the story for the right reason. Like, you tell your adoption story, it’s for the right reason. It’s to, “Wow, look at Martino. He turned out okay. He went through that. He was the nerd, he was, you know, beat up and he was”—

MC: And I wanted to end my life.

WC: “And he turned out okay.”

MC: I wanted to end my life.

WC: I know.

MC: Like, it wasn’t write a letter and get attention. You know, it was go hide in the woods. I didn’t want it.

WC: Right.

MC: And I just can’t believe, looking back, that I wanted to end a life that hadn’t even begun yet.

WC: Right.

MC: You know? And it truly is—I believe it’s an honor and a gift to have a setback in life.

WC: I agree.

MC: Because you can’t have that acceleration without it.

WC: No.

MC: And if you do, it’s very rare.

WC: Again, in spiritual terms they’ll say it’s something that brings you to your knees and—

MC: Yeah.

WC: —on your knees is when things happen. *[laughs]*

MC: Literally.

WC: Yeah, literally.

MC: Yeah, yeah.

WC: Like, this is when I need to, you know, ask and plead and change my life.

MC: I can't believe that. I would have never—I'm sitting here, you know, two feet away from you right now—

WC: I can take it out if you would like, to prove it to you, but.

MC: I believe you.

WC: Okay. Yeah, we don't need to take it out.

MC: I just—that's amazing.

WC: Yeah. Well, that's whenever I get photographed I have to be on this side. For some reason, if I stand on the other side, my eyes are all cross-eyed—

MC: Really?

WC: —in the picture. *[laughs]* So I'm always like—there's people like, "No, well my better side's over here, my hair's better on this side." I'm, "Yeah, but this is a fake eye, get over here."

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: *[laughs]* "You're gonna—my eye is more important than your hairdo right now."

MC: Oh my gosh.

WC: Anyway.

MC: Wow, amazing.

WC: But it's great when people take those setbacks, you know? Whether it's an addiction or it's something physical. You know, that's why I always, for some reason I'm drawn to people who have had to overcome something physically—what I would consider horrific.

MC: Sure.

WC: You know, we brought in this incredible—Taylor, he's a quadruple amputee, you know?

MC: Wow. Oh my gosh.

WC: And he's—

MC: What's his name?

WC: Taylor Morris. And he was blown up in Afghanistan, detonating a bomb, and quadruple amputee. And he and his girlfriend—his fiancée I guess—they're talking about how lucky they are. How lucky they are that it wasn't, you know, brain damage. It was just his four limbs and they're so lucky.

MC: Just, *just* his four limbs.

WC: Yeah, yeah.

MC: How does it work? Like, how does he—?

WC: He has three prosthetics and, you know, both legs and one arm and, you know, he's—

MC: He walks with them?

WC: Uh-huh. Yeah. That's really amazing.

MC: Wow.

WC: He must think I'm an idiot 'cause every time I'm around him, I just, like *[pretends to cry]*.

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: I can't even form a sentence.

MC: I guess not.

WC: You know, 'cause he inspires me so much. And everybody has those stories, you know? You know, people got to start using their stories.

MC: I agree.

WC: Who better to help an alcoholic than a recovering alcoholic?

MC: Yeah.

WC: So.

MC: Yeah.

WC: That's why it happened to you. Huh.

MC: Totally.

WC: Today is one of those days—sometimes I say I wish this were video. Today is the day I say I'm glad this isn't video—

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: Because I pulled off my glasses like 20 times to wipe my eyes. So.

MC: Ahh.

WC: You're amazing.

MC: So are you.

WC: So, talk about, like, loving your clients.

MC: You know, I think that we sometimes forget that even the clients that are a little bit annoying, maybe, or maybe they're a little crazy. You know, they bring in a picture of a redhead and they said, "This is what I want to be." And you tell them "It's going to be a huge shock, you're not going to like it." They say, "Yes, I will." You do it and then they freak out, you know?

