

Before We Meet...

A Letter From Nikki

Hi! 

First of all, thank you for taking the time to learn a little more about Willow & Rayne.

If you're reading this, chances are you've reached out about joining the salon, or I've invited you to come shadow for a day. Either way, I'm genuinely excited to get to know you.

I wanted to write this because I think it's important that you understand who I am, what Willow & Rayne stands for, and what I'm trying to build before we ever have that conversation in person.

This isn't meant to be an employee handbook, a list of rules, or a sales pitch.

It's simply me sharing my heart for this salon and the type of person I'm hoping to work alongside one day.

Why Shadowing Matters

I like to have potential stylists spend a day shadowing before making any decisions.

Not because I'm trying to make anyone nervous, but because I think both of us deserve to know if it's the right fit.

Shadowing isn't about trying to impress me.

I want you to experience what a normal day at Willow & Rayne feels like. I want you to see how appointments flow, how clients are cared for, and how I approach this industry.

At the same time, it gives me the opportunity to get to know you beyond your portfolio or résumé.

I'm paying attention to things like kindness, curiosity, communication, professionalism, and how you interact with people. Technical skills matter, but they aren't the only thing that makes someone successful here.

Most importantly, I want you to decide whether this feels like somewhere you could truly see yourself growing.

Why I Opened Willow & Rayne

When I opened Willow & Rayne, I wasn't chasing the dream of owning a salon.

I was chasing the feeling I wanted people to have when they walked into one.

I wanted clients to feel heard.

I wanted them to feel comfortable asking questions.

I wanted them to understand what we were doing and why.

I wanted every appointment to have a purpose instead of feeling rushed.

I wanted guests to leave with a plan for their hair, not just a pretty before-and-after photo.

Most of all, I wanted people to walk out thinking,

"That was the best salon experience I've ever had."

That's still my goal every single day.

Beautiful hair is expected.

The experience is what people remember.

You'll Probably Notice I'm a Little Different

You'll probably notice that I ask a lot of questions.

I take a lot of notes.

I explain why I'm doing things.

I think about long-term plans instead of just today's appointment.

I pay attention to details that many people probably wouldn't even notice.

Some people would probably say I overthink things.

They're probably right.

But every system inside Willow & Rayne exists because I've spent years asking myself one question:

"How can I make this even better?"

This Isn't Really Booth Rental

Technically, Willow & Rayne operates as a booth rental salon.

But honestly...

I don't really think of it that way.

I also wouldn't describe it as a traditional commission salon.

It's something a little different.

I believe stylists should absolutely have the freedom of owning their own business.

But I also believe they shouldn't have to figure everything out alone.

I believe you can have independence while still having mentorship.

Freedom while still having support.

Your own business while still being part of something bigger than yourself.

That's the culture I'm trying to create.

The Opportunity Here

One of the reasons I'm open to growing Willow & Rayne is because there are simply more opportunities than one person can handle alone.

Over the years, I've intentionally built this brand piece by piece.

The website.

The marketing.

The client experience.

The systems.

The reputation.

The education.

The consultation process.

None of those things happened overnight.

They've taken years of work, and I continue refining them every single day.

Those things have value.

My hope is that the right stylist won't just rent a room here. They'll have the opportunity to become part of something that's already moving forward with purpose.

I can't promise exactly how quickly someone's books will fill because every stylist's journey is different.

What I can promise is that there is real opportunity here for someone who's willing to work hard, continue learning, and truly care about people.

I Want You To Succeed

One thing I never want someone to feel here is alone.

Booth rental can sometimes feel like you're handed a key, told "good luck," and expected to figure everything out yourself.

That has never been my vision.

If we're the right fit, you'll have someone who genuinely wants to see you succeed.

Someone to celebrate your wins.

Someone to help you navigate challenges.

Someone who enjoys talking business just as much as talking hair.

I genuinely love helping people grow.

I want the people around me to build careers they're proud of.

I want them fully booked because they've earned it.

I want them charging what they're worth.

I want them making great money doing something they genuinely love.

Your success doesn't threaten me.

It excites me.

What I'm Looking For

Experience is wonderful.

Talent is wonderful.

But those aren't the first things I look for.

I'm looking for someone who's kind.

Someone who's dependable.

Someone who's humble enough to keep learning.

Someone who communicates well.

Someone who enjoys taking care of people.

Someone who notices the little things.

Someone who wants to build a career instead of simply renting a chair.

Most importantly...

I'm looking for someone who genuinely wants a home.

One Thing I Do Ask

Every stylist comes from a different background.

Different education.

Different salon cultures.

Different habits.

I genuinely respect that.

I'm never going to tell you another salon was wrong.

But if someone chooses to be part of Willow & Rayne, I do ask that they come with an open mind.

You may see me do something completely differently than you've always done it.

Please ask me why.

There's usually a reason.

Every system I've built has come from years of experience, trial and error, client feedback, continuing education, and constantly asking myself how I could improve.

I'm not asking anyone to blindly agree with me.

I'm simply asking that you're willing to understand the "why" before deciding whether something works.

I've learned a lot through building this business, and I genuinely love sharing what I've learned with people who want to grow.

Why I'm So Selective

People often ask why I don't just rent the room to the first stylist who's interested.

The answer is simple.

Culture matters.

Every person who joins Willow & Rayne becomes part of the experience our clients have.

Every interaction contributes to the reputation we've worked so hard to build.

Because of that, I'm intentionally selective.

I'd rather leave a room empty than invite the wrong person into the salon.

That isn't because I think I'm better than anyone else.

It's because I care deeply about protecting what has been built here.

This Is a Two-Way Interview

I also want to be honest that not everyone who shadows at Willow & Rayne receives an opportunity to join the salon.

And that's okay.

Shadowing isn't just for me to get to know you.

It's for you to get to know me.

I want you to leave understanding exactly how I run my business, what I value, and whether that aligns with the kind of career you want.

Sometimes we'll both leave excited.

Sometimes we'll realize we're looking for different things.

Neither outcome is a failure.

I'd much rather figure that out now than months down the road.

Final Thoughts

At the end of the day, I'm not looking for someone to simply occupy a room.

I'm looking for someone who gets excited about the same things I do.

Someone who believes details matter.

Someone who wants to create unforgettable client experiences.

Someone who wants to continue learning.

Someone who's ambitious.

Someone who wants to build something they're incredibly proud of.

If that's you, I'd genuinely love the opportunity to get to know you.

Whether our conversation leads to shadowing, joining the salon, or simply connecting with another passionate stylist, I'm grateful you took the time to read this.

I hope it gave you a little glimpse into who I am and what Willow & Rayne stands for.

I look forward to meeting you and hearing your story.

With gratitude,

Nikki Browning

Owner & Stylist

Willow & Rayne Hair Salon

