

HAIRBIZ

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CREATE YOUR WAY.™

7 Lesson from **Bruce Lee** that made me a **Better Hairstylist**. By Anthony Presotto



The name Bruce Lee is almost synonymous with martial arts cinema, modern popular media, and pop culture in the 20th century. The best-known martial artist of all time for sparking interest in Chinese martial arts in the West during the 1970s, he is considered one of the most influential martial artists of all time. In American films, he changed the way Asians were portrayed.

When Bruce met Hollywood hairstylist Jay Sebring (the inspiration for Warren Beatty's character in the 1975 film Shampoo) at a tournament in Long Beach, he was introduced to television producer William Dozier, who was interested in bringing the Green Hornet to the big screen.

Anyone can achieve the same heights of their chosen profession with the same dedication, determination, and willpower that Bruce Lee had. The goal of my career is to become an influential and inspirational figure in this industry.

Along this journey of life, 40 years of which have been spent in this wonderful industry, I have gained wisdom and insights that apply not only to our business lives but go deeper and affect our personal life as well. I want to share with you just some of those insights, with the hope that you might find they apply to your life and your journey towards abundance and happiness.

1 LIFE PURPOSE

"The key to immortality is first living a life worth remembering." - Bruce Lee

You only live this life once; well, you only die once but you live every day. So, make sure you make the most of it by creating something that adds value to the people and community around you.

"The meaning of life is that it is to be lived, and it is not to be traded and conceptualised and squeezed into a pattern of systems." -Bruce Lee

Our world has become full of distractions - television, movies, social media, podcasts. Add to that our work lives and family commitments we have become a society that is always busy. In Fact, being busy did become the new status symbol. Covid-19 did teach us to slow down, but on a daily basis working with salons I unfortunately see us returning to a "busy" normality. I don't feel this is as positive as we think it should be.

But as salon professionals there are few things as crucial to us as creating. Sure, running the business is always a concern, but our main focus is to express ourselves creatively and follow our innate need to create.

For us, the amazing by-product of our art is that we can bring happiness to people. We have the ability to change people physically, and psychologically. It is our ability to create and improve the lives of others that helps give us a satisfying purpose and meaning to our lives.

I have spent the latter half of my career working with environmental projects, HairAid, WasteFree Systems, Supporting domestic violence victims and aid for the homeless on the streets of Brisbane. As hairdressers we have the opportunity to touch so many people in such a positive way, more than any other profession I believe.

2 HAPPINESS

"Be happy, but never satisfied." -Bruce Lee

We often hear people say they will be happy when.... Things will get better when.... We are in the habit of delaying our happiness until we reach some arbitrary goal. It is vitally important to find happiness in everything we do. Life is a cycle of growing or dying, it is up to you to choose which you would prefer your life to be.

We can become so discontent in our lives, constantly pursuing more. More stuff, more things to replace what we have given up to our busy work lives. Yet the easiest way to find contentment is in gratitude. If we only realised how much we already have. Being grateful for the simple pleasures, our loved ones, our health, the amazing gifts we've been given, of nature and beauty and the ability to create and everything in between. Gratefulness leads to happiness.

3 LEARNING

"Use only that which works and take it from any place you can find it." -Bruce Lee

Our profession is one of constant learning. We should try to learn everything we can, it makes us better hairdressers. But always be open to the lessons around you no matter where they come from. We easily fall into a style or school. But just as Bruce Lee found when creating Jeet Kune Do, all systems and styles have holes and flaws.

"Adapt what is useful, reject what is useless, and add what is specifically your own." -Bruce Lee

In my role as an educator, this is a message I try to convey to participants as early as possible; take what you know and put it aside, take in what I present, and then incorporate what works into what you already know and do.

Every system and school of hairdressing has valid points and flaws. My personal system is to have no system. Rather, I have an eclectic and hybrid philosophy, taking what works for me from the many and varied systems that I have studied over many years.

Rigid forms can become polarising, creating an 'us and them' elitism. I hope no one in one of the workshops I facilitate feels judged, I try my hardest to make them a judgement free experience. I sincerely believe that we really are all in this together - expressing our art as individual creations for the one person in our chair at that time.

4 TIME

"If you love life, don't waste time, for time is what life is made up of." -Bruce Lee

We all start each day with 24 hours in the bank; the difference is what we do with it. Our business is selling our time. Make sure you are compensated justly for the time you are not spending with family, friends and loved ones. You can always make more money but time, once it's gone you don't get it back.

If your family asks for your attention, try to always give it freely. Give your family your full attention, and don't become annoyed that they are interrupting what you are doing - instead be grateful for the reminder to spend time with someone you love.