WC: Right.

MC: We have those clients and sometimes we tend to, you know, not appreciate them to the point where you'll say, "You know what? I don't care if they leave." Think about that for a minute. So, you don't understand the value of a client because one client that gets their color done every six to eight weeks is worth how much a year, right? So, you lose one, you lose two, you lose three, think about the value of what you lost. So, you have to love them, I said, like a father, like I love my son, like my son loves me. It's unconditional love. So, you know, you take the good with the bad. My son doesn't do his homework. I get an email from the school. Do I still love him? Yes. Is he still my son? Yes. Well, guess what? Your client is still your client and your client is going to send you new clients. Your client is going to help you with your career. Your client's going to allow you to show off your work. You know, you have to love them. Don't be cheap. You know, hairdressers tend to be cheap. If you don't believe me, ask everybody for

\$3 to send flowers to someone who just had a baby. “I don’t have it today.” It happens in the salon, you know? And I think that, you know, you need to make your clients laugh. You need to make them feel good. And once in a while, you need to give them something, you know? And just don’t be cheap with them. Love them, you know? Don’t rip open the tip envelope before they walk out the door. You know, that kind of thing. You know, when you’re retail, when your can of Awapuhi hairspray is almost empty. Instead of shaking it and running it under hot water to get it to spray, if your client has never bought it before, say, “You know what? Why don’t you take this home and try it? And if you like it, next time you can buy a can.” Now, they know you love them. You’re not just trying to sell them. If everybody did that when their retail products were just a little bit left, think of how much retail they would sell.

WC: Huh.

MC: But instead, they beat the can, they run it under hot water, they shake it, you know? If you love them, they’ll love you back. You know?

WC: So how much do your staff get of you? I mean, when you’re all over the place. Isn’t that sometimes the challenge?

MC: It is. It is a challenge.

WC: You know, thousands of people are hearing your message and feeling your energy and—

MC: You know, it’s hard.

WC: —on stages and then you go home and your staff are like, “And who are you?”

MC: It’s tough. It’s tough. And I would say half of them get it, understand, follow on social media, repost. And the other half, I guess, maybe feel slighted or—probably that would be the word, you know? And I try to do stuff with them, fun stuff with them. And we have, like, a party at my house once a year where they can bring their kids and their spouses and every year it’s a theme. Last year it was an Arabian Nights theme. And I surprised them with a camel in my driveway.

WC: Oh my goodness.

MC: *[laughs]* You know, and they bring their kids and we’d have a photographer and—

WC: The city let you bring a camel?

MC: Believe it or not, yes.

WC: Did you have to get a permit? I'm just asking.

MC: No.

WC: You know, I have to tell you a funny story because my neighbor—she's passed away a couple years ago at 92 years old and she was one of my best friends—and she was a big fundraiser and connected to the Republican Party. And so she was telling me that, like, in the '50s—remember that movie *Around The World In 80 Days*? I think it was a Disney film.

MC: Okay.

WC: Well, there was an elephant in that film, right? Well, so she hires the elephant. She pays to have this elephant delivered to her front yard—

MC: Wow.

WC: —for this fundraiser for the Republican Party. And the police show up and say, "You can't have an elephant here." And she said, "Okay. Take him away."

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: That's awesome.

WC: I know. Anyway, that's my little side story.

MC: That's a good one.

WC: So I'm picturing this camel, like, "You can't have a camel." "Take it away!"

MC: That would have been good. I should have called you before that happened. But it was fun, you know? And then the Cake Boss, Buddy, does a cake for us, you know? And he's such a great guy. He sponsors our Friends Are By Your Side. And it's just fun. But—and we do the same thing for Christmas. But we—I feel like we need to do it a third time, you know? They need to be recharged more than twice a year, you know? So those are things that I need to work on. And a lot of what you said today, I think I'm going to have a meeting when I go back. After some of the stuff you said because it's true, like, you know, I'm out there in the field, every trade show that there is, plus VIP events for distributors and it's all about making hairdressers believe in themselves and empowering them. And my staff is like, "Where the hell are you here?" You know?

