

Client Narration + Verbiage Playbook

Coaching with Krista · Jenn · How to talk in-chair with an assistant in the room · August 2026

Two things determine whether your clients feel calm or anxious the first time the assistant is in the room with them: **what you say out loud**, and **what you don't**. This playbook covers both. Part 1: narration scripts for each service — the "here's what's happening next" pattern that turns nervous into normal. Part 2: verbiage rules for you and your assistant — words to use, words to never use, code words for the scary stuff, and specific mixing language that leaves no room for interpretation.

PART 1 · THE NARRATION PATTERN

Micro-steps for every service.

Krista's rule: every step, every client. You are the tour guide of your own service. When clients know what's coming next, they don't have room to get anxious. Use these verbatim — swap in your own names.

SERVICE 1 · ROOT TOUCH-UP

The full narration, start to finish.

"Hey [client name], so good to see you — let me tell you what we're doing today. I'm going to apply your root color, then [assistant name] is going to take you back for your shampoo and toner. I'll be back over when it's time to blow you out."

→ At client check-in, before you touch the hair.

"Okay, all applied. [Assistant name] is going to bring you back to the bowl in about 20 minutes."

→ When you finish applying root color.

"Great — she's going to shampoo you and apply your toner. I'll come check it in about 15 minutes."

→ When assistant walks the client back to the shampoo bowl.

"Perfect, tone looks great. She's going to detangle and start your blow-dry — I'll come back over when it's dry to check everything."

→ When you check the tone.

"Beautiful. I'm going to finish styling the front. Give me one sec."

→ Always finish the front yourself for photos and for the client's sense that YOU signed off.

SERVICE 2 · MINI FOIL / PARTIAL / FULL FOIL

Same pattern, adjusted for foil timing.

"Hey [client name] — here's what's happening today. I'm going to do all your foils, then [assistant name] is going to pull them and rinse you when it's time. I'll come back to tone and cut."

→ At check-in.

"All foils in. She's going to check on you in about 20 minutes to make sure everything is processing right. If anything feels off before that — hot, tight, anything — just wave her over."

→ When you finish foiling.

"Great — [assistant name] is going to take you to the bowl, pull your foils, and rinse. I'll be back to tone once you're back in the chair."

→ When it's time to rinse.

"Toner's on. She's going to rinse in about 20 minutes and get you started on the blow-dry. I'll come back to cut once you're dry."

→ After applying toner.

SERVICE 3 · EXTENSION INSTALL

Extensions are the most sensitive — over-narrate.

"Hey [client name], so excited for today. I'm doing every single install myself — [assistant name] is going to help me by prepping the hair, handing me bonds, and getting everything set up so we can move as smoothly as possible. She'll also be doing your shampoo and blow-dry once we're done installing."

→ At check-in. Emphasize YOU are installing.

"Okay, we're going to move you back to the bowl for a shampoo before we start. She'll take you back — I'll meet you at the chair."

→ Handoff to shampoo.

"[Assistant name] is going to detangle and rough-dry so we can start installing. Then I take over."

→ Post-shampoo handoff.

"All installed. She's going to cut in around them and start your blow-dry — I'll finish the styling."

→ Post-install handoff.

SERVICE 4 · EXTENSION MOVE-UP

Similar to install but with a removal step.

"Hey [client name] — here's the plan. She's going to help me remove your bonds, then I'll check the hair, and we'll go through your color if you're getting a root. I'll re-install every bond myself. She'll shampoo and blow-dry when we're done."

→ At check-in.

"Perfect, removal is done. I'm going to move you to the bowl for your color — [assistant name] will apply."

→ If root is included.

"Back to installing. She's going to hand me each bond as I go. Should take about [time]."

→ Reinstall.

The rule underneath all of this: if you would think it, say it. The reason clients get anxious is because there's silence where there should be information. Micro-steps kill anxiety.

PART 2 · VERBIAGE — WHAT TO SAY + WHAT TO NEVER SAY

The words that make you sound professional.

Teach every single one of these to your assistant on day one. Some are for you both to say to clients. Some are for the two of you talking to each other in front of clients. All of them matter.