Earlier in my career I did whatever it took to get ahead, retain every client, I remember working until midnight in the dead of winter, going home so exhausted and ill that I wondered if tonight was the night I might die in my sleep. It still took another 15 years for me to realise nobody comes to the end

of their life wishing they had spent more time working.

Also, rest is more important than you think. The past couple of years have definitely proved that. As a society we just try to do too much and often forget to rest adequately. We fill our lives with checklists rather than bucket lists. If you let them, clients will demand more and more of your time. We then try to crank out our work like machines and risk becoming burnt out. As a result, our creativity suffers, and we often begin to hate our jobs because we haven't struck that work/rest/play balance. Stop trying to be a machine, focus on what you love and do it lovingly.

5 PERSEVERANCE

"Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one." -Bruce Lee

No matter what your social or financial position in life is, you are always going to face problems and challenges. For me, the secret to success in any area of life is learning to overcome those challenges. As we do, they can often lead to bigger and bigger challenges.

Doubts and fears about your ability will creep in and try to hinder you. You may turn away from doing great things or embarking on new adventures. You may not want to share the awesome work you are creating and put it out there for the world to see because of self-doubt or fear.

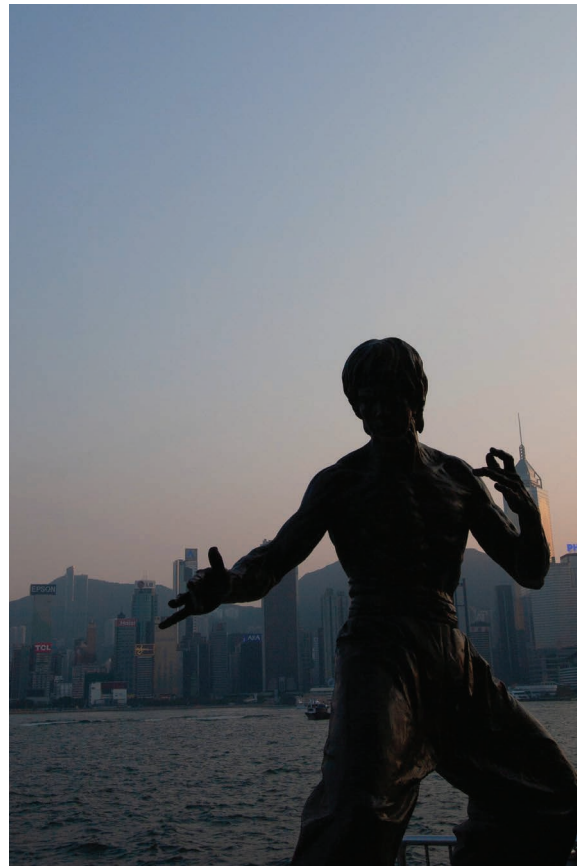
This doesn't even have to be a conscious decision; it can be something playing out in the recesses of your mind. The solution is to become aware of these doubts and fears and do it anyway.

6 FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

"Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow, or it can crash. Be water, my friend." -Bruce Lee

Perhaps my most favourite quote from Bruce Lee. Learning to become flexible and adaptable when it comes to your work, your approach with clients, and life in general, and problems will begin to roll off your shoulders. I don't mean you should compromise your values and beliefs but understand there will be grey areas around them. We create excessive tension in our lives when we become rigid and regimented and then society, family and clients don't meet our expectations and perceptions on how things should be.

For me this is and always will be the greatest lesson I have learned from Bruce Lee, along with the 4 agreements by Miguel Ruiz, which



if you haven't read, I suggest you do, are the foundational philosophy of my life now.

7 LIVE IN THE MOMENT

"Take things as they are. Punch when you have to punch. Kick when you have to kick." -Bruce Lee

Make sure you remain focused and attentive in the present moment. Rather than allowing the past to dictate your future, let what you do now determine what happens next.

As stylists, we need to remain focused in the present, as we never really know what is going to be walking through our door today. Even your most staid, dependable client might throw you a "let's go blonde today!" curveball!

No matter how out-of-control your day is, no matter how stressful your job or life becomes, being present can create a feeling of peace. This will change your life, and it's incredibly simple, though not always easy.

So, in conclusion what have I learnt from Bruce Lee? That I have a lot to learn still, and life has many lessons left to teach me. And for that I am grateful, I believe learning in all forms is what maintains our youthful enthusiasm for life.

As I pass through this current phase of my life, remembering the good times, trying to forget the bad, and thinking about my future, I am reminded that life is fleeting and while there is still so much time ahead of me it will pass much faster than I think. What hair I have left is turning grey and I've only just started to get my bearings on life. But one thing is for sure I am going to appreciate every damn minute of it, and when it comes time to draw my last breath, I want to be able to sum my life up in one word, "SPECTACULAR"!