

# 10 Questions with Ruby Harris of Ruby Red Ink



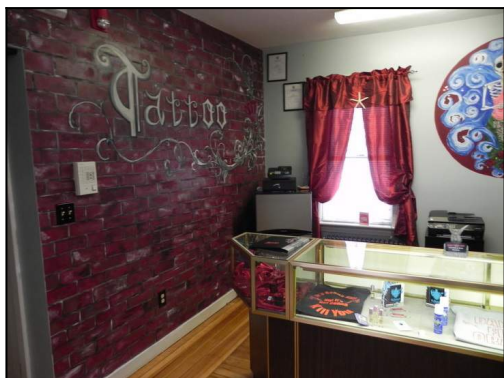
*Ruby Red Ink at 144 South Main Street: Call  
(508) 995-4465 and ask for Ruby!*

Are you thinking about getting your first tattoo or piercing? Or are you a collector? There's a new shop in "town," Ruby Red Ink on Main Street in Acushnet featuring a full range of cover-ups, black & white, color, portraits & custom work. As a "collector" myself, I'm always on the lookout for new artists and especially any new shop that opens up within a short driving distance.

Tattoo shops are hard to come by in this area. Just a few years ago, there was only one shop in New Bedford, but surrounding towns had shops, and the closest "Mecca" was Fall River which had eight. New Bedford was held back primarily due to outdated, puritan-like bylaws and some resistance from a few stuffy politicians.

Once upon a time only bikers and criminals got ink, but these days soccer moms, grandmas, doctors, lawyers, etc. are getting tattoos. People across age, class and gender demographics are getting them. Apparently, the memo never arrived on the desk

of many local politicians. It seems that it did arrive in Acushnet, where Ruby Red Ink's owner Ruby Harris, had a relatively smooth time opening up her shop.



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Since I drive South Main Street on a regular basis, when I saw the black, red, and white business sign go up, I bee-lined it for the shop to investigate. I was pleasantly surprised.

The past two years I haven't gotten any ink, so I've been "out of the loop" and haven't been in many shops since. Cleanliness is a priority of course, but many a shop translates this to mean you must feel like you are in a hospital or laboratory. A bit cold. I don't know if there is a new trend in tattoo & piercing shops, but Ruby Red Ink is -simply put- just a beautiful shop. Sounds weird to say, right? You'll believe me when you see it for yourself. It's welcoming, homey, and decorated with a woman's touch. The walls are brightly painted in a variety of colors. There are sculptures, local artwork and the establishment has a sort of Mexican "Día de Muertos" theme threaded throughout the waiting room. Does beautifully morbid make sense?

The aspect that immediately grabbed me was the viewing window in the waiting room that allowed you to experience Schadenfreude as a friend or stranger was getting the needle.

A group of twenty-something girls were there and soaking up the whole experience. The worst thing you can do is go with a group of friends who are planning to get a piercing or tattoo and think it's not going to be contagious. I was thrilled to see how happy they were in spite of the painful piercings. It conjured memories of my first time.

I feel that our society is starving for rites of passages which have been stripped away by political correctness and the "safety" culture. "Don't do 'x' because you'll get sick, infected, turn purple, get a paper-cut, etc. Just stay on your couch in a fetal position where it's safe! No damn way! Society *needs* rites of passage. Our youth *need* rites of passage. We all *need* rites of passage.

In fact, I believe it's human nature. People are always chasing the next rush or buzz – even though they are painful experiences and will probably lead to injury or potentially death. We climb mountains, jump out of planes, do Tough Mudder events, take up martial arts, etc. These outlets serve society in that these activities serve as an outlet, and for some they would be using other outlets to get their rush or buzz – namely criminal or drug-related behavior. Life can be all the high you need.



*Ruby Red Ink has a*

*comfy, warm interior  
decor.*

Whatever your reason for being pierced or tattooed, you can rest assured that Ruby Red Ink has you covered – pardon the pun. After I had my fill of watching the girls get pierced and tattooed, I turned towards the reception area and saw a bunch of clothing, display cases of jewelry choices and more brilliant paintings on the wall. Owner Ruby Harris greeted me with a warm smile and made me instantly feel welcome.

I introduced myself and told her I was sadly not here for work, but just checking the place out. I was pleased to see that she was just as happy to show me around as she was a potential customer. The entire business was renovated and while the building may be older it has been completely modernized and redone on the inside. The rooms from the floor to ceiling are completely new.

There were 3-4 work rooms as well as a restroom (handicap accessible), and a separate room for the auto-clave and sterilizer. This is going to sound weird, but the most important thing I judge a tattoo shop on is their toilet. That room is the best indicator of the mindset of the owner and resident tattooists. If that room is immaculate, clean, and stocked it's a massive "yes" for me. You can have the best artist on earth and the cheapest prices, but if your bathroom is dirty and disgusting, it's a red flag. That disorganized attitude comes from the people and may transfer to their tattooing.

These rooms were impeccably clean, and sterilized. While they clearly had that hospital feel, that woman's touch was evident and the designs and colors made it feel homey. A welcoming hospital room, if you will.

I saw a story here – one of "girl power," local business (which we at NBG support enthusiastically), and art community.