Never say (in front of a client):

- ✗ **"Bleach"** — even in a bleach-based service. Say "lightener" or "lift" instead. Bleach sounds harsh; lightener sounds intentional.
- ✗ **"Brassy"** — clients hear "damaged" or "cheap." Say "warm" or "we're neutralizing the warmth."
- ✗ **"Yellow"** — same. Say "warm" or "we're taking down the warmth."
- ✗ **"Orange"** — clients panic. Say "we're at a level [X], now we're going to shift the tone."
- ✗ **"Purple"** — as in "we're putting purple in your hair." Say "cool toner" or "we're bringing the tone cooler."
- ✗ **"Damaged"** — even if it is. Say "the hair is a little more porous here" or "we're being extra careful on this section."
- ✗ **"Fried" / "crispy" / "dry"** — never. Same reason.
- ✗ **"Mistake"** — even when you or the assistant made one. Say "let me make a small adjustment" or "I'm going to redo this section."
- ✗ **"I don't know"** — say "let me check" or "let me look at that one more time."

Say instead — the professional swap:

INSTEAD OF	SAY
Bleach	Lightener / lift
Brassy / yellow / orange	Warm / warmth
Purple toner	Cool toner / cooling the tone
Damaged	Porous / a little more porous here
Mistake	Adjustment / redo this section
I don't know	Let me check
She messed up	Let me take a look and adjust

CODE WORDS — FOR TALKING TO EACH OTHER IN FRONT OF CLIENTS

Developer strengths.

Some clients get anxious hearing "30-volume" or "40-volume." Krista uses numeric code words. Adopt the same system.

ACTUAL PRODUCT	WHAT YOU SAY	EXAMPLE
10-volume developer	"1"	"10 grams of 1"
20-volume developer	"2"	"10 grams of 2"
30-volume developer	"3"	"10 grams of 3"
40-volume developer	"4"	"10 grams of 4"

Krista's rule: "If I was on a blonde and rooted her and got a spot somewhere, I'd say 'run and go mix me up a drop of 3.'" The client hears a number. She doesn't know it means 30-volume. You've protected the experience.

MIXING LANGUAGE — EXACT, EVERY TIME

Never say "more." Say grams.

The single most common training miss with new assistants: vague measurements. Fix it on day one by only ever asking for exact quantities. She'll mirror you.

- ✗ "Go mix me more lightener" — she doesn't know what more means.
- ✗ "Just a little bit of developer" — same.
- ✗ "Mix up some toner" — same. She'll waste product.
- ✓ "Go mix me 20 grams of lightener with 10-volume, one-to-one."
- ✓ "Mix me 10 grams of powder with 15 grams of 1." (that's 10-vol in code)
- ✓ "Bring me 30 grams of toner, half and half, with 1."

What she should always know before she mixes: the ratio for each formula (2:1 vs 1:1 vs 1:1.5), the volume of developer, the total grams needed. If any one is missing, she asks — she never guesses.

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

The 3 phrases that save the day.

1. When you need to correct the assistant in front of a client:

"Hey [assistant name], can I show you something?"

Then walk her through it. Client sees a mentor teaching, not a boss correcting. Krista's phrase — steal it.

2. When you or the assistant makes an actual mistake:

"I'm going to make a small adjustment to this section. Give me two minutes."

Don't over-explain. Don't apologize excessively. Fix it, move on.

3. When a client's hair goes lighter than she expected:

"We had to get you to a level [X] to break through the warmth that was there. Otherwise it would've stayed too warm. We're going to gloss you back down to your target tone now — this is the plan."

You're the expert. Explain the reasoning as if the client should have known — she doesn't need to know you're smoothing over a surprise.

When you DO have to correct in front of a client: keep it clinical and forward-moving. Krista's example: "You watch me and tell me what you're not getting or what you haven't been taught yet." Teach, don't scold. The client can hear the difference.

GIVE THIS TO YOUR ASSISTANT ON DAY ONE

The one-page cheat sheet.

Print or text the "Never say / Say instead / Code words / Mixing language" sections to your assistant BEFORE her first shift. Ask her to review the night before. Then quiz her — casually — during her first shadow day. This is one of the fastest ways to see whether she takes homework seriously.

The whole playbook in one line: *narration removes anxiety, verbiage protects the experience, code words protect the mystery, and exact measurements protect the outcome. All four rules run in parallel from the first client on day one.*