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ANATOMETAL
THE FIRST NAME IN BODY JEWELRY

IMPLANT GRADE TITANIUM - IMPLANT GRADE STAINLESS STEEL
SOLID 18K GOLD - NIOBium
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This issue of The Point is primarily focused on extended learning opportunities. Unfortunately, since I spend very little of my life in the piercing room these days, most of my learning opportunities now present themselves in the form of a computer screen and software tutorials; databases, spreadsheets, mail merges, and the like. Oh, how my career direction has shifted in the last few years!

That being said, I had the amazing opportunity this year to attend Camp APP. Since its inception, I've been eager to attend, but the circumstances never quite worked out. This year, it finally happened, and as I expected, it was a revitalizing and perspective-shifting experience. Read on to find out more about my time spent in the Georgia woods.

Over the past several months, our international colleagues have also celebrated extended learning with many other seminars, including annual conferences for the UKAPP, LBP, and the 1st annual GEP Brazil. If cross-country or overseas travel is outside your current budget and schedule, don't fear; there are still plenty of other learning opportunities, which we talk about later in this issue.

Keep in mind that even within your own studio, surrounded by your regular clients, there are a plethora of opportunities to expand your knowledge. Our industry is ever-evolving and everyone's individual experience and perspective play an integral role in their understanding. Don't forget to keep your mind opened and be introspective. Some of the most groundbreaking epiphanies come from within.

“Let the improvement of yourself keep you so busy that you have no time to criticize others.” —Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart

Many piercers will tell you that once you are an apprentice you are always an apprentice; that there is always something to be learned or improved upon. Yet our career choice has an odd dichotomy that sees many of us not only as the student, but as the teacher as well, sometimes in the same day.

From our earliest school days, most of us can recall specific teachers or mentors that had a profound effect on not only our learning, but on what is the core of who we are and what we believe. Some people were simply meant to teach others, to give the knowledge that they have to the masses. The need to share what they know is in the core of who they are and how they go about their day to day business. It is their archetype.

The psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung, used the concept of archetype in his theory of the human psyche. He believed that universal, mythic characters—archetypes—are contained within the collective unconscious. Jung defined twelve primary types that symbolize basic human motivations. Each type has its own set of values, meanings, and personality traits. The ones I am most interested in currently are those that further our learning: The Mentor, The Teacher,
and The Student. What I hope is that I can get each of you reading this to find the parts of yourself that identify with each of those three archetypes; embrace them. If you identify the most with the mentor, nurture that – use those traits to enhance your life and career and those around you. If you identify as the student, open your mind to all that is around you and think outside of the box to become the best that you can be.

**The Mentor**

The mentor archetype not only invests in the student learning certain material, but takes interest in the route the student goes with the knowledge. By definition, the mentor imparts advice.

The mentor is the person you go to for help in making a decision. An empowered mentor artfully guides the student to an authentic resolution without getting in the way. The student not only attains their answer, but understands how to get there on their own the next time.

Intimately tied with wisdom, the mentor archetype uses their experience as a teacher, showing rather than telling. They consistently encourage their mentees to try things for themselves. The enlightened mentor is able to stand aside and watch mistakes happen, because they know that their role is not to control every move made by their student. A mentor feels that their job is to help the mentee learn how to think for themselves.

The relationship between mentor and student is one-on-one. The mentor dedicates a great amount of time to taking one student under their wing, accepting responsibility for them. Thus fostering that student through the entire process of learning a craft or skill. The goal is to see students fully fledged in the world, a master in their own right and no longer in need of advice.

**The Teacher**

On the other hand, the teacher archetype has to do with a classroom full of students. Thus, the teaching style is more generalized than customized. This is a common point of struggle for the teacher – wanting to reach every student, but not being able to given the constraints of working with so many personalities at once.

Teachers commonly take students through a specific phase of a learning process (such as a school year), unlike the mentor who covers the beginning, middle, and end of a topic. With the teacher archetype, the focus is shifted from mastery of a subject to measurable progress in ability. Like the mentor, the teacher also prefers to teach through experience, but understands that no two students learn alike. Some students need hands on activities, others need time to read information, and others still need to talk through things.

However it is very important to remember that the teacher is a constant student in their own way. They are always learning how to read their students needs and how to better meet them. For example: learning how to manage the classroom and teach life skills alongside algebra. The balanced teacher understands that lessons of conscience are as important as grammar lectures.

**The Student**

The student archetype is primarily interested in learning, period. Sure, if someone wants to hear what has been learned, they will be glad to share, but they often lack the patience needed to wait for someone else to get it. The student relishes acquiring new knowledge.

For the student, good grades and being the top of the class can be everything, leaning towards being a perfectionist. The enlightened student accepts oneself as a work in progress and knows when they have enough knowledge to stand on their own two feet. A true student sees everyone as an equal regardless of who may know more or less than them. It is important for the student to understand that there are many kinds of intelligence - including emotional intelligence, common sense, and intuition - and to be open to learning on all levels. The student must walk in the world with equal doses of confidence and humility, understanding the difference between knowledge and knowing; the difference between wisdom and information.

So whether you identify more with the student, teacher, or mentor, we are positive that this issue will hold something to grab your attention and make you want to learn something new.
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JEF SAUNDERS
APP President

“The Association of Professional Piercers (APP) is an international health and safety organization. It is a nonprofit voluntary alliance dedicated to the dissemination of information about body piercing. Governed by a voluntary elected Board of Directors, the APP is a united group of piercing professionals that freely shares information to help fellow members, piercers, health care professionals, legislators, health inspectors, and the general public get the best and most up-to-date information about body piercing.”

You’ve probably seen the preceding text so many times that you may already know it verbatim. As a piercer interested or involved with the APP, you aren’t surprised by what our mission statement is. But have you really considered the importance of that mission?

I can tell you, as a Board member, that the Mission Statement is a compass that always points to the kinds of decisions we should be making. The Association of Professional Piercers is a health and safety education organization. Our job is to openly share with anyone who might care to learn. This is a powerful mission, and one that touches me deeply.

Fakir Musafar speaks about body art, and body piercing specifically, in a way that few others do. To him, modification of the body isn’t just a fun thing we get to do to ourselves, it is an innate human right. That is something far deeper and far more important that can get lost in the day to day routine of a piercing shop. But I like to think about this art of ours the way Fakir taught me to think of it: a human right.

That puts our mission as an educational organization in a very unique light to me. By providing education in so many forms, we are trying to assist the entire planet to safely express themselves. What a responsibility! Yet, so many from our community rise to the occasion again and again. Some of us provide education at the Association’s annual conference, of course, but there is so much out there for piercers and the public alike. From sister organizations, to independent schools, and even online forums; our community has embraced the mission of the APP and run with it.

Imagine where we might be if the earliest members of the piercing community had attempted to keep their techniques entirely secret? If they had refrained from writing magazines, publishing books, producing tutorial videos, and making piercing schools? The piercing community wouldn’t be anything like what it is today.

In this issue of The Point you will read about body piercing education not only through the APP Conference, but outside of our organization as well. To those who have given so much of their hard work to help improve the art of body piercing, we say thank you.

Post Script: I am writing this just a few days after the passing of a career-long educator, Rick Frueh. Rick was an APP Board Member, an instructor for our conference, an instructor for Health Educators, Inc., an enormous part of the 2013 APP Procedure Manual, creator of the Body Modification Learning Forum, and a friend. He’s left a legacy of body piercing education that we have all benefited from in one way or another. He will be missed.
It is with a heavy heart we acknowledge the passing of Rick Frueh. Our organization and industry have lost a long-term and dedicated volunteer and safe piercing advocate.

In his time with the organization Rick taught dozens of classes over numerous conferences. He was part of the Curriculum Subcommittee. As part of the Procedure Manual Update Committee/2013 (completed work) he saw the organization’s Procedure Manual get a much-needed update. His work with the Bloodborne Pathogens Committee helped to create the current online courses many of us have taken. Rick also served on the Board of Directors from 2011–2014 as the Medical Liaison. His hard work and dedication will be missed and our condolences go out to all of those who grieve his passing.

—by Gene Gowen

Like so many others, my family and I were grief stricken when we heard about the passing of Rick Frueh. For Cameron and me, the loss was more personal than professional. Though we both worked with Rick extensively, it was our friendship with Rick that brought Cameron and I together. So in no small way, Cameron and I credit Rick so much, with the beautiful family that we share today.

When I received the call that Rick had passed away, my heart sank. I felt what I can only describe as shame. Shame that I had taken time for granted. That I allowed myself to believe that everything would be ok until the Christmas holiday, when Cameron and I could visit with him. Shame that I didn’t take advantage of the little time that I had with my friend. Shame that I didn’t get a chance to tell him how much I appreciated his friendship and how grateful I was to count him as a friend.

There are definitely people who knew Rick longer than I. There are certainly people who can list Rick’s professional piercing achievements better than I ever could. What I can tell you is that Rick Frueh truly did embody the principle of Forever Learning. Though I worked with Rick every time I did a guest spot at 23rd Street Body Piercing, it was my time living with Rick during those trips, that I learned from him the most. Most nights after work or even on days off, I would return to the apartment to find him on the couch reading Mill Certs, pouring through MSDS manuals, or studying metallurgical reports. Always in the context of trying to learn as much as he could about what mattered most to him.

Laments for Rick Frueh
The days following Rick’s death, I thought about nothing other than what I could do to honor my friend and all that I learned from him. It took me days to get myself together enough to ask if I could contribute something to The Point, in his memory. I spent days crying over blank pages and blank screens, unable to get passed my own personal grief long enough to write anything down. The best I can do to honor Rick’s memory is to share what I learned from him, in the hopes that it helps the next person, as it did me.

