

## AU NATUREL

### THE TIME HAS COME.... Community and Salon Updates

Well, spring is here and so returns my love affair with nature. I'm always enamored by all the beautiful variations of fauna jockeying to spray their paint across the canvas of life. Just last week, I saw a most beautiful



bird that I had never seen before called a Brown-headed Nuthatch. It was seemingly preparing a nest outside of my office window. The bird is super tiny at 3-5 inches--not much bigger than a hummingbird. I stared at the creature for quite a while as it worked. I don't know if it will return to this location though. It kept looking to its left as if it suspected that it was being observed though it couldn't see anyone or anything noteworthy. I was

immediately behind it and slightly to the right on the other side of the window. I do HOPE it returns. I would surely favor the distraction upon my regular glances out my office window. We shall see.

Well with the advent of spring has come the opportunity to share the good news. I had a wonderful time with the students of Mary E. Phillips High School during their Cultural Festival on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Some were definitely not ready for what I had to share but then, others were. Such is the parable of the sower. ☺ It's all good. The essay below provides a bit more context and exposition to these words, for those interested. Also, the **NUSOL Natural Hair and Beauty Expo** is coming to Durham, NC on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. The event will be from 10am-10pm. I will be presenting a lecture from 1:00pm-1:45pm titled *"Natural Hair: The Phoenix Rising to Herald our Cultural Renaissance."* The organizers have coordinated a phenomenal program so you won't want to miss it. Visit the [show's website](#) for a general overview of what to expect and the [Facebook page](#) for up-to-the-minute highlights and previews. And so it is written: April 12<sup>th</sup> promises to be a most pleasurable day of joy, union in the spirit and love. I eagerly anticipate the coming....

### QUOTES BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it.

Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation.

# SPEAKING MY OWN TRUTH

## Lessons Learned

A few things that speaking on the lecture circuit has taught me over the years is this: 1) I dance on the radical side of life; 2) Not everyone is ready for the message I have to share; and 3) I can't predict who will be most impacted by what I have to share. It's a reality that always propels me into the depths of my own psyche to ponder who and where would I be if I had a different beginning, a different experience, a different life. Each time I ask myself the question, I'm forced to give thanks for my people: the predecessors who raised and nurtured me into the natural woman that I am today.

My family has always questioned...well, everything! At seven years of age, my Mom told me about the Tuskegee studies long before the rest of the world knew about them. She taught me very early to ask questions and to "always know what people are capable of." Being young people during the Civil Rights era, my family viewed the status quo and mainstream ANYTHING with a jaundiced eye. If it can't stand up to the test of reason, logic or Divinity, then something's wrong and you should consider the source...always. One day, when I came home from my girlfriend's house rather early, my Mom asked why. I said, "They're all going to tan in the sun so, I came home." Momma simply demanded: "Get your swim suit and go tan too!" I thought she was crazy but there was a lesson therein. She said, "The sun was made for you. Your skin knows what to do with sun rays. You don't have to hide from the sun. Join in the fun!" And so, I did. And at the end of the day, I was a healthy deep mahogany and my friends were all sporting sunburns. That simple lesson forced me to reconsider how I perceive dark skin despite the programming of the wider society. At that time, I did not need to learn to see the beauty of light or white skin. That program was well entrenched. But now, I was empowered to see a deeper truth. And I've been questioning the programming ever since. If my Mom had been less confident in her own beauty, she could never have conveyed that message.

With that said, I do not purport to suggest that questioning established beliefs or the status quo is somehow inherently righteous or even appropriate. But for me, it undergirds my willingness to speak a truth that cuts, sometimes deeply. I am a black woman so I know the black experience. I feel no shame or embarrassment to speak our truth in mixed company and to shine the microscope on our deepest insecurities and fears. Sometimes, I see the discomfort that's created by my words and I empathize with the angst and sometimes the confusion. But, I don't alter the message because it is a universal truth.

Embrace the beauty of you is a message from God that is etched on the eternal conscience of the universe. It will stand the test of time and will live long after I'm dead and buried. It is a message for everyone because we all have some inherent insecurities that make us inclined to deny our self-worth—to pale in comparison. I truly feel honored to be one of the many voices delivering this message for the ages and I pray for all who hear the message that they may apply it to their own life in a way that makes sense to them.

With that said, the message inherently means to adopt and be your own truth—not anyone else's. If straight hair is your thing, have at it? But if you believe that your texture is somehow *less than* because it's not straight or wavy, then I challenge you to look deeply and understand more broadly. Understand me: I am not suggesting that any woman should be cool with alopecia and just "get over it." But if there's a way to avoid or delay its onset, there's room for guidance. All the same, I personally pray that if alopecia comes to greet me, no matter the cause, I am able to carry it with the grace and dignity of [Sandra Dubose](#). Chic is phenomenal!! I likewise confess that I am unapologetic in my disdain for descriptions of black hair which suggest that it is anything less than a beautiful gift from God. I regularly hear women describe their hair texture as "not good." I don't always correct them because correction requires more than a few minutes of edification for the message

to truly be appreciated. If there's not ample time to deliver the full message, why engage? But, I note the error all the same, offer our assistance in whatever way possible and move on. I'm not here to change the world or to change your mind. As I stated many years ago in one of my articles: *"I am not on a mission to PROVE that natural hair is beautiful. Why should I try to convince the world that the sun is hot or that the sea is vast or that a baby is precious? I believe those things with my heart and soul and really do not wish to argue these points with anyone. If you don't believe, then maybe you're not ready for us. But, you are welcome to come and look and learn. Only you can see the sun's rays, feel its heat and know the truth."* So, I WILL speak the truth. And as we know, sometimes the truth is an offense. Sometimes, the sting is too uncomfortable for some to entertain. And for others, it's just the jolt they needed to wake up. At the recent sojourn with the students of Mary E. Phillips High School, one young woman turned her body at a complete right angle so that she would not have to look at me anymore as I

spoke hair truths. On the other hand, a teacher wearing a very blond hair weave which frankly hid the beauty of her natural olive complexion came up to me, thanked me and confessed that she learned a lot. And still another very handsome, well dressed young man named Josh said he attended the session because he may have a daughter or son in the future and he wants to know what to tell them. He looked like a football jock—minus any arrogance, so I really didn't expect his words of appreciation afterwards. I was really glad I came. I will never know who or how my words impacted the attendants. But, I was there, and they listened. That is enough. As the parable of the sower implies, I do not expect all to hear and understand. Such is the plight of any teacher. We can only pray for the best. In all, I press on, and give thanks for yet another opportunity to shine the light on the seed of discontent that lies in our own hearts. And to encourage all to "embrace the beauty of you." I do.

RALEIGH'S 1<sup>ST</sup> NATURAL HAIR SALON – EMBRACE THE BEAUTY OF YOU.

Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa, LLC  
258 W. Millbrook Rd.  
Raleigh, NC 27604

Email Distribution List