

The first day I walked into the cosmetology school in my town, I was a sophomore in high school who absolutely resented school and everything about it. I was amazed. It looked like a huge hair salon. It was in the same building as a construction class, plumbing class, computer science class, and an automotive class. Everything was so new and cool, but overwhelming at the same time. I decided I wanted to go there for my junior and senior years, in a program where I could spend half the day at my regular school and the other half in cosmetology school. To be completely honest, I was really sold by the fact that I could leave Pearl River High School half way through the day and go learn about hair and makeup. Throughout my two years there I would learn that good things take time and if you really want it and work for it, it will happen.

I was really interested in the beauty industry. I always loved doing hair and makeup on myself and others. I remember putting on lipgloss and straightening my hair since I was a little child. So, I worked really hard to get into this program, and it paid off. I went into it with very little confidence, just hoping I could get by doing what I have known my whole life. A week or two in when I had to demonstrate a full roller set and comb out, reality set in that this might actually be harder than actual school. Looking at the \$500 kit of tools I just purchased and the bag I was holding full of mannequin heads, I thought to myself, "How am I gonna do this?"

Looking at everything going on in my life, I decided I needed to make some changes. At the time, I was doing varsity cross country and track and field. Practice was twice a day and I had races basically every weekend. It was very demanding and I was not as interested in being forced to run seven miles through trails as I used to be. I had to make the decision to quit and although it was difficult because I did love the team, I definitely felt that I needed more time to focus on school (as college was coming up) and I wanted to be able to give time to working on cosmetology when possible. I was met with a lot of opposition to my decisions but I just felt like

it was the right thing to do. The next morning, as I am sitting in class overthinking everything, my cosmetology teacher asks, “Do any of you want a job in a salon?” I was interested, wondering if I should get a job now that I did not have practice constantly. I gave it a shot and raised my hand. It ended up being a position at a salon I knew since I was young. I got the job, literally the same day, and it felt like my life was falling into place. This series of events convinced me that the cliché of “everything happens for a reason” is really true.

The work in school got tougher and tougher. However, I began to learn how to manage it and began to quickly fall back in love with doing hair. Nothing could compare to the feeling of finally sitting down with the girls in my class (who became some of my best friends) at the end of the day on a Friday after working so hard all week. I continued to learn so much and it was turning into a huge part of my life. I had to work extremely hard to balance my new job with both of my schools’ work, but doing cosmetology honestly made my life so much better. I was learning something very interesting and that I could easily put to use in real life, unlike most of my high school classes which felt pointless and draining.

Once I got used to the workload and the new environment, I loved cosmetology school so much. Being challenged to become better at something I love was really enjoyable for me. Of course, I did not love having to redo a foil of highlights over and over until I got it perfect in the moment, but looking back it made me much more persevering. Two years, a combined of over a thousand hours later, a long process of testing, all to finally get my cosmetology license. It was so worth it and I would not trade the experiences and lessons for anything. So make that leap. Do whatever it is you have been debating for awhile. If you really want something, go for it, and it will all work out how it is supposed to in the end.