First, that it’s fine if you’re a stubborn student, as long as you can always remain a student. This is probably where Rick and I shared the most in common, though we might’ve both been too stubborn to admit it.

Second, if you’re lucky enough you may make actual friends in this industry. If you do, and you have the chance to, stand tall for your friends. Rick stood tall for me personally and professionally more than a few times. In this industry or in life, that can be a rare thing to come across, even rarer to count on. I could always count on Rick.

Third, it is easy to doubt yourself. Especially when so many make themselves feel bigger these days by causing doubt in others. But when faced with the trust of peers, coworkers, and clients, trust yourself. Trust your instincts. Trust your dedication. For so long I didn’t know how to do this and it kept me from ever being able to breath as a piercer. Then one day at 23rd Street, as I was running from piercing to piercing, Rick grabbed me and simply said “I trust you, we trust you. We wouldn’t have asked you here if we didn’t. Trust yourself and you’ll be fine.”

These lessons have stayed with me. I hear them and see them everywhere I go. My life has forever been changed for the better because of Rick. Not because he taught me about piercing, but because he taught me how to be a piercer. Not simply because of his friendship, but because he showed me how I could be a better friend. Rick could see and believed in a version of me that I didn’t know I was capable of. If you’re reading this, I hope you have someone in your life who does the same for you. If not, I hope you have the chance to be that for someone else.
It’s hard to write about someone’s passing when you’re having a hard time believing it’s real. Rick was a friend, a really good one. He had a big personality and wasn’t afraid to express his opinion, but he was soft spoken too. He loved feet, the color orange, and cats A LOT. What a weirdo; I loved him so much! All my thoughts about him go back to the personal stuff. The text or phone call I could 100% count on when things were rough. I’m not sure I ever fully understood him, but I really respected him.

People loved to hate Rick for being a dick online, but he was a realist. He wasn’t afraid to put it out there and be unpopular. I often watched that with a combination of admiration and envy. Despite what the critics had to say, he did a ton for the industry. He continually sought to further his education for the benefit of body piercing. He founded the most active social media group for us and that brought the use of good jewelry and the drive to become an APP Member forward light years.

I know I’m doing this no justice, but it can’t wait for me to get my head around it enough to be articulate. I’m wrecked over this loss. So wrecked that I’m trying to pretend it’s not real for just a bit longer. Maybe it will be real at that next Banquet dinner where I think about how he would say, “It’s a formal dinner, not a costume party. I’m wearing a suit.”

— Bethrah Szumski

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Tea and the art of decompression—taking a moment to relax amid the stresses of modern life.
On a warm week in October, in the woods of Georgia, piercers collected. It started as a slow trickle, with the camp organizers and early arrivals. I puttered around Camp Daniel Morgan, getting familiar with my surroundings, claiming my bunk, and waiting for the others to arrive. To kill time, Shorty, John Robberson, and I took the boat out for its maiden voyage; we explored the shallows and coastlines of Lake Rutledge, making plans for fishing and island exploration. We had expectations that the boat would be mostly abandoned as it has been in past years, but to our surprise, this year it quickly became a favorite for many campers including the Boat Boys.

**Quote from Olivia Theriault:**

“Camp was actually eye opening for me. Not in the same way as usual, with knowledge and action like Vegas. Although I learned more at Camp than I ever could in Vegas, I also connected to our industry in a deeper way than I knew possible. I found my spirit. I found a way to connect to altering bodies in a way deeper way than aesthetics. And I’m so ecstatic.”
Brian Skellie explains the dos and don’ts of Statim maintenance.
That evening, campers arrived and we all sat together for our first communal dinner and an orientation meeting. The first class, *Tinkering with Statims and Anodizing*, took place after dark in the screen porch style classroom. In the days to follow, the classroom would morph into a hammock city, allowing campers a comfortable space to kick back during class. On this particular night, folks were tired from travel, but still remained attentive as Brian Skellie went over the dos and don’ts of Statim maintenance.

The next morning, we all awoke for breakfast followed by personal introductions. This is where we started really getting to know one another and reconnecting with our cross-country colleagues. More classes followed; our first day was themed around the topic of jewelry, with classes ranging from *The Extra Terrestrial Origins of Body Jewelry* and *The Rise of Artisan Jewelry to New Materials for Initial Piercing*. After dinner, we were joined by the Atlanta Astronomy Club. They shared their knowledge and telescope collection, allowing us to take a closer look at the rings of Saturn and craters of the Moon.

Our second full day of Camp started with breakfast and an introduction to genital beading by Ryan Ouellette. Below the belt talk and coffee; a great way to start the day. This was immediately followed by a class about estate planning presented by a local Attorney at Law, explaining the importance of making thorough arrangements. After lunch, the Atlanta Audubon Association led a workshop about *Cultivating Outside Interests* with a focus on birdwatching. The afternoon was filled with a *Studio DIY* class from Randy Smyre and roundtable discussions about industry terminology and involvement. I took some time to myself throughout the afternoon, reading in my hammock by the shore; it was blissful. The night culminated in a large and colorful bonfire courtesy of the fire team, with stories from around the circle. There were, of course, movies and games available in the common buildings as well.

The final full day of classes began with First Aid Narcan Training directed by Atlanta Harm Reduction - with Members coming from all over the country, for many the opioid crisis is hitting particularly
close to home. Lightening the mood, we all gathered after class for the group photo and swimming. Afternoon workshops started with *Piercing Techniques*, where we split up into small groups to discuss needle crushing, paired piercing placement, and genital piercings. The final Camp class was *The Art of Decompression* with Paul King and a traditional tea ceremony lead by John Johnson; what a perfect way to end classes and reflect on the Camp experience. After another delicious dinner from the kitchen team, we joined together in the main hall for raffle prizes provided by campers. Then we laid in a huge circle in the cool grass under the stars, sharing our closing thoughts, laughter, and tears; many of us have experienced a lot this year, and being together in the wilderness was a much needed retreat.

Our farewell breakfast had an almost somber tone, as folks prepared their belongings, getting ready to travel home and return to daily life. The bus departed for Atlanta and a small group stayed behind for final clean up. One final small group goodbye, and I was back in the car. I had a short drive to Atlanta with Brian Skellie, talking about industry history and our personal journeys. After dropping him off, I had several hours of alone time in the car, thinking back on the week of learning, networking, and nature. Feeling suddenly lonely and nostalgic, I listened to a few piercing podcasts and eagerly thought about the next time I’ll be able to spend quality time with piercing family.
Elayne Angel makes a point on piercing technique.
Camp APP, 2017 —over but not forgotten

Clockwise from the top left, attendees discovering life outside the piercing studio; the kitchen crew hard at work; Paul and Elayne share a relaxing moment; Shorty bemused; the group soaks up the sun riverside.
In this issue of The Point, the Editorial Staff has chosen to highlight educational resources available throughout our industry. It should not be surprising that many other options outside of the conference setting exist to take classes and seminars to extend one’s learning. It should also come as no surprise that several people deeply involved in the APP would offer just such courses privately and for-profit. We have made the editorial decision to equally highlight all seminars that were submitted to our staff and felt that prohibiting APP Board Members would be counterproductive to the spirit of this article and issue. Therefore we have chosen to run the following list of available seminars, because we believe in piercing education.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of any agency of the Association of Professional Piercers. We do not endorse or recommend any particular seminars or classes, but are simply providing the information on some available seminars as submitted.
Progressive Mentorship — Ryan Ouellette

While Jesse Villemaire and Efix Roy focus primarily on health and safety courses (in both English and French) in Canada, my primary focus is on techniques and their application. I offer shadowing sessions for professional piercers in my New Hampshire studio, Precision Body Arts. Shadowing allows a piercer to witness techniques and client interactions first hand to help expand their knowledge base. I offer short seminars annually at the Boston Tattoo Convention, but I hope to expand my USA seminar offerings to full day classes at my studio and at host studios in the USA in 2018. I also volunteer teaching time at several conferences worldwide including APP, UKAPP, BMXnet, LBP, and GEP in Brazil. I look forward to continuing volunteer instruction to bring safe practices to as many piercers as possible. I can be contacted through my website www.precisionbodyarts.com/ as well as www.progressivementorship.com.

Above: Jef Saunders and Luis Garcia teaching a Navel Fundamentals course at APP Conference 2017. Photo by Autumn Swisher
Private Classes — Jef Saunders

I provide a variety of different educational experiences. In addition to teaching for the Fakir Intensives and the Association of Professional Piercers, I have been an instructor in Mexico at LBP, in Brazil at GEP, and in Great Britain at UKAPP. I provide my own line of classes, called the Advanced Fundamentals series, and have provided these classes at several shops all over North America. Topics discussed include disposable piercing studios as well as techniques classes on specific piercings like the nostril, nipple, navel, daith, tragus, and rook. I also provide in-shop consultations. You can book me for an Advanced Fundamentals class catered to your needs or a shop consultation by contacting me at Jef@JefSaunders.com.

Private Classes — Aiden Johnson

I teach classes about the various metals used for body jewellery, their pros and cons, their history and source, how they are created, and their uses within piercing. I have taught at UKAPP (2015, 2017), APP (2017), and BMXnet (2017). My life before piercing was as a Mechanical Engineer for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) where I specialised in materials testing and quality control. Now I’m a professional guest artist and jewellery manufacturer. I have also taught private seminars based around increasing sales and efficiency within a studio, and I am planning a new sales seminar for UKAPP next year. I’m based in the UK, but travel for work, so the best way to contact me is through Instagram (@aidenmustdie) or Facebook (Aiden Johnson).

