

Micro Dermal Pigmentation

By Timothy Reddick As I reflect on my past sixteen years of involvement in the beauty business and stand witness to many relevant advancements and developmental concepts that have been presented to our industry during that time period, certainly all seem too pale by comparison to the impact of the Micro Dermal Pigmentation process. Even amidst widespread misconceptions, ignorance and cautious apprehension, the lure of the service so commonly and inappropriately labeled simply as Permanent Cosmetics, has enticed tens of thousands of people nationwide wishing to become actively involved in offering it. In an attempt to attain an over-all perspective of this, we must first evaluate the components of it's popularity. Certainly, and most significant, is the promise of high dollar profits to be generated from incorporating it into our salon menus. Almost every salon has now received at least one solicitation with the lure of potential to earn " \$500.00 per hour". Secondly and no less enticing is the promise of being "Board Certified" or "Licensed" in only two short days. As yet there is no state that regulates the pigmentation process through either the Boards of Cosmetology or Education. Any company can tell you that you are "Board Certified" (and this is only by their board of directors) but the label is misleading to both the potential student and the public they intended to serve. If we now combine these two primary factors with overwhelming acceptance of an all too eager public willing to pay for it, the result is truly a phenomenon. The surface appearance or overview of the scenario as I have just presented it is accurate by the information that we have been force fed for years via mass mailed brochures from companies offering training for this process, but is it accurate? Is it real? As I present the facts concerning all facets of this procedure, you the reader must decide what is relevant and what is hyperbole. The Micro Dermal Pigmentation process has unfortunately, since first presented to the general public in the mid-eighties, been the victim of relentless commercial exploitation. Since the nascency of the procedure in contemporary form we as cosmeticians (I shall use this particular nomenclature to refer to all beauty industry licensed classifications) have been unable to access, through traditional means of reference, any substantiation of claims made to promote the service or its viability. Therefore any individual or company wishing to capitalize on the multi million dollar business of offering training for this field, has certainly had a free and unrestrained hand in using any means of advertising necessary to attract students. In regard to our gullibility to respond so ubiquitously without discernment, one must speculate which old adage is more appropriate, the traditional marketing concept of "Tell people what they want to hear and they will buy it" or P.T. Barnums' immortal observation "There's one born every minute." We seem as an industry to be buying into propaganda that simply by virtue of our participation in the beauty business, we are inherently more qualified than anyone to perform this process. Even if, hypothetically speaking, we could assume that everyone in the beauty and skin care industry is qualified to prescribe instruction on proper cosmetic application, does that qualify them to preform an invasive clinical procedure where we break through the largest organ of the body, the skin, which is our first and foremost line of defense against bacteria, and disease, to deposit a foreign substance. As one and two day seminars for training and certification of this invasive procedure have become the established standard in the industry, the medical implications have been substituted, for the sake of economics and expediency, with a few hours of discursive, hyperbolic nonsense and pigmenting pig ears. The substantive evaluation of the training for this service ranges from egregiously absurd to almost criminal. We have endeavored to step beyond our traditional scope of offering haircuts, manicures and facials into what should and must be perceived as a para-medical cosmetic clinical procedure, that incorporates no less physiological implications than that of minor surgical process where the health and safety of a human being may be compromised. I am not suggesting that we as beauty oriented professionals should not be permitted to perform and provide this tremendously viable and relevant service. I am however advocating with urgency that we refuse to be willing participants in the continuations of such rapacious exploitation presented under the guise of training. We must seek to ameliorate the field by demanding proper training and education for the dollars spent. This training should consist of a curriculum that addresses at least fundamental familiarization of anatomy, physiology, bacteriology and stringent clinical sterilization methods. These topics should be couple with extensive supervised and repetitious hands on practice utilizing live models. Unfortunately in most courses offered, the only opportunity a student has to pigment living tissue is in the event another student volunteers to be worked on, and even then they seldom have the opportunity to perform an entire procedure. Far too long has training for this service been simplified and homogenized. If we are to achieve the professional status and perpetuate our economic structure we must demonstrate our commitment to education and diligence. I.n.e. -Tim Reddick Tim Reddick is serving his second elective term as president of the California Association of Permanent Cosmetic Specialists. He is a licensed cosmetologist and former cosmetology school instructor. 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