



## How to Talk to Your Hair Stylist

### Communication tips to help you get your best cut.

By Constance Dunn

Until quite recently, I walked around with raggedy split ends while waiting, no, *counting* the days until I could see my favorite hair stylist. During this time I also realized the saying about good and bad hair days is not so off base.

We can feel the difference on days we look our best, and vice versa. Looking good makes us *feel* good, and feeling good makes us *do* better. Because performance is linked to our presentation, it's always in our best interest to look as good as we can.

The state of our hair has a lot to do with looking good. But for many of us, a visit to the salon is a dip in uncertain waters. We are unsure of what we want, what will look good on us and what is possible with our hair. That said, a smooth stylist-to-client relationship is key to a successful salon visit.

Those reading this who have found the One--the stylist who consistently gives you the cut, color or style of your dreams--know the power of this relationship, and that when it comes to your hair, no one else will do. (Somehow I never view giving a 50-percent tip to this person as an extravagance.)

For those who have yet to find the One, hair-wise, know you can enhance your salon experience by improving the way you communicate with your stylist.

**It's OK not to know.** Uncertainty over what you want is not uncommon. Tell your stylist that you're unsure and let him or her take the lead. Remember, you're not the hair professional, *they* are. Take advantage of your stylist's expertise and listen to his or her take on what will look good based on variables such as your face shape, skin tone or the natural texture of your hair.

**Be clear about what you want.** If you already know what you want, before entering the salon take some time to think about how to parlay the image in your head to a descriptive phrase or two. Collect your thoughts and try not to contradict yourself or give confusing instructions such as: "I want you to cut off my hair but I don't want any of the length to change."

**Be specific.** Think about the details of your desired cut, color or style. Do you want a natural look or a more dramatic one? What shade of red, exactly, do you desire? Be as specific as possible when describing their vision. You can

bring pictures or use gestures, such as indicating with your hands where you would like the length to fall on your body.

**Be open.** Realize that you're not the first guy or gal to sit in that salon chair. Have some faith in your stylist's ability to competently work with your hair. Though your confidence and ease will grow with each visit, try not to initially approach a stylist with your guard up.

Remember that hair care practitioners typically choose their profession because they love working with hair and making people look good. Be receptive and give yourself over to them. After all, you share a common goal: For you to have fantastic hair!