In-Person BBP classes (California Industry Specific) — Lee A. Ballesteros

This class is geared to anyone who is associated with the body art industry in California. The Safe Body Art Act in CA requires that all persons who are at risk of exposure to BBP undergo yearly industry specific training. This course has been crafted to expressly address all aspects of body piercing and tattoo studio regulations and precautions that will be necessary to conform to these needs. Covered topics are fully inclusive of the BBP Standard, best practices within our industry, and what the Safe Body Art Act means to us. I have built my course to seamlessly transition between the BBP Standard, which is Federal Law, and the CA Safe Body Art Act, which is for us in California studios. I cover the common sense stuff, the hard stuff, and then delve deeper to help you discover what can be done to protect yourself and
your clients. Knowledge is power and you must be familiar with all the ins and outs of the law to wield this power. If you have chosen to be in this profession, you must also make the conscious choice to be a professional about it. No other course will do this for you, and no other instructor is as committed to the personal experience as I am. Although we all have our regular BBP certification that is usually completed online, nothing can replace an in-person course with respects to understanding just how much we need to do to keep ourselves and our customers safe. Questions and discussion are immediately available. Since we do this all day, every day, we tend to become lax after a time. How much attention is paid when you do the online course? Do you find yourself tuning out? Make it a more engaging event; one that can save your life.

Lee A. Ballesteros has been a body piercer and studio owner for 25 years, and has taught her own industry specific BBP course, B.A.P., since 2011. Courses offered in the past through County Environmental Health Departments include Sacramento County & San Joaquin County. The B.A.P. course is a recognized and approved BBP course in most California counties. This course is offered in a group setting either at your studio or through the local Health Departments.

If you would like to organize a group or host me in your studio please contact me at contactleeb@gmail.com. If you would like to ask your Health Department to offer an in person course, you can have them contact me also. Cost is $25.00 per person and includes a course booklet and certificate, good for one year. Travel time is included within an hour and a half radius, while further distances are charged by the mile - so the more attendees, the less expensive it can be! The course takes approximately two and a half to three hours.

**Private Educational Body Piercing Seminars—Luis Garcia**

I started teaching my own educational seminars in 2014. I have enjoyed teaching for the APP and other organizations, but wanted to try a different format, more like a workshop, but with live piercing demos (which we cannot offer at APP and many other conferences). I wanted to concentrate on technique theory and technique application, which I feel can be more difficult to process in a conference environment. These ideas led to me teaching my first seminar at The Crypt in Arlington, Texas, a two-day ear project and surface piercing seminar. The reception for the seminar was way better than I had hoped, but I knew I wanted to adjust the way I did things. I reworked a few things, and relaunched my seminars in 2016.

I prefer to concentrate on technique theory and technique application. I can do a set topic or two, as I have done for most of my seminars. With enough notice from a host shop, we can get the word out to your clients and book appointments for the piercing models. Many times, the students want to volunteer to be piercing models as well. The first half of the day is theory and lecture, then after lunch we cover the technique application and live piercing.

I can also offer a more “freeform” approach, as I did for a seminar at Amory Body Arts in Santa Cruz, CA. They were concerned that the main topic I was teaching at the time (genital piercing) wouldn’t garner interest from potential client/piercing models, so I built a class around what piercings clients were willing to let me perform in front of my students (ironically half of the appointments were for genital piercings). The client would come in for the appointment, do their paperwork and select jewelry, then while the Statim sterilized, the client could sit in with the students on the theory presentation for the piercing they were about to get. This went well on several levels, breaking up the day a little more, and the clients absolutely loved learning about the piercing they were getting.

If anyone is interested in being a host shop for my seminars, please feel free to contact me at bodmodkub@gmail.com, or via Facebook message.
Most of us have spent the greater portion of our life up to this point on the planet learning. It may have been in the structured classroom setting of a university, or it may have been the wide open fields that come with being home schooled. No matter how we have come to where we are in our life, all of our previous experiences have been learning experiences. Learning is the process which combines action and reflection. There are many things that we can do in order to make ourselves better learners. The first thing to do is to have a good understanding of how you learn so that you can maximize your strengths, adapt existing strategies, and develop new techniques for yourself. One of the best ways to maximize this learning is by becoming aware of your learning style(s). Some individuals will have one dominant learning style, whereas others will have more than one area of strength. You may also find that you utilize one learning style in a particular setting while using a different one under other circumstances.

Becoming a piercer may not have the same types of learning curves that other careers have, however it is still learning-centric and most piercers take the full responsibility of learning their craft and trade on themselves. In this article we are going to discuss one classification of learning styles, the VARK, that focuses on four specific styles in which students take in information; visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. Some students are visual learners, while others are auditory or kinesthetic learners. While students use all of their senses to take in information, they seem to have preferences in how they learn best. (Gilakjani, 2012) There are a great many resources available to read, videos to watch, podcasts to listen to, or even other piercers to shadow and learn hands-on from. Many of us will often gravitate to one of these learning styles over another, finding that it works better for us.

The following test will help you to determine what type of learner you are. Once you know this, you will be able to ensure that you learn to the best of your abilities. This is one of many different categorizations of learning styles and by no means should be taken as a scientific analysis of your complete learning style.


The acronym VARK stands for Visual, Aural, Read/write, and Kinesthetic sensory modalities that are used for learning information. Fleming and Mills (1992) suggested four modalities that seemed to reflect the experiences of the students and teachers.

The VARK questionnaire, as a learning preference assessment tool, consists of 16 multiple choice questions, each having four choices. All choices correspond to the four sensory modalities which are measured by VARK (Peyman, Hadi et al., 2017).

I encourage you to click the link above and complete the test choosing the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it. Please circle more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.
The VARK Questionnaire Scoring Chart

Use the following scoring chart to find the VARK category that each of your answers corresponds to. Circle the letters that correspond to your answers.

e.g. If you answered b and c for question 3, circle V and R in the question 3 row.

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Calculating your scores

Count the number of each of the VARK letters you have circled to get your score for each VARK category.

Total number of V's circled =
Total number of A's circled =
Total number of R's circled =
Total number of K's circled =

The VARK Questionnaire Scoring Chart

Use the following scoring chart to find the VARK category that each of your answers correspond to. Circle the letters that correspond to your answers e.g. If you answered b and c for question 3, circle V and R in the question 3 row.

It is important to remember that the results indicate a ‘rule of thumb’ and need not be rigidly applied. Remember that the questionnaire is not intended to ‘box’ respondents into a mindset that they have been ‘diagnosed’. Rather, it is designed to initiate discussion about, and reflection upon, learning preferences.

As students, we learn best by seeing the value and importance of the information we have been presented with. If we are not interested in the material presented, we will not want to learn it. Students learn in many different ways. Visual learners learn by viewing charts, graphs, and pictures. Auditory learners learn by listening to lectures and verbal explanations. Kinesthetic learners learn by doing and tactile practice. Students can prefer one, two, or three learning styles. (Gilakjani, 2012)

Learning styles may be defined in multiple ways, depending upon one’s perspective. Here are a few
definitions of learning styles: Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the manner in which individuals perceive and process information in learning situations. He argues that learning style preference is one aspect of learning style, and refers to the choice of one learning situation or condition over another. Celcia-Murcia (2001) defines learning styles as the general approaches—for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual—that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. Learning style is sometimes defined as the characteristic cognitive, affective, social, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment (MacKeracher, 2004).

The remainder of this article will discuss the three main learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. For our purposes, we will be consolidating the visual/reading and kinesthetic/writing portions of VARK.

**Visual**
Visual learners think in pictures and learn best with visual images. They depend on the instructor’s or facilitator’s non-verbal cues such as body language to help them with understanding and comprehension. Sometimes, visual learners favor sitting in the front of the classroom. They may also take descriptive notes about the material being presented.

Someone with a Visual learning style has a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc. These people will use phrases such as ‘show me,’ ‘let’s have a look at that,’ and will be best able to perform a new task after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first. These are the people who will work from lists and written directions and instructions.

Visual learners will:
- Take detailed notes rather than get involved in discussions
- Tend to sit in the front so they can see clearly
- Benefit from illustrations and presentations, and especially those in color
- Make comments like:
  - “How do you see the situation?”
  - “What do you see stopping you?”
  - “Do you see what I am showing you?”

**Auditory**
These individuals discover information through listening and interpreting information by the means of pitch, emphasis, and speed. Auditory learners gain knowledge from reading out loud in the classroom and may not have a full understanding of information that is written (Ldpride, n.d.).

Someone with an Auditory learning style has a preference for the transfer of information through listening; whether to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises. These people will use phrases such as ‘tell me,’ ‘let’s talk it over,’ and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from an expert. These are the people who are happy being given spoken instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs that they hear!

Auditory learners will:
- Enjoy discussions and talking things through and listening to others
- Acquire knowledge by reading aloud
- Hum and/or talk to themselves
- Make comments like:
  - “I hear you clearly.”
  - “I’m wanting you to listen.”
  - “This sounds good.”

**Kinesthetic**
Individuals that are kinesthetic learn best with an active “hands-on” approach. These learners favor interaction with the physical world. Most of the time kinesthetic learners have a difficult time staying on target and can become unfocused effortlessly.

Someone with a Kinesthetic learning style has a preference for physical experience - touching, feeling, holding, doing, and other practical hands-on experiences. These people will use phrases such as ‘let me try,’ ‘how do you feel,’ and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment and never look at the instructions first!

Kinesthetic learners will:
- Need lots of breaks and will want to move around
- Speak with their hands and gestures
- Remember what was done, but have difficulty with what was said or seen
- Learn through doing activities
- Make comments like:
  - “How do you feel about this?”
  - “Let’s move forward together.”
  - “Are you in touch with what I am saying?”