WC: Right.

MC: So, yeah. You're right. It's a balance. And then my son, too, you know? He's like, "Dad, when are you coming home?" And then I got my mother, "When am I getting my hair done by my son?" You know, it's like—but it's all good, though. It's good. This is what I wanted. I wanted this and it's here. So now I have a video that I play whenever our shows open up and it's part of *Spiderman*, you know? And he's walking out through the cemetery and he says, "With great power comes great responsibility. Who am I?" and then it fades to Visible Changes at Conference when I'm on stage going, "I'm a hairdresser!" And the team's going, "I'm a hairdresser!" "And I rock!" "And I rock!" They repeat, you know? And it's just great. I just love it so much.

WC: Huh.

MC: Really do.

WC: You know, I don't think there's anybody listening to this that doesn't have that same balance thing. Like, how do you balance it all? How do you have it all? And I'm like, "You don't."

MC: You don't, you're right.

WC: You don't!

MC: You don't.

WC: You swing the pendulum over here to family life and then you realize, "Oh, I've got to make some money," and you swing it over that way and then—

MC: *[laughs]* Yeah.

WC: —you realize you've got a pot belly so you swing it towards being at the gym all the time, and now your family's—

MC: It's true.

WC: —complaining 'cause you're never home, then you swing it back, and then you have volunteer work so you gotta go—

MC: Yeah.

WC: You know? So.

MC: Yeah, seriously. You don't plan it. It just—

WC: No.

MC: You just have—I think, like what you said today, you know, follow your dreams, the money will come. Well, if you try to plan it, it'll never happen anyway. You'll sit there trying with a pencil and paper and you'll be trying to figure out the right formula and it won't work. But if you just go and do it, it always works.

WC: That's what Kathy Buckley says. She says, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans."

MC: Yes.

WC: *[laughs]*

MC: Yeah. She's right.

WC: Yeah.

MC: She's right. She came to Wigs and Wishes last year.

WC: Love her.

MC: Yeah. She's a great woman.

WC: Yeah.

MC: Great woman.

WC: You know, it's—and we didn't really plan out this interview very much, did we?

MC: No, and look how great it's been.

WC: I know. Mr. ADD, here. I called you, like, three or four times and last time, "Hi, it's Winn." "Oh yeah! I got to send that to you."

MC: *[laughs]* It's the truth. Yeah.

WC: Didn't matter, you know?

MC: No.

WC: You and I both knew it would be like this.

MC: Yeah, totally.

WC: A couple of things. So how do people get involved with Friends—

MC: Friends Are By Your Side?

WC: —Are By Your Side?

MC: Because I have ADD, you can go to FABYS.com or friendsarebyyourside.com or friendsarebyyourside.org or FABYS.org and they all go to the same place, you know?

WC: Okay.

MC: And if you want to get involved as a hairdresser or salon owner you can just go to “pledge now” and you read what we expect of you. You know, it’s really making them feel like it’s your mom, it’s your sister, you know, it’s going that extra—

WC: Commit.

MC: Yeah, commit.

WC: You gotta—yeah, don’t get emotional and—

MC: Yeah.

WC: —half-commit and then, ‘cause—

MC: No, ‘cause that’s worse.

WC: —you shared how—

MC: Yeah, and it happens. You know?

WC: Yeah.

MC: We’re always taking salons down. But it’s fun. It’ll make you feel good. And the website on the home page, you’ll get to meet, like, see little kids that we’ve helped. You’ll see videos. You’ll meet Kiki. And if you do a wig for someone, you can go on the website and upload the picture and tell your story about your salon, you know? So it will give your salon exposure. And then October 5th this year is our gala for 2014, a Night of Wigs and Wishes. And it’s great.

WC: Cool.