So after some discussion, I returned to interview Ruby.

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**1. What separates Ruby Red from the other shops in the area?**

At Ruby Red Ink, I have tried to create a great atmosphere where people can come in and feel relaxed and comfortable. I have tried to create an environment where the clients are greeted by a friendly, professional artist. I feel my prior work experience in health care prepared me for Ruby Red Ink, by sharpening my people skills and learning how to listen and be more attentive to people's wants and needs.

**2. Why Acushnet instead of the more populated New Bedford?**

Acushnet is a wonderful town. Ruby Red Ink is located on the "business strip" of the town on South Main Street. The building is a home that is zoned for business, which is perfect for what I wanted. it's an awesome town filled with great folks.



*Bright, warm and welcoming!!!*

**3. What would someone who is thinking of coming to Ruby Red expect when they come there? What do you expect from a customer?**

Expect a group of artists who are friendly, helpful, kind,

professional and understanding. People have specific reasons for getting piercings and/or a tattoo and we fully respect them all. We want to understand their motivation and reasoning, so it fuels us when we are either sketching their idea or actually putting the art on them. When you know how important it is to that person, you put extra care into it.

#### **4. Do you have advice for people who are new to tattoos and piercings and are thinking about getting them?**

If you come in with an image that you want already, it is superior to just conveying an idea in your head. Bring an image or a few, so we can best understand what it is you want. This is going on your skin for life. We want to make sure it's as accurate to what you want as possible.

Don't listen to others that tell you how painful getting a tattoo is. Yes, it's not pleasurable, but it's not like getting a shot by your doctor. It's about on the discomfort level as a mild sunburn.

#### **5. Where do you see Ruby Red in 1, 3, 5 or 10 years?**

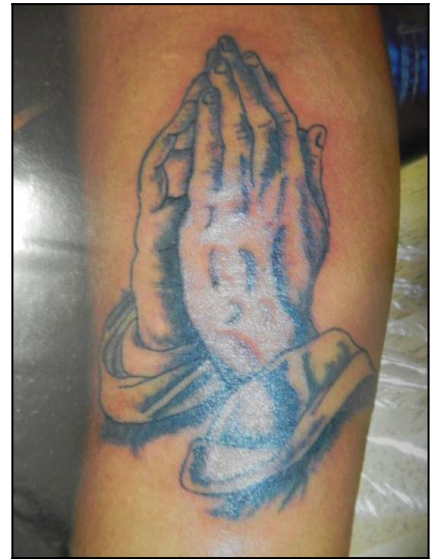
I have so much to learn and I want to grow and improve as an artist, so I can offer a better, quality work to people. I'll have a large group of repeat customers that are thrilled with our work. I am passionate about art period, and want that to come out in the work I do.

#### **6. Take us through the process from the time a customer walks into the shop until they leave with a smiling face?**

A customer will come in and explain what they want -with a photo or photos- and their motivation for it. We dialogue until we come up with the most accurate image possible. Then they look through the portfolios to look at the work of specific artists and designs, to give them more ideas and in case they see something similar.

After they pick an artist and approve of the image, they sit with the artist who gives them a short explanation about

sterilization, getting the tattoo, sign paperwork and get any questions or concerns they have answered. We want them to be as physically and mentally as possible.



*Praying hands tattoo*

Throughout the work we check for any discomfort and get frequent feedback on the how they are doing. Upon completion, we clean the area, wrap them up, and get more feedback. Finally we explain all about after-care and emphasize it. We want big, happy smiles.

### **7. Who are your role models locally and internationally?**

A role model for me is any person who does the right thing. A person who is compassionate, has empathy and sympathy. Who is willing to help out another living person or thing, especially animals for unselfish reasons. For its own sake.

I also look up to strong, successful women who prove themselves against all odds. For that matter, anyone regardless of gender that has succeeded by never giving up, and done it the right way.

### **8. What was your first tattoo?**

My first tattoo was of my sons' names for simple reasons: they are the most important people in my life – next to my amazing husband. And yes, I do have my husband's name tattooed on me

in spite of that being a no-no.

**9. Worst idea for a tattoo you've ever been asked to do that you DID?**

I tattooed the letter "B" on each butt cheek of a guy.

**10. Ever flat out refuse to do a tattoo because of how awful it was?**

I was once asked to put a chest piece of Satan nailing Jesus to the cross. That goes against what I believe in. My morals may be different than others, but that was too extreme. I would do something like Archangel Michael fighting Satan.

I try to talk young people especially, out of getting tattoos like that or putting their boyfriend or girlfriend's names on. Of course, they have the final say, but I want them to have really thought it out as I did.



*Ruby Red Ink has T-Shirts, Hoodies, and more!*

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**Ruby Red Ink**

144 South Main St

Acushnet, Massachusetts 02743

**Phone:** (508) 995-4465

**Email:** RubyRedInkTattoos@gmail.com

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/RubyRedInk](http://www.facebook.com/RubyRedInk)

### **Hours of Operation**

**Mon:** 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Tue:** 2:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**Thu:** 2:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**Fri – Sat:** 2:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**Sun:** 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

*Street and lot parking*

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