Previous studies concerning visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles according to Dunn and
Dunn (1978) conclude that only 20-30% of school age children appear to be auditory learners, 40% are visual learners, and 30-40% are tactile/kinesthetic or visual/tactile learners. Barbe and Milone (1981) stated that for grade school children the most frequent modality strengths are visual (30%) or mixed (30%), followed by auditory (25%), and then by kinesthetic (15%). Price, Dunn, and Sanders (1980) found that very young children are the most tactile/kinesthetic. They concluded that there is a gradual development of visual strengths through the elementary grades, and that only in fifth or sixth grade can most youngsters learn and retain information through the auditory sense. Carbo (1983), investigating the perceptual styles of readers, found that good readers prefer to learn through their visual and auditory senses, while poor readers have a stronger preference for tactile and kinesthetic learning.

One of the most significant issues in learning to learn is an individual taking the responsibility for their own acquisition of knowledge. The individuals should know what their own learning styles are and what characteristics this style has, and that they should thereby behave according to this style. In this way, the individual can acquire the constantly changing and increasing amount of information without need for the assistance of others. When the learner takes the responsibility of their own learning, they attribute meaning to the process of learning. They develop an understanding of their own form of learning style and become much more satisfied with the environment they interact with. Every opportunity for learning is a chance for them. It is in the learner’s hand to use different methods and develop learning styles to some extent (Coffield, 2004).

There are three particularly vital reasons that understanding and utilizing learning styles are important. First of all, people’s learning styles will vary because everyone is naturally different from one another. Secondly, it offers the opportunity to teach by using a wide range of methods in an effective way. Sticking to just one model will create a monotonous learning environment, so not everyone will enjoy the lesson. In other words, learning and teaching will be just words and not rooted in reality. Thirdly, we can manage many things in education and communication if we really recognize the groups we are called (Felder, Silverman, 1988; Coffield et al., 2004).

Learning style has an important place in the lives of individuals. When the individual knows their learning style, they will integrate it in the process of learning so they will learn more easily, more quickly, and be more successful. Another advantage of the identification of learning style by the student is that it will help the student to become an effective problem solver. The more successful the individual is at solving the problems they face, the more control they will take over their own life (Biggs, 2001). It is important for individuals to receive education in areas suitable for their learning styles. A person educated in an area having no relationship to their learning style may lack confidence and they may be less successful; as a result, they may become frustrated.

Knowledge of learning style also provides information to the student as to why they have learned in a different way than others. It helps to control the process of learning. As a student gains an understanding of their learning style and becomes autonomous, they will take responsibility for their own education. This has to be part of the learning process to enable the individual to obtain knowledge, which constantly shifts and changes, without any help from others. Confidence in learning will consistently rise when learners know how to learn. Learning to learn and grasping knowledge in a suitable manner will lessen the need for an overbearing control by teachers. At this point, teachers guide the students. The students take responsibility for their learning, they are at the center of the process, and everything is under their control. They search answers to the problems and benefit from their unique performances and preferences in their learning styles. Those people will identify their aims, unlike those whose learning style preferences are not identified. They know what they want to learn and “how.” This awareness will change their perspectives on learning new things (Fidan, 1986).

It is very important to understand and explore each individual’s learning style. Analyzing one’s own particular learning style can be very helpful and beneficial to the student by aiding them in becoming more focused as an attentive learner, which ultimately will increase educational success. Discovering this learning style will allow the student to determine their own personal strengths and weaknesses and learn from them.
As piercers, we should be focused on perpetually improving our knowledge and craft. Understanding the most effective learning methods for us personally will help in this pursuit. As practitioners, understanding the different learning modalities will aid in our client interactions. Catering our aftercare speeches, placement explanations, and informational discussions to the learning styles of our clients will improve their grasp and understanding. Even though we don’t work in traditional classrooms, the dissemination of knowledge is a major component of our industry.

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# The Most Beautifully Created Opals

## Cabochon & Beads

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For 100 pc of an item use above prices.
For 50 to 99 of an item add 20%.
For 10 to 49 of an item add 50%.

Email: menash1@aol.com  
Web: www.hklap.com

**Colors Available**

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E. Mail MENASH1@AOL.COM  Website: WWW.HKLP.COM
WHAT HAS PIERCING TAUGHT YOU—AN INTROSPECTIVE
Collected by Kendra Jane B

I already possess all the strength I need to live through anything.
— Jaymes Lombardi

Body piercing and suspension have taught me that I can maintain and find my center calm in stressful situations. I can work efficiently and effective when others can’t. I’ve learned to be humble and true to myself. I have learned that people can overcome almost anything (pain, healing, criticism) that comes in their path to achieve their goals. I’ve learned that while I may just be poking holes in people, I must remember this is an experience and milestone for so many clients. I’ve learned to arrange my behaviors in such a way to make people comfortable and trust me upon the first minute of interaction. I’ve also found what makes me happy and gives me passion.

— Britt Riggs

I’ve learned patience and professionalism. What I’m building will never end and my skills will never be as good as they will be in the future. I’ve learned that I can completely change someone’s day and be a ray of light in their ‘story’. It’s taught me to stay humble and that I’m lucky to be in my own shoes. There are tons of people miserable in their jobs and I’m lucky to be in love with mine.

— Tyler Hamline
There is always more involved than just what is visible to the naked eye.
— Tod Almighty

Patience, professionalism, how to have a backbone, and most of all is how beautiful people are.
— Kendra Hansen

I have learned about my limits, and to trust my intuition. I’ve learned not to take myself too seriously, and that sometimes shit just happens. I’ve grown a thicker skin and also become a compassionate person. I’ve learned how, and the importance of, setting boundaries, and that preserving my own mental health needs to be a priority if I want to be so emotionally available for my peers and clients. And I’ve learned the power of the little things, like an extra smile or hug.
— Ali Pope

That I know nothing. That being humble goes a long way and that no matter how trivial it sometimes seems, I get to make a difference in someone’s life.
— Ken Seyler

Piercing has taught me patience, kindness, to be open and to listen to others. It has taught to be kind to myself, it has shown me that everyone is different and everyone deserves to be educated and treated like it is their birthday, even if they aren’t your clients.
— Nina Mikulin

I have learned about my limits, and to trust my intuition.
— Ali Pope

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— Ali Pope

There is always more involved than just what is visible to the naked eye.
— Tod Almighty

Patience, professionalism, how to have a backbone, and most of all is how beautiful people are.
— Kendra Hansen
That I didn’t have to stay stuck in the situation I was given. That dedication and strength of will can lead me to anything I want to do. That my experience of joy can also help others find their joy. It taught me patience and empathy.
—Ryan Archuleta

That I am capable of more than I ever thought possible, how to be patient, and most of all, how absolutely beautiful people are. I’ve found so much joy, gratitude, and humbleness in this industry.
—Taryn Dahlgren

That I’m not bad at ‘physical’ or intricate work. All through growing up, I thought I was a kid who was good at things like reading and writing and bad at everything else. I found learning to pierce much more difficult than any studying I’d ever done in the past, but so much more enjoyable and rewarding, and my drive to want to do this is what pushed me forward when I found it hard. I’m constantly surprised at how quickly I can pick up new things now. Becoming a piercer has honestly raised my self esteem because until that point, other people had made me believe that I was a ‘bright kid academically who couldn’t do a good job of practical things.’
—Becky Crossan

I have learned how to love myself in more ways than I could explain. I grew up, toughened up, and learned how to be a light for many people. I’ve made connections deep enough to find a new meaning in what I consider a family.
—Corey DeMelo

That I’m not bad at ‘physical’ or intricate work. All through growing up, I thought I was a kid who was good at things like reading and writing and bad at everything else. I found learning to pierce much more difficult than any studying I’d ever done in the past, but so much more enjoyable and rewarding, and my drive to want to do this is what pushed me forward when I found it hard. I’m constantly surprised at how quickly I can pick up new things now. Becoming a piercer has honestly raised my self esteem because until that point, other people had made me believe that I was a ‘bright kid academically who couldn’t do a good job of practical things.’
—Becky Crossan
There are as many approaches to piercing apprenticeship as there are mentors. Those of us who have trained other piercers understand this, and I believe we tend to embrace it. I’d even go so far as to say each apprenticeship is different simply based on the two personalities involved. Three years ago, the APP Membership Committee and work groups at Camp APP started trying to tackle the puzzle of apprenticeships, and how much (or how little) our organization should say about this aspect of the piercing industry. Something that we only briefly addressed was the idea of a for-profit apprenticeship. The idea of for-profit apprenticeships isn’t new, but because of its rarity it is worth thinking about in greater detail.

In a for-profit apprenticeship, the apprentice pays the mentor a sum of money to receive their piercing education. There are a variety of ways the piercer could pay for their apprenticeship: a lump sum, month to month, or even by getting a paycheck from the shop, with a portion of the pay kept as repayment for the education. The intricacies involved in a paid apprenticeship are important to consider. What exactly is the apprentice buying? Are they guaranteed a career? Are they guaranteed a certain level of mastery? Or is this more like a long term class that the apprentice either passes or fails? In more traditional “internship” style apprenticeships, there may be timelines set, but often they are flexible based upon how the apprentice is proceeding. Typically, the apprentice learns at their own pace, with some goals in mind, and the mentor decides when appropriate mastery of a skill or topic is achieved. In a for-profit apprenticeship, this responsibility is flipped, and the mentor must meet educational goals the way a college course moves at a predetermined pace. Perhaps the apprentice keeps up, perhaps they don’t.