MC: You’ll get to meet—

WC: Where do you have that?

MC: It’s in Berlin, New Jersey.

WC: Okay.

MC: It's a beautiful facility. Last year we had, like, 1,200 people. It was crazy when the doors opened. It was like Walmart on Black Friday, you know, people rushing in. And we had, you know—

WC: Walmart on Black Friday?

MC: *[laughs]*

WC: Where do you come up with these lines? You crack me up.

MC: I don't know. It's a Jersey thing.

WC: Walmart on Black Friday. Okay.

MC: But it was great. You know, like Tabatha came to show her support and Behind the Chair and *Modern* and *Launchpad*, which was great because, you know, three years ago I didn't even think we were going to get off the ground, you know?

WC: Right.

MC: And now we're getting big sponsors. We have Proctor & Gamble.

WC: That's great.

MC: And I told you Paul Mitchell sponsored our first Disney wish.

WC: That's great.

MC: DemandForce, we've got Hotheads, so many.

WC: So can somebody go on and, like, sponsor a wig?

MC: Yes.

WC: So they say a wig is going to cost this much money, if you pledge this much—is that how it works, or—?

MC: No, we don't—that's a great idea. That's a good idea. We have it where you can donate on the website. You can donate there, and there is our Wigs and Wishes—our program book for sponsoring. So if you're a manufacturer or if you want to just put an ad or a picture in honor of someone, whatever you want to do. We have stuff from \$25 all the way to \$25,000.

WC: Got it.

MC: Now, we also have swag bags. You know, that we always collect stuff throughout the year, so if there's, like, you know, if you wanted to put an Awapuhi shot in every bag, we would, you know—whatever. So that's how we do it, you know?

WC: Good for you.

MC: Yeah. I wish you could come this year, October 5th. I'd love for you to come.

WC: You know, I will look at my calendar.

MC: That would be unbelievable.

WC: Do you have a final message? Can you believe it's already been over an hour?

MC: No, it's been great, though. I just think that—well, first of all, I'm so honored to be sitting here with you. I know I've said it a hundred times but it really is—it means the world to me. And I just, you know, being a Future Professional and the fact that you're getting this MASTERS series to listen to, it means that you have dedication and that, you know, your future's already set for you. So just never give up. Always believe in yourself and know that every day, your life has a value, promise, and potential. And the minute you feel like giving up, just say that. Say, "I was born with purpose. My life has value. It has promise and it has potential." And that's all you need.

WC: What's your message to that salon owner who's been doing this for a long time and they're, like, waiting for the lease to run out to throw the keys at the landlord. What's your message?

MC: That if you would go back mentally and remember when you wanted that floor and you picked out that tile and you picked out that paint and you picked out this and you picked out that and you were so proud. Mentally take yourself back there. Take yourself back to when you bought your first really good pair of scissors. Before you would wipe the hair off after every haircut, put a drop of oil on the screw, put it back in the case. It was like manna from heaven every time you touched it. And six months later, you started chucking them across your station.

WC: Right.

MC: Take yourself mentally back to your first love, your first love. It'll come right back.

WC: Yeah.

MC: Totally.

WC: Yeah. It was joy that made you sign that lease.

MC: Yes.

WC: You know, there's joy or pain. It was joy. Go back to the joy.

MC: Yeah, it was joy and it was your heart's desire.

WC: Yeah.

MC: It's what you wanted, you know? And you can get it back. Listen, we all—as much as I love to motivate—we all—I get set back myself. Some days I leave that salon and I'm like, "Why am I doing this? I'm working hard, you know, as a platform artist and I'm making great money at HSN. I don't need this." But I do need it 'cause it's my passion, it's my joy. But sometimes we all can be a little pigeon-like. And we have to snap ourself out of it, you know? No one's exempt to the rule, you know? So.

WC: Beautiful.

MC: Yeah.

WC: This was great.

MC: Thank you so much. It meant a lot.

WC: Thanks, Martino.