

# Women of Style: Deborah Gavin

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Co-owner, Fresh Hair Studio, Southhampton, PA

Goldwell Educator/Artist

**Licensed:** Wilfred Academy in Pennsylvania, 1985

First job: Shampoo assistant

**Clients per week:** 40—depending on my travel schedule.

**Price point:** \$63 for cut; \$75 background color

[freshhairstudiopa.com](http://freshhairstudiopa.com), [deborahgavin.com](http://deborahgavin.com)



Why did you choose beauty? I loved the salon environment and thought the hairdressers were so cool. I grew up drawing and was creative, yet I never felt inspired until I started working on the canvas of hair.

**Milestones:** Working for Goldwell; opening our studio; being nominated for NAHA

**Big break:** Partnering with Goldwell has given me many opportunities to have my work showcased and my knowledge of hair color has grown leaps and bounds. I was a part of Goldwell's Color Zoom in 2006, an international achievement resulting in magazine covers, articles and being part of a few ad campaigns.

**Career advice you've received:** Someone told me early in my career that you will go through times where you just feel like you don't know what you're doing. Those moments are followed by growth and clarity. I think because change is uncomfortable when I have "a moment" like that it really is because something inside is shifting.

**Career advice you've given:** I believe there is room for everyone to be successful. I never think of another salon, colorist or stylist as competition. I always encourage stylists to figure out what it is about them that makes them unique. Concentrate on that, learn to find and build your strengths. Create your signature.

**Who are your mentors?** I have been to many academies and seen many great artists whom I find really inspirational. When I think of a mentor though, I think of a person who I have learned a lot from and that learning goes beyond inspiring. It drives deeper and changes the way I see things. I'd have to say Bruce Klein was that person for me. He was also an amazing leader who helped you grow by creating a safe environment.

Of course, my mom is a life mentor. She has taught me to be strong and charitable. Because of what she instills in me, our belief at Fresh is to give a portion of sales to charities near and dear to our clients and team. It comes from the entire staff. Last year we donated \$10,000.

**Who do you mentor?** Anyone who asks.

**Are there benefits to being a woman in beauty?** A huge benefit to being a woman comes from how unique this industry is. Of course it is a "business," however, as artists we can be very emotional, too. It's because we allow ourselves to be so vulnerable. There needs to be a balance when you lead people in appreciating both sides, and I think women are very good at this.

**Are there challenges for women in beauty industry?** I wish I could say no. This is a hard question because I try not focus on this. It seems that women need to work a little harder to earn respect, from other women and men. Even in this day and age, there is still a huge boys club. The phrase "don't mistake my kindness for weakness," is something I live by.

**Risk and lesson:** Opening Fresh was a necessary risk. Our idea was to open a salon where our team felt safe and respected at every level. If you make decisions based on integrity, it does not mean they will always be the right ones, but you will always be able to live with them.

**What does "work/life" balance mean to you?** I used to think balance was multi-tasking. My thoughts have changed. Like many of us, I have many roles: mother, wife, salon owner, educator, mentor and so on. The key for my balance is to live in those roles 100 percent when there. Guilt does no good, because I cannot be all things at all times. Living in the moment and enjoying it, and the person I am when I am there, that's my balance.

**To follow in your footsteps, a woman would have to:** Not wait for opportunity, but create it. Figure out where she fits by trying different types of salons and career opportunities. I can't imagine my life if I'd followed my initial thoughts and was not lucky enough to keep searching.

**Famous woman you would like to style:** Pink

**Next change to personal style:** Depends on my mood.

**What are you reading?** The *E-Myth Revisited* and I just finished *One Day*. I usually have a non-fiction and fiction book that I am reading on my Kindle.

**Tell us about a client (or client experience) that made an important impact on your business, and why.** I always think I do not need to relearn this lesson, because I get it, yet it just happened to me again. I had a really nasty client who was being unkind to my team. "That's it," I thought. This was the day I was going to ask her not to return. When we finally talked (after she got off her cell phone—and missed her appointment time—she told me a story of something terrible that was happening in her life.) Now I do not think there is ever a reason to act badly, but I was reminded once again that you never know what is going on in someone's life.

**Every day, just for you:** Lift weights or mixed martial arts

**Working on:** More photo work. Evolving myself and the programs I teach. Getting more involved in the business of marketing myself.