This approach is not without its upsides. One of the things that prevents piercers from taking on apprentices is the concern that this freshly educated piercer will just become a competitor when they feel like they are ready to pierce without supervision. The mentor is frustrated because they’ve invested significant time and effort, and at the end of the experience they’ve gained nothing except a new form of competition.
In a for-profit apprenticeship there should be no illusions: the customer (apprentice) is buying education to do with as they please. It’s possible to draw a contract that limits this as a possibility, but my guess is that enforcement of a non-compete clause in an educational contract like this one would be prohibitively expensive. Still, the big upside for a mentor is that they see an immediate financial payoff from the apprenticeship experience. In addition, the mentor will likely set a timeline in advance, so they know how much time and effort the apprenticeship will require on their part.

There are advantages for the apprentice, as well. In essence, becoming a customer shifts the power dynamic. The mentor now answers to the apprentice in terms of the quality of their apprenticeship. This can solve problems that often arise in more traditional piercing training situations. The mentor needs to prove to the apprentice in advance that they have a quality product that they will deliver, and in a reasonable amount of time. This means education that will likely be successful in preparing the apprentice for a career in piercing. It's conceivable that there are consumer protections in place that can prevent an apprentice from paying for education that the mentor fails to provide. While there are no guarantees, this definitely puts the onus on the mentor to deliver quality education, and potentially puts them in a competitive market with other experienced piercers.

This brings us to a question, though. Is a for-profit apprenticeship even an apprenticeship at all? Or is it long-term paid training? Is this the kind of training regulated by local, state/province or federal law? No doubt, when large sums of money are exchanged for education the government is likely to have some say in the matter, and the person providing the product should expect to do the legwork to make sure they are providing training that is legally allowed. It may turn out that offering a for-profit apprenticeship is actually too expensive for the mentor, if local laws require significant amounts of licensing. It is strongly recommended that piercers choosing to offer paid apprenticeships thoroughly investigate local laws pertaining to this kind arrangement.

The APP has addressed apprenticeships in its *Suggested Apprenticeship Guidelines and Curriculum*. The Association has done its best to provide insight into safe, ethical training without trying to establish “the single correct way.” My hope would be that this guide could be useful to mentors in deciding if a for-profit apprenticeship program was worth their time, and also empower would-be apprentices to find education that both fits their needs and isn’t exploitative of their time, money, or energy. You can find the APP Suggested Apprenticeship Guideline and Curriculum free of charge at [safepiercing.org](http://safepiercing.org/).
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James Weber, Former President
Association of Professional Piercers
The following excerpt is from *Responsible Body Piercing*, the Gauntlet seminar training manual written by Michaela Grey and Jim Ward and first published in 1995. Reissued in 2016, copies of this historic document are available from runningthegauntlet-book.com

**AN INTRODUCTION**

When Gauntlet first came into being in 1975, who would have imagined the phenomenal popularity body piercing would be enjoying less than 20 years later? In response to the huge demand, people calling themselves “piercers” have been springing up all over. From tattoo shops to beauty salons, almost every city and town now has at least one so-called piercer in residence. A few of them are good; some do poor piercings but are at least clean, and some are just plain dangerous.

Presumably you are reading this because you want to become a piercer yourself, and it is hoped that you wish to become a responsible piercer. We have chosen to call this manual *Responsible Body Piercing*, NOT *Professional Body Piercing*. It is very important for you to understand that NO ONE can make you into a professional after a short course of study, and, in fact, we make no such claims. Experience has proven it takes between a year and a half and two years of supervised training for someone with aptitude to become a fully-qualified piercer. Any one who leads you to believe that you are ready to start a piercing business after taking a weekend seminar and doing a few piercings is dishonest, irresponsible, and unethical. Professional piercers, like good health care workers, good hair stylists, or any other professionals, are not created overnight. They must all train and practice under the supervision of someone with more knowledge and experience. In time they will gain the skills and confidence necessary to win the trust of their clients and make the piercing experience as untraumatic and painless as possible.

So what if you won’t be a professional by the time you finish this book. What is far more important is for you to start right now to be a responsible piercer. We encourage you to learn and practice your craft in an ethical, responsible, and, yes, professional way. Form in your mind an image of the professional you wish to be, and in time you will become that image.

This training manual is intended to provide a broad overview of the world of piercing, to teach the fundamentals of sterilization and hygiene, and to help you begin developing a safe and solid technique. It is beyond the scope of this text to make you a good piercer. That can only come with aptitude, practice, time, and patience.

The information herein is based upon the combined experience of nearly 20 piercers over a period spanning almost 20 years. And while these techniques are used daily in Gauntlet’s establishments, our piercers constantly seek ways to refine and improve them.

We all know there is a vast difference between just being able to do something and being able to do it professionally and well. Becoming a professional, “master” piercer—a title rapidly becoming meaningless because it is so abused these days—requires more than learning some basic information and techniques. A true “master” piercer always acts responsibly, i.e. safely, knowledgeably, and professionally. These are the traits and qualities you should cultivate and strive to assimilate. Unless and until they have all become an integral part of your being, you cannot consider yourself a professional, much less a “master,” piercer.

**THE KNOWLEDGEABLE PIERCER**

No matter what profession you pursue you will have to gain whatever knowledge is unique to it. Piercing is no different. Here are some of the things you will be required to know:

- The names and locations of the various traditional piercings.
- The best jewelry designs and materials for each.
- How to prepare and mark them.
- The appropriate piercing tools and techniques for each.
• Their healing times and appropriate aftercare.
• When a particular piercing isn’t a good choice for a particular individual.
• Sterilization from A to Z.
• How to deal with people, gain their trust, put them at ease.

THE SAFE PIERCER
Without question safety is the single most important requirement of any piercer. You simply must not put your clients or yourself at risk in any way.
• Sterilization and hygiene must be strictly observed.
• Never do a piercing that could endanger the piercee or install a piece of jewelry that is not appropriate even though the client might want it.
• Never use an ear piercing gun to pierce anything. Period!
• Absolutely never do piercing under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Likewise never pierce anyone who is intoxicated.

THE PROFESSIONAL PIERCER
With a solid knowledge of one’s craft and safe techniques and procedures, it is possible to be an acceptable piercer. To be a truly professional, “master” piercer requires the highest standards of character and conduct, qualities that go beyond the basics.
• A professional piercer is ethical and honest. It is very important not to pretend to be something you’re not. Your clientele deserves the truth. They have a right to know the extent of your training and experience. Studying this manual does not entitle anyone to claim that they are “Gauntlet-trained.”
• Arrogance and a know-it-all attitude are incompatible with professionalism.
• The quality of a piercer’s work has a definite correlation to their motivation to pierce. Just as a physician who becomes a doctor for the prestige and money will make a poor caregiver, the piercer who is in it for a quick buck, or because it’s “cool” will probably not be very good at it.
• Piercing requires patience and a willingness to listen to the fears of a client and respond to those fears in a way that will allow that person to relax and enjoy the experience. Although a good piercer will not always be able to connect with a client, they should make every effort to try and make the experience as positive as possible, or, if that isn’t possible, refer the client to another piercer. Whenever you are going to pierce someone, you should ask yourself, “Is this how I would want to be treated? Would I be comfortable in this situation”? Nothing will drive away business faster than a bad experience with you. And word of mouth can be your best or worst advertising.

These then are some of the most basic requirements of a responsible, professional piercer. Let’s now begin to look at these in greater detail.
When I got the message during the LBP asking if I wanted to write this article for *The Point*, I didn’t even consider no as an answer. I simply couldn’t.

Initially I felt like getting personal by writing about my perspective and telling a story about my experience throughout the years participating in the different conferences I’ve attended here in Mexico. Then, the feeling of having to do a more journalistic type article took over; to simply report the facts and leave my story aside. But since we are a tight community it just feels fair to include a personal touch to it, and I will do my best to express an experience that feels like you have to really live to understand.

The Facts:
The Asociación Latinoamericana de Body Piercing held its fifth annual conference October 30 through November 3 in the beautiful town of Taxco, in the estate of Guerrero, Mexico. During the event there were approximately 200 people from all over the world including countries such as Mexico, US, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, France, Spain, Canada, Russia, and Honduras. There were 115 attendees, 20 speakers, 9 volunteers, and 18 jewelry companies.

The event also hosted a host of different activities, like the traditional walk around town where 150 people enjoyed music and drinks. There was also a suspension show held inside a pre-Hispanic mine that was recently discovered inside the hotel. There was a jewelry expo with all the vendors.

Almost 50 people took a trip to a virgin area of Taxco, where Ramon Perez “Tigre” and Nick Wolak prepared a sweat lodge, or Temazcal, which lasted 4 hours. There was also a banquet dinner during which Katia “Esperanza” Tira- do, Mexico’s first female piercer, gave a performance titled “Instrucciones Bajo La Mesa”. The raffle prizes were given away, as well as the LBP awards, and it was an incredible night that ended with fireworks.

Overall it felt like a successful event and everyone seemed to have had a great time.

My Experience:
First things first, I really feel the need to go as far back as 2006, when Danny Yerna organised the first official APP Conference in Mexico. This really was our first big break into the industry. We got so much exposure to how things were being done in the US, and speaking from a very personal perspective, this even introduced me to piercers who, to this day, I hold very dear to my heart; people like Luis Garcia, who was actually at this year’s LBP and has maintained his commitment with the Spanish speaking industry throughout all these years.

I want to take this opportunity to really bow down and thank Danny Yerna, not only for the personal friendship that we share, but because I really don’t know what piercing would be like in Mexico right now if it hadn’t been for him and everything that he has endured to bring the standards of our industry up and put us on the map. So, gracias Danny!

So, the APP Conference in Mexico went on each year from 2006 to 2010, and then again in 2012. It was at this very conference where the LBP really got started! Basically at some point during the event, discussion started about the need for an organisation that catered more directly to the reality of Latin American countries; then Board Members were named and a new association was born. Just like that!

This is the fifth annual conference, and I have missed two, but I can honestly say that I will try my hardest to not miss this event ever again. This year felt different; I really can’t figure it out but from the very start, when we all met at Estudio 184 everyone was happy and we were all excited to see each other and to meet people for the first time.

Once we were all registered, we got on three different buses and made our way to Taxco. A few hours later we were at the hotel, and then we had the greeting ceremony. Already there was a lot of emotion. The Board Members introduced themselves and made some an-
nouncements. Then the classes started.

From that point on, it is all kind of a blur, I must say.... I was taking, translating, and teaching classes, and on top of that I was also in charge of documenting the event, so needless to say, it was a busy week for me. But everything seemed to flow. Everything felt right.

And though I’m having a hard time putting into words what I’m trying to express, hopefully the video that I will put out on the event coverage will be able to transmit the feeling. Everyone was just such a treat to be around. We all interacted with each other, we all got along, and there was just a vibe throughout the whole event. I still can’t shake the sense of unity that was really evident this time around.

To Wrap Things Up:

I really want to give thanks to all the organisers, speakers, and the following volunteers:

- Sofia Vega Perez
- Sonia Corina Constantino Cruz
- Laura Isabel Ochoa Figueroa
- José Rubén Nuñez López
- Sofia Rios Amaya
- Ricardo Padilla Chavoya
- Rodrigo Santana Dos Santos
- Ismael Vargas Guerrero
- Laura Alicia Juárez Reyes

I’d also like to thank all of the jewelry companies, and of course, all of the attendees.

It only seems fair at this point to include the names of the speakers: Nick Wolak, Ramon Perez, Luis Garcia, Bethrah Szumski, Andre Fernandes, Matias Tafel, Nicholas Adams, Jason Pföhl, Miro Hernandez, Mauricio Torres, Alejandro Hernandez Salazar, Javier Fingazz, Danny Yerna, Brian Skellie, Emmanuel Rodriguez, Aldo Booth, Sergi Tinaut, Paul King, and myself.

I really wish I could put into words how much was experienced and shared. I want to wrap this up by inviting you to next year’s conference. If you have ever thought about coming to Mexico, this is a great way to experience it. A lot of the attendees speak English and even if they don’t, everyone always tries their best to communicate with each other. It’s a great opportunity to interact with piercers from a bunch of different countries. Really, don’t miss out!
Above, Ricardo Padilla and Alfonso Culebro; right, Nicholas Adams
Above, Vlad Bodmodov (Auris Jewelry, Russia) left, with LBP Board Members Axayacatl Nochipa and Mario Oliva; left, Guillermo Reyes and Lani Soleil

FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Left, Lani Soleil
This past July, I had the honor of attending and teaching at the very first major educational conference in Brazil, the three-day GEP 2017 Conference (Grupos de Estudios de Piercing). The GEP was started in São Paulo by body piercer Andre Fernandes, initially involving small seminars held on Sundays with one or two invited instructors. This year, Andre decided to try for something larger, not just to educate more people, but to bring Brazilian piercers together for the betterment of the Brazilian piercing industry.

The conference was held in conjunction with São Paulo’s largest tattoo convention, Tattoo Week, with the classroom overlooking the convention floor. This made it easier for attendance, since many had planned to be in São Paulo for the convention already, with many travelling 20 plus hours by bus from the opposite end of Brazil to be able to attend. It also made for an interesting time, as many of us had not seen a convention as large as this. Some booths were even two stories tall, others with water features and marble floors! They even had a decent sized play area for children, with soft Nerf like material jungle gyms and trampolines. All of the above led to 127 piercers from all over Brazil (and a few surrounding South American countries) attending, an impressive number for a first time conference.

The conference’s speakers represented many different countries, with Jef Sanders, Ryan Oullette and I from the USA, former APP and LBP Board Member Danny Yerna from Mexico, Matias Tafel from Argentina, Gladix Porca Misera from Spain, Jesus “Sala” Salaverria from Norway, and Javier Guerra from Colombia. Topics covered almost every aspect of body piercing, from the Brazilian history of body piercing all the way to sterilization, and everything in between. Live translation was provided by the wonderful Emilia Aratanha from English to Portuguese, and by either Andre or Matias Tafel from Spanish to Portuguese. The Conference also had a small expo area, with vendors such as Industrial Strength, Dinamica, Namaste, Sacred Symbols, Kiwi Jewelry, Biometal, Kraken, and Painful Pleasures Brazil. The event came to a close with a lovely banquet dinner at a small private restaurant, and with a beautiful and immersive performance put on by La Negra, an Argentinian performance and suspension artist, and Thiago Soares, her Brazilian counterpart.

Everyone attending left happy with the overall experience, and extremely appreciative to have access to so much knowledge from so many different piercers from around the world. With Portuguese being so different from Spanish, many Brazilian speaking piercers have a tough time absorbing and understanding classes in English at APP, and classes in Spanish at LBP. I can attest to this difficulty in language, as I attempted to learn as much Portuguese as I could in the months leading up to GEP, and I still found myself having a very hard time understanding Portuguese, and Spanish is my first language. This makes an event like this very important to piercers in Brazil. I can say that I personally felt a massively warm reception from everyone I interacted with during my time at GEP.

Andre and his small team (Tatiana Rodrigues, Emilia, and Thiago) did an amazing job organizing this conference. What they achieved in such a small amount of time left me flabbergasted. Muito obrigado a Andre e sua equipe de pessoas maravilhosas!
Top to bottom, Conference educators; Danny Yerna; Gladix Porca Miseria; Javier Guerra
FIRST BRAZILLIAN CONFERENCE

Top to bottom, Jesus “Sala” Salaverria; Tatiana Rodrigues and Andre Fernandes (Organizers of the GEP Conference)
One weekend a year in England, piercers from across the UK and Europe gather together to share knowledge, discuss business, talk social media and get their hands on some of the world’s best jewellery. This year, we also got to throw axes at Danny DeVito.

The third annual United Kingdom Association of Professional Piercers Conference began on Sunday, 17th of September, with around 110 attendees; quite the growth from our first year, where 35 of us (including speakers and vendors) crammed into the basement of a Birmingham nightclub for one day of talks and socialising. From this small, but fun event, we grew into our second year, where we moved to a hotel and extended our event to two days of talks, due to the fact that we doubled our attendee numbers. Year three proved even better, not only with us needing to add yet another day of talks, but needing to add a second classroom as well; our numbers tripling from our first year!

In years past, we’ve been lucky to receive an incredible amount of support from the Association of Professional Piercers and this year was no different. They once again provided us with some of their fantastic speakers; UKAPP regular Ryan Ouellette kicked off day one. He presented his “Tongue Piercings” class, which had already proved a big success at this year’s APP Conference in Las Vegas. The room filled up quickly with people eager to improve their core knowledge, something that we at the UKAPP strive to implement as much as possible at our own conferences.

But he didn’t stop there. Ryan gave another talk later that day, which had the classroom once again packed to capacity: “Septum Piercings, Where Skill Meets Luck.” It’s a common subject within the UK forums, with many piercers getting “The Fear” when a client comes in asking for this particular piercing, so this talk was highly anticipated. We took a survey from our attendees after the conference and had one attendee stating, “The septums class was a game changer!”

Not to be outdone, we had our second classroom this year acting as a roundtable room, with some of the UK’s best and brightest leading discussions. Speakers included Aiden Johnson (whom some of you may have seen at APP giving his talk on Metals), our fabulous President Nicole Holmes, and a special guest speaker, Sue Hutchinson talking about self care. Sue is the mum of our lovely secretary Kim and a wonderful addition to our speaker team!

For those unfamiliar with a Roundtable, though the talk is lead by selected speakers, it’s a place to openly discuss our ideas, opinions, and offer help to each other through conversation and troubleshooting. Personally, these are some of my favourite types of classes, as they often prove less intimidating to those who may not want to ask a question in an 80 person classroom, but don’t mind so much chatting with 20 or so others in a more casual environment.

As day one came to an end, whilst some were headed to the bar or dinner, around 40 of us were gearing up for a very different event... Axe Throwing! The unofficial after party of UKAPP 2017 was organised by one of our Scottish piercers, Nikki Lloyd-Proctor. She arranged for the venue, Whistle Punks, to open its doors to us on the one day a week they were closed, so we could try our hand at some hatchet throwing. This was also a teetotal event, as we knew there were a good number of non-drinkers who may want to have entertainment other than hanging round a bar or sitting watching reruns from their hotel room.
Clockwise from the top, basics of tongue piercing with Ryan Ouellette, photo by Sebastian Wolfe Pickersgill; 2016 UKAPP Board Members, photo courtesy of the UKAPP; group photo at Whistle Punks, photo by Sebastian Wolfe Pickersgill; classroom photo of Mike Hill’s class going disposable, photo courtesy of the UKAPP
“I’ve learned so much, and I felt so welcomed, a part of the UK piercing family! THANK YOU IM-MENSELY FOR EVERYTHING!” - UKAPP attendee

After a few practise demonstrations and a quick request for some more event appropriate music (pop music and piercers don’t oft go hand in hand) we got to business. This is where poor Danny DeVito comes into play! Brought along for a giggle by lovable Liverpoolian Mick Stocko, the lifesize cardboard cutout didn’t fare too well or for too long after he got hung up for target practise!

Day two was set into full swing with talks from Sala from Pinpoint discussing Surface Anchors. Paul King gave a full update on the FGM laws that are currently affecting the UK piercing scene, a subject with which he has been consulting with many of us on. There was also a welcome return of Dr. Matt Lodder of Colchester University and his new class “Myth of the Modern Primitive.” Matt has been teaching and working around the UK, specialising in tattoo art history and UK body piercing history and has an enthusiastic audience at UKAPP!

