

Prepare to Educate

SCISSORS EDUCATORS DO NOT TEACH HAIR CUTTING



The purpose is to coach the hair cutter when it is necessary to emphasize proper handling, routine care of scissors, the understanding of the features and benefits, as this only enhances the precise nature of the tool. These recommendations are what the manufacturer specifically had in mind during the engineering process to enable the scissors to function perfectly. Scissors that are precise will easily produce a more perfect haircut and all stylist will accept this as most important. A practical awareness of a scissors mechanics helps every stylist enjoy all aspects of their scissors.

Scissors can be used with any hair cutting technique that is desired. However, the scissor is a static, mechanical tool and requires the correct tension setting, the proper edge, and a relaxed hand in order to function at its manufactured performance level. All these fundamentals are the responsibility of the hair cutter because they are the skilled, technical, creative and sole facilitator for using the scissors.

The enlightened development of the Scissors Educators role in selling scissors to stylists and barbers was initially originated to overcome customers objections pertaining to unexplainable malfunctions, and an unwillingness to have any personal responsibility for the function of their tools. The success of this method evolved from the inevitable failures and resolutions in defining a delicate balance of assessing overcompensations used by the hair cutter, then attempting to realign any existing negative habits without bruising their creative ego. This method or technique only addresses issues observed with scissor maintenance or handling that causes a malfunction. It has nothing to do with teaching how to cut hair and everything to do with how scissors function mechanically.

Positioning yourself as a Scissors Educator has many long-term advantages to achieving a strong business model and becoming a contributing adviser to your customers. Making changes to your presentation is the natural progression to being successful and when you get objections it is important to remember these are mere requests to justify your statements. Do not underestimate your background, experience and knowledge of a scissors physical function because it far exceeds that of most any hair cutter.

Falling victim along with other associates or predecessors that have had a couple of objections and given in to remiss and the uninformed allowing them to set the standards is unacceptable. Here is the good news! I am sharing these guidelines that have been used by me thousands of times and for decades because they work. I mean *“they really work*, and it was a tremendous advantage for my business model over that of my competitors that considered being a Scissors Educator to be outside of their boundaries.

Here is a quote from a sharpener that is in my opinion way too common within the scissors industry that epitomizes and makes my point of the tail wagging the dog.

*“I’ve heard of sharpeners in my area telling stylists who complained about their sharpening that the stylist is the problem and just don’t know how to properly hold their shears. The stylists rejected that information and felt it was an excuse. I have always tried to make a shear work in the way the stylist expects it to work **even if that use is improper for the shear.**”* Author Anonymous

As a Scissors Educator I would determine this customer has not heard a compelling explanation that would justify why they should embrace scissor servicing standards and apply Basic Career Disciplines for handling them.

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Let's discuss the importance of Basic Career Disciplines, as these traits can easily be observed in a matter of seconds:

Is the scissor adjusted correctly, does it have a proper edge, and is it handled appropriately?

Stylists exhibiting these qualities generally have fewer issues with their scissors and can evaluate them efficiently. Under these circumstances you only need to confirm each other's mutual knowledge and understanding of the scissors, in this instance you have observed excellent discipline and their commitment to self-mastery.



Being a Scissors Educator is a winning strategy for the salesperson as well as the hair cutter. It will confirm or deny an equal understanding of how a scissors mechanics are affected by daily maintenance and how the manufacturer intended their product to be used. Undeniably there is an industry-wide misinterpretation of tension settings, thumb pressure, and proper upper hand control. This is a major point of frustration at every level of the scissor industry and until now these topics were predetermined to be untouchable because of the fear of offending the creative and technical skills of the hair cutter. It would be fatalistic not to acknowledge that today's educational energized salon/barber industry expects and demands a more professional and forth coming support program from every conceivable vendor in their supply chain.

When the salesperson or sharpener has the willingness to address these topics as an authority and is considered qualified to "Set the Standards", your overall perceived position will be elevated to that of a preferred vendor and a Scissors Educator. Stylists accept this as being most important as these disciplines are taught as entry level hair cutting techniques, it is conceivable that any credible creative technique will not cause the scissors to malfunction. So, when these disciplines are obviously being adhered to it is much easier to diagnose any problems with the scissor and then perform the appropriate service. However, individuals that have damaged their scissors as a result of ignoring Basic Career Disciplines will require coaching as a preemptive measure to avoid a recurrence. A sharpening service will not rectify a malfunctioning scissor when the hair cutter is uninformed and uses force to manipulate them.

When disciplines are being ignored, basic standards clearly have no significance to that hair cutter, thus making it difficult to diagnose and resolve their needs or for them to be able to fairly evaluate a scissors performance. A conversation mutually recognizing appropriate or deficient disciplines would include praise as well as soft coaching. It is a priority to guide your presentation to any topic that would enhance a scissors performance that eventually leads to a more satisfying experience for everyone. Coaching can be completed in ten minutes or be an ongoing process over multiple meetings.

When your customer accepts you as an authority you can easily defend your knowledge of how the scissor functions and the hair cutter will inevitably agree with your diagnosis. Succumbing to misinformation, fallacies, and statements like "this is how I have always done it" or "I am not interested in making any adjustments," will diminish your position and you will lose the customer if this teachable moment is not utilized effectively.

Being the responsible authority in the room delegates you as the one that "Sets the Standards" on how scissors are to be maintained and handled. Customers that decline to accept the standards set by scissors manufacturers only need to be informed of their responsibilities, whether they would choose to follow them is a personal decision.

Creativity, technique, and physics need to be aligned to achieve a great haircut.

Discovering a strength or a weakness in this sequence will project tremendous credibility during your scissor's presentation.

As a Scissors Educator it is important to use the “Set of Standards” for using scissors that are recognized universally, as these were determined by the manufacturer that engineered them. Scissors are extremely accurate and require the user to follow predetermined disciplines in order to maximize its capabilities. Here are a few successful examples to facilitate a soft discussion about any aspect of Basic Career Disciplines.

- It is important to emphasize that explaining what the manufacturer would recommend for proper use of a scissor *is not a challenge* to the hair cutters creativity or technical skills.
- Let’s make sure that we are talking about the same issue and what will successfully resolve it.
- Can we discuss what the manufacturer would recommend as a proper tension setting on this scissor?
- Loosening the tension setting causes the scissors to have more wobble/flexibility when closing and the user innocently overcompensates with excessive thumb pressure.
- Checking and adjusting your scissors daily will resolve many irritating issues such as bending, pushing, pulling, and pinching of hair while cutting.
- The use of thumb pressure is an unconscious response forcing scissors to cut when they are malfunctioning. Once the scissors are adjusted or repaired, they will now cut efficiently, to continue using thumb pressure will recreate the malfunction and it can again damage or cause premature dulling of the blade.
- Would you find it interesting to know what cause this issue/damage to your scissors?
- Every scissor has a specific uniqueness, what equalizes all scissors ability to function is the correct tension setting, proper maintenance, and a relaxed hand while cutting.
- When discussing standard disciplines, it is a systematic means to backtrack the process to diagnose what caused a scissor to malfunction. It is like making sure everyone is understanding the same definition for the words being used.

The underlying goal of a Scissors Educator is to exemplify the individual qualities necessary for precise scissors to deliver the perfect hair cut that is expected. The most consequential influencer to a scissor’s performance lies with the hair cutter.

- Manufacturers warranties uphold how a scissor is made.
- Salespeople assist with placing product for the right purpose.
- Service maintains functionality.
- **The hair cutter is the sole facilitator for using the scissors.**

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