



Au Naturel

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Looking to the Past to Inform the Future

Happy 2010!!! May God shower your life with peace and blessings in abundance!

I feel very blessed to see a New Year! With each passing year, I become more grateful for continued life and breath and the capacity to make a difference in the lives of others. As the earthquake in Haiti quickly reminds us all, life is fragile and fleeting. Do good while you can; for tomorrow is promised to no one. With that theme in mind, I have had cause to reflect on my own life over the past few days and weeks. In some ways, my fundamental question is: What am I doing? Sometimes when I think of the minutes in the day and the days in the week and the work that needs to be done, I conclude that it's surely not enough. At times, I feel powerless to the negative forces of gravity that weigh down life on Earth. I seek to rise and transcend and radiate light and energy and power. But alas, I am only human. So, I intend...

All the same, I know there is much that I can do, and I strive to complete all that this body and time will permit...God willing. While reflecting on the New Year, the Sankofa symbol came to mind. The symbol is of West African origin:

"Sankofa" teaches us that we must go back to our roots in order to move forward. That is, we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone or been stripped of, can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated." (quote from <http://www.duboislc.net/SankofaMeaning.html>)

The meaning is summarized in the phrase "look to the past to inform the future." I believe the sankofa haunts my spirit of late because of the things I'm discovering. A book that I'm currently reading is The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan. This book is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the core challenge facing the American Health Care System. At times the book is so deep, that I just have to put it down and think. Pollan expounds upon the collective history of peoples living in the West as one filled with contradictions, namely scarcity in the face of excess and disrespect for the Mother which sustains all life on Earth. This reality is one that I would like to change, at least within my own life. Small changes that I've made in my pantry are that I'm shopping at Trader Joe's, I'm doing a better job of reading the labels of my food, and I'm buying *enough* food, focusing on quality rather than quantity. Healthfully was how I shopped while living abroad but I quickly became enraptured in the Sam's Club culture that is a veritable quick sand of abundance. I aspire to do better. I'm also reflecting on my work life, my social interactions, how I spend my time (work or play)...in a nutshell: what I do--all aspects. I don't anticipate making earth shattering shifts in all aspects of my life, but the quest of the human spirit is towards growth, enlightenment and wisdom. And so I aspire, always looking over my shoulder to reflect on the road traveled and moving forward with the pearls of wisdom that yield expanded knowledge, strength, insight & peace.

*"If you want to know your future, look at what you are doing in this moment."
Tibetan Proverb*

"These days people seek knowledge, not wisdom. Knowledge is of the past, wisdom is of the future." Vernon Cooper

All About Natural Hair Types

Reprint of two articles posted on www.mynhcg.com cited as *_*

Note from Schatzi: First, let me say that after over 25 years of wearing natural hair, I have concluded that my spiral coiled hair is not fundamentally different from anyone else's. The basic structure of hair does not change regardless of race or ethnicity:

"Hair is composed of protein that grows from cells originating within the hair follicle. This is where the hair shaft begins. As soon as these living cells form, they begin their journey upward through the hair follicle. They mature in a process called keratinization. As these newly formed cells mature, they fill up with a fibrous protein called keratin, then move upward, lose their nucleus, and die. By the time the hair shaft emerges from the scalp, the cells of the hair are completely keratinized and are no longer living. The hair shaft that emerges from the scalp is a nonliving fiber composed of keratinized protein. Hair is approximately 91 percent protein." (Milady's Standard Cosmetology, Delmar Learning, 2004, pg. 205.)

What makes hair different is: 1) the wave pattern (whether straight, wavy or extremely curly); 2) the texture—referring to an individual strand's thickness (coarse "thick," medium "normal" or fine "thin"); 3) the density—referring to the number of hairs on the head (high "thick or dense hair", medium or low "thin hair"); 4) the porosity—the ability of the hair to absorb moisture (high porosity can result from overprocessing the hair, leading to dryness and breakage); and 5) the elasticity—"the ability of the hair to stretch and return to its original length without breaking." (Milady's, pp. 209-211). The more elastic the hair, the stronger it is.

With all of these realities of hair, I have come to conclude that we make much more of hair than we should. It's something that everyone's got (somewhere on their body) and as similar as it is in make-up, our differences are unique and beautiful. Following this same tack, I have also come to believe that any hair which is not chemically altered to create a different texture is by default "natural." So, Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic-Latino and Indian women may all have "natural" hair based on their personal decision to care for their hair without permanents and other chemical treatments which alter the structure or texture of their hair. What has given coily, curly or wavy hair a "lock" on the natural hair debate is that we represent the only ethnic group which seems to have an "expectation" regarding the means to care and maintain our hair. And so, we've had to carry the mantle of *natural hair* and wave it high for all to see thereby reminding the world that we are only choosing to wear our hair as it naturally presents itself...as ordained. Wearing natural hair is a God-given right for all peoples because fundamentally, the hair structure or make-up is the same regardless of ethnicity.

All the same, there are "differences" which make some people with Afrocentric hair character traits *feel* that something IS fundamentally different, dare I say awry, about our hair. So, I've included the attached articles from the website "My Natural Hair Care Guide" as noted above. This information is designed to demystify the natural hair debate and come to a more common understanding of our hair. The terminology used in the articles is not always consistent with professional usage of the terms as cited above. But, I believe the context clearly defines the meaning.

For more research or information on this topic, please reference "Chapter 5: Type & Texture" of Chris-Tia E. Donaldson's book [Thank God I'm Natural: The Ultimate Guide to Caring for and Maintaining Natural Hair](#).

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The Differences Between Ethnic and Straight Hair

Curly/Coily Hair is Delicate

Contrary to popular belief, hair that is curly/coily is much more delicate than hair that is straight. Straight hair has as much as twice the amount of cuticles than curly hair. The cuticle is important. On healthy hair the cuticle lies flat. When they lie flat your hair shines. Heat styling, using chemicals, shampoo, and improper combing or brushing all can contribute to making the cuticle rough. Which will in turn make the hair tangle and hard to manage.

Curly/Coily Hair is Drier



The individual hair follicles produce natural oils (sebum) to keep the hairs lubricated. The curlier your hair, the harder it is for the sebum to get all the way down to the ends. Also there are [fewer] individual hairs on a curly haired person than on a person with straight hair. That means that there are [fewer] sebaceous glands to produce oil.

Curly/Coily Hair is Flatter and Finer

If you were to look at a cross section of straight hair under a microscope, you would see it is round like the rings of a tree. Wavy hair is oval which gives it its gentle bends and waves. Curly hair is flat. Coily hair is the flattest of all and the most delicate.

Note from Schatzi: So what does all of this mean? Fundamentally, it means that with fewer cuticles, increased dryness and a tighter wave pattern, curly or coily hair is more inclined to become brittle between shampoos, thus causing split ends or breakage. As a result when it comes to combing, less is more. It is important to avoid combing the hair when it is dry as much as possible. Coily hair, like all hair, is more elastic when wet so, this is the ideal time to style the hair. My preference is for a style that won't require combing again until the next shampoo. In this way, the hair is only combed when wet and elastic. This approach fosters growth and manageability. To combat dryness in between styles, use a leave-in conditioner to add and seal in moisture and/or oils to provide extra lubrication to the cuticle. Curly and coily hair LOVES moisture. That's why an afro always looks and styles better when water and oil are added before combing (or picking). If you follow this rule alone, you'll see a marked improvement in the health and vitality of your hair.

Three Basic Hair Types: Coily, Curly and Wavy