Meantime, some of our first time UK speakers took over the roundtable room, including an in depth (and invaluable) class on Social Media from Maree Fowler, Andrew Davenport, and Sebastian Wolfe Pickersgill, and a chat with Dr. Emma Spoor, a regular piercing fan who works closely with President Nicole Holmes.

However our star speaker from day two was so popular, we had to turn people away due to the room filling to capacity before it had even begun! Mike Hill originally thought that his idea would interest a handful of people, but after a gentle nudge and a couple of chats, he agreed to take on the roundtable room with his discussion “A brief introduction to disposable piercing.”

As of yet, working with disposable tools and equipment hasn’t garnered too much attention in the UK, but with the unexpected popularity of this discussion, it could soon be in the cards for a lot of piercers looking to improve their practises. Mike gave a concise and highly informative chat as well as providing goody bags to those who came along (although we all underestimated just how many people wanted to see his talk and getting a goody bag almost became a status symbol.)

Day three came around all too soon, but boy did we go out with a bang. Not only did we have one President, oh no, we had TWO. Former APP President Brian Skellie and current President Jef Saunders both made an enormous effort to join us this year, with Jef travelling directly from the Fakir Intensives in the US to Birmingham UK and teaching within 12 hours of landing. We didn’t let him off with an easy day either, Jef gave a fantastic talk on Nipple Fundamentals in our main classroom. He also co-presenting two more talks in our roundtable room, along with Ryan Ouellette and rising star of the UK scene, Lola Slider from Glasgow, Scotland.

Brian Skellie, as anyone who has ever met him will verify, is more like a vast calm sea of knowledge than a fountain of knowledge. He once again provided us with a fascinating talk on Bevel Theory, in which there’s always something new to be gained from his engrossing explanations. He also provided us with more of his brain power by co-presenting an anodizing class with Lola. It is evident from the influx of anodizing posts on UK forums that this class was a big success.

Lola Slider, as aforementioned, is one to watch in the piercing world, not only for her precision and dedication to quality piercings and jewellery, but the way in which she presented her classes this year. Her natural ability to hold the attention of 30 odd piercers packed into a small room, swarming around her to see her needle bending techniques was something to behold. She held her own amongst industry heavyweights and we cannot wait to see where the future takes her next (and we hope that will be with us again next year at UKAPP 2018!)

“In the short time the UKAPP has been going, it’s taking on a life of its own, we love you all, great job” - UKAPP attendee

We were happy to see even more vendors this year, both homegrown and international! From independent jewellers such as Alice Ruby, Stonewolf, and Danila Tarcinale, to Naga Jewellery, Sacred Symbols and the team from Lovely Lobes and Maya. Special thanks goes out to the amazing gang from Industrial Strength UK, headed by fearless leader Patrick Kielty, who even spent his birthday with us at conference! Paddy has constantly shown support for the UKAPP and has made ISUK a gateway brand for many of the UK piercers who had not previously had the opportunity to see the jewellery up close and personal. Without the loyalty and love shown to us all from this bunch, UKAPP wouldn’t be the same!

Now, it may be known to some of you that piercers occasionally like a party; well, the UK crowd is certainly no exception! This year we held a Rocky Horror Themed party at the bar of our venue hotel, The Radisson Blu, with fancy dress encouraged! We were not disappointed by the outcome either (you’ve really
not lived until you've seen how great Paul King's legs are in fishnet stockings.) Although there was no 'Best Dressed' award, incredible outfits were worn by Becky Crossan of Inkhaus Tattoo, Peter Monckton (our Vice President!) and the gorgeous bunch from Adorn Art Gallery!

This year was a year of firsts for a number of reasons. Our members grew into double digits! We've been accepting Members into the UKAPP for the past year and have grown from the 6 Board Members, to over 20 current Members (with all but two in attendance at conference this year!) We've already got a few applicants ready for when the Board reopens the application process and we look forward to welcoming more members from the UK and from overseas as well. You can see more details about membership via the ukapp website www.ukapp.org.uk.

We also introduced the Mentor Program this year, where people could ask to be buddied up with another attendee. As an industry, a large number of us suffer from anxieties in one form or another, often social anxiety, and whilst we do what we can to help ease these anxieties, we thought that attendees may benefit from one-on-one mentoring. We had a separate registration section on our conference floor, a half hour introduction and mingle with our assigned mentors and mentees and a bit of quiet away from the crowds towards the entrance of the floor. It went well and we hope that this is something we can keep going for next year.

It's been a crazy year. Myself and the other Board Members were thrilled with how it all came together. We want to express our deepest gratitude to the APP for their unwavering support, the volunteer team who helped keep the conference running as smoothly as possible, and to the friends and family of the Board Members who helped keep us cool as cucumbers in the run up to an event which holds a deep and special meaning to us all.

**UKAPP—AN ATTENDEE'S PERSPECTIVE**

**JESS FARRAR**

On a Sunday in late September 2015, I attended the first official UKAPP seminar - then titled UK Piercer Meet Up. We met in a social club's basement that smelled like stale beer and had vaguely sticky floors. The ceilings were low, the lighting was dim and the space was cramped, but it didn't dampen any of our spirits as we were too happy to be part of something bigger than ourselves- to start forging a community like the APP overseas we all aspire to.

The first year, I felt was a success, with Ryan Ouellette coming to not only teach, but also show support for our infant organisation and help us along the way. I met Ryan for the first time there and spoke with him about my goal of attending the APP Conference the following year, if I felt ready and confident enough to apply for the scholarship. His advice was impartial and well thought despite him being on the committee of people that awarded the scholarships; I already felt my anxiety about the prospect abate. He offered invaluable advice and support to many of us and helped educate us as a collective with his informative and relaxed teaching style. Simply having him there made the whole day seem more legitimate and established.

This first year was casual and took place over a single afternoon with just over thirty of us, but we left feeling refreshed and invigorated, ready to continue self-improvement as piercers and to strengthen the bonds we'd formed as a fledgling community. The majority of us had only met that day, some coming from other countries, previously with only professional contact online, if that.

The year that followed was full of education and interaction on a daily basis as more folks joined the UK Facebook group and started contributing with advice, techniques, and individual expertise. By the time September rolled around again we were all ready to gain some knowledge.

Yet more folks from APP came this time including Brian Skellie, Luis Garcia, and Paul King, who gave great classes. The new setting was a business suite at a swanky hotel which was a far cry from the first year's venue. I think the room was full to overflowing that year with yet more people ready to learn; about sixty of us were there in 2016 for the two day event and the feeling of excitement continued to grow as our community and bonds strengthened.

I didn't feel ready the previous year to apply for the Al D. Scholarship, but shortly after this round of class-
es and socialising I began to feel comfortable with the idea of doing the same thing in another country, on a grander scale, surrounded by familiar faces that I hadn't met yet in real life. As daunting a prospect as it was, I applied for the scholarship in December 2016 and when I found I had been successful and chosen such a mixture of feelings flooded me - elation, pride, and a gripping fear of feeling in over my head. Despite having wanted this moment to come for the past three years, I still didn't feel truly ready or even deserving of the opportunity I’d been granted and I was determined to put my best foot forward, shedding the fear with each step. The UKAPP group was a fantastic tool to help me, as the previous connections I'd made with UK piercers made it easier for me to reach out to some individuals who had been in my position and ask about their first APP Conference experience, readying me for my own.

June 2017 finally came and I flew alone for the first time - a huge deal in itself - across the Atlantic to meet all the wonderful people that make Conference magic, to throw myself into the world of APP and I enjoyed every minute. Working as a volunteer while being a first time attendee (who took far too many classes) was exhausting, but it also helped to keep me grounded as I was instantly welcomed into a family of volunteers and organisers that lived, breathed, and slept (a bit) the Conference experience. I felt like I quickly became an integral cog in the well-oiled machine that is APP Conference. We all had a job that needed doing, a place we belonged, and a want to help one another, to make the best possible impression all round.

I had such a wonderful experience at my first APP Conference. It changed my life, certainly my outlook on friendships and the community we’re all a part of.

Three months passed since I returned from Vegas and the weekend of the third UKAPP drew closer. I felt no nerves this time, not even a pang of anxiety, simply excitement to be able to reconnect with fellow piercers, some I’d seen in Vegas a few months before, but most I’d not seen in a year. The venue was the same classy hotel, yet this time we had the entire floor available. More rooms had been opened up as an increase of vendors came this year, bringing their stunning wares. In addition to the larger variety of jewellery available, the raffle prizes were more prestigious. A scholarship program had been launched and there was a marked increase in the calibre and quantity of classes - some were lectures, others became hands-on workshops in a smaller setting and a few were open forums for discussion - each uniquely taught and presented. This year too we had even more international speakers. We also had a really nice show of camaraderie from the UK folks as people with information to share with the collective and our industry took a stand and taught a class or two.

UKAPP has continually grown each and every year. Having already outgrown the venue we’ve recently been situated in, I think we’re even moving cities to allow for a larger area in a better connected city for next year.

The first meet up I attended was something I was already proud to be a part of, but seeing how much it’s grown in the past two years is unbelievable. So much love and passion has been committed to this movement of furthering the UK industry as a whole. Instead of just being a group of individuals trying to accomplish our dreams, we are all starting to pull in the same, worthwhile direction, sharing information we know to be worth learning, regardless of whether the person benefitting from it is our “competitor” or not quite at a level of skill we’d like to see. This is how we get there, together.

The lesson APP taught me is that we are all simply cogs, we can get along just fine on our own, but when we group together to become part of something bigger than ourselves, that’s when the magic happens. UKAPP 2018 is already something I know anyone attending will be proud of, and while it’s nowhere near as polished or developed as APP it is a foundling organisation - ready to grow, take shape and gather momentum. For anyone in the UK reading this, you should absolutely attend next year; you will not regret
it. Same goes for people within Europe, we’re all pretty well connected so let’s not let borders get in the way of our collective education! Even folks further afield will find this event worthwhile, especially if you can use it as an opportunity to see the beautiful English countryside and some of our studios, just make sure you bring waterproof clothing; the reputation of our weather is there for a reason, so don’t say I didn’t warn you.

I sincerely look forward to seeing what the UKAPP has to offer us all in years to come and it’s been a pleasure to be a part of, if only as an observer and an attendee. I hope my involvement will only deepen and my self-confidence increases as time goes by. Regardless, one thing I am sure of is that the UKAPP is already an invaluable resource to new and seasoned piercers all over the United Kingdom, and our nearby colleagues. With further involvement from anyone in a position to help, it will not only benefit the people already part of the organisation, but for future generations of piercers to come.

I already know that if the UKAPP was established when I started piercing I would have grown faster as a piercer, but at the same time I’m glad I had the shaky, self-taught introduction that I did into this industry. I treasure so much because through my own pitfalls and shortcomings, I have been able to work harder to change everything with my own hands and now I get to taste the fruits of my hard earned labour. I’m under no impression that this is a rite of passage that every person wanting to become a piercer must undergo, and I hold no bitterness or resentment toward the newest generation of piercers that have all this pertinent information readily available to them, but it is up to them to utilise it to the best of their ability. I only hope I will be able to help in one way or another with someone’s quest for knowledge, the very same way people like Ryan helped me. Be kind and considerate and never knock someone for truly wanting to learn and better themselves.

No matter where you feel you are in your piercing career - a seasoned veteran around since BME days or someone fairly new, perhaps at apprentice level - these organisations are here for you to make yourself a part of and improve yourself in any way you can. If you have something worth teaching, you know where to find people eager to listen. If you feel that you are a small fish in a big pond with deep seated feelings of inadequacy (kind of talking to myself here) that is precisely what the UKAPP and APP are here for - self betterment and in turn the betterment of our industry as a whole. It is not an unachievable dream, especially not if you take a deep breath and jump into this world of readily available, invaluable information feet first. We’ve all been in questionable situations at one time or another. Half the piercers I know, myself included, wouldn’t even say we had a proper apprenticeship. I can only speak for myself here, but without the APP’s outreach program and public education I would not have picked up as many pertinent bits of information that my “apprenticeship” neglected to recognise as important. Instead, it’s being a part of all of these forums and groups, these pockets of subculture that willingly impart lessons on anyone paying attention and asking the right questions that taught me how much I truly still had to learn. Get involved and visit the next conference for your sake as well as that of your clients, peers, and even the general public. It is lack of understanding that breeds ill will and resentment, so the more we know, the more we can help with the betterment of one another and the industry; we all help continue the legacy in our own ways. Now that so many valuable tools are available to us, utilise them to educate yourself, for knowledge is power and we are forever learning!
Sean Dowdell: Why did you want to learn to do body piercing?
Jef Saunders: This is kind of a long story, but I’ll be as brief as I can be. I graduated high school in small town Connecticut in 1996. There was very little going on in the way of body piercing where I was, but a few piercings had become popular in the punk/hardcore scene by then. My girlfriend at the time had wanted to get her tragus pierced, so on her birthday (Halloween 1996) I drove from my college dorm at the University of Connecticut to Providence, Rhode Island to get her tragus pierced, and my ear lobes pierced. It was like lightning struck me when I watched the piercing get done. Keep in mind, there was no YouTube, so when there was a curved needle, and a cork, and all these glove changes... It was so incredibly fascinating to me! It made no sense and I desperately wanted to make sense of it. By spring of the following year, I was apprenticing in Connecticut, and by fall, I was apprenticing at the shop I had been pierced at.

Sean Dowdell: When did you start body piercing, who taught you, and where?
Jef Saunders: I started piercing professionally at a shop called LunaSea, which was a combination skate shop and piercing shop in Providence. I apprenticed under the piercers at that shop, and I also attended the Fakir Intensives in San Francisco, California. Fakir and his instructors are the reason I am still a piercer today. They really instilled in me a passion for the work of piercing that still burns in me to this day. I can't emphasize enough how big an impression Fakir, Dustin Allor, Tod Almighty, Ian Bishop, and Ken Coyote had on me. They changed piercing from a business or a hobby to something transcendental and good for the world around me. It was truly life changing.
Interview: Sean Dowdell

"EL PRESIDENTE"

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I CAN'T REALLY SAY ENOUGH ABOUT HOW MUCH I ENJOY THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS.

- JEF SAUNDERS
Sean Dowdell: What piercers do you look up to and why?
Jef Saunders: I think first and foremost, when I think of pure, raw, piercing talent: Luis Garcia. Luis has some kind of extra sensory perception when it comes to placement. Luis is playing chess when other piercers (including myself) are playing checkers.

I am really inspired by younger, newer piercers. I think a lot of my experienced peers look at newer piercers and see entitled Tumblr users who didn’t have to work for anything. I think of it differently. I had the benefit of piercing before it was easy to put pictures on the internet. I had a running start with my portfolio before other piercers had a chance to tear it apart. Nowadays? You need to be good, and you need to get good fast. Sure, you may not have had to go to the library to research skin preps, but you had better get the length on that industrial right or the internet will tear you apart! It’s a ton of pressure on these newer piercers, and most of them are doing a fantastic job of absorbing that pressure and putting out remarkable work.

Finally, there’s no small list of piercers I think are spectacular. I couldn’t list them all but a few include Cody Vaughn, Courtney Jane Maxwell, Aaron Pollack, Kelly Carvara, Kellan Smith, and Ken Coyote.

Sean Dowdell: What are your thoughts about the internet and its role in the piercing industry?
Jef Saunders: I can’t really say enough about how much I enjoy the free exchange of ideas. The internet is a wonderful resource for piercers, and I can’t imagine being where we are today in terms of health and safety, as well as technique if the internet wasn’t a big part of our industry.

I have really enjoyed being a blogger. I was caught off guard when my piercing blog (www.piercingnerd.com) started to develop a following. In the years since I started it, I’ve developed classes on the entries I’ve posted and met literally hundreds of piercers through it. It’s been a wonderful personal learning experience, as well as a fun way to give back to our community.

Sean Dowdell: If you could give 1 piece of advice to the piercers out there, what would it be (pertaining specifically to procedures)?
Jef Saunders: You are allowed to practice on an inanimate object before you do a piercing on a paying customer. I think, for a lot of piercers, they never consider trying a piercing technique on a piece of foam board or one of those silicone body bits. The muscle memory, and figuring out problems before they arise, is totally worth the small amount of time or money you may need to invest.

Sean Dowdell: What do you think are (if any) problems within the piercing industry?
Jef Saunders: Less a problem, more an opportunity for improvement: it’s very important to me that we continue to innovate tools and supplies that are designed to be single use. I would love to see the piercing community embrace less tool reprocessing as a way of making piercing safer for our clients, and exposing piercers and shop employees to less bioburden. There are lots of jewelry and supply companies that can seize that opportunity and make us disposable, inexpensive, high quality piercing tools.

Sean Dowdell: Where would you like to be in 5 years (pertaining to life and business)?
Jef Saunders: That’s a difficult question! I sold my shops last year to my good friend, Peter Jett. I’m hoping within five years, I have found a good place to continue to pierce, whether I own the shop or not. My son will be six years old by then, so I’m betting I’ll be coaching basketball by then too!

Sean Dowdell: What is your favorite piercing to perform and why?
Jef Saunders: I really love the basics, especially nostrils and navels. I have to admit a daith piercing is a pretty special one to me, though. I like performing
Jef Saunders: I really love the basics, especially nostrils and navels. I have to admit a daith piercing is a pretty special one to me, though. I like performing them because they are a great mix of challenging, and have an important history to me. I have my daith pierced by Ken Coyote, who apprenticed under Erik Dakota, the first person to perform one. That lineage means a lot to me.

Sean Dowdell: How does it feel to be the newly elected President of APP?
Jef Saunders: It feels like a great responsibility, but also an enormous opportunity. I am standing on the shoulders of giants, though. The presidents, board members, officers, and volunteers who preceded me have put me in an amazing place, enabling the APP to continue to grow and be successful.

Sean Dowdell: What changes would you like to see in the APP?
Jef Saunders: I have been working with the Board and the Membership Committee to make our application process more streamlined and efficient. I am looking forward to making compliance with APP membership requirements easier for our members as well. There are more plans in the works, but I would rather let the people whose hard work is making these amazing changes happen introduce them!

Sean Dowdell: Tell us something positive that you feel comes from the piercing industry.
Jef Saunders: I genuinely believe in the power of body piercing as self-expression. I think this art form speaks to certain people, and I’m passionate about making it as safe as possible for those people.

Sean Dowdell: What would you like other piercers to know that they might not know about you?
Jef Saunders: I took a few months off of piercing last year to work at a craft brewery. It was very hard work but I developed a newfound respect for the work and craftsmanship that goes into making a consistently good quality product.

Sean Dowdell: Being a veteran piercer, what advice do you think that most new piercers should be aware of as they climb into this industry?
Jef Saunders: We were all the newbie at some point. No one happened upon this piercing community a fully formed excellent piercer. You’ll get there with hard work and assistance from the good people of this amazing piercing family.

Sean Dowdell: Is there anything you wish to learn or get better at in the piercing industry?
Jef Saunders: I want to be a better piercer in every regard, whether it be bedside manner, health and safety, technique, or even something like jewelry color combinations. I’m fortunate to be surrounded by good examples and resourceful friends. I will continue learning from and being inspired by these amazing piercers throughout our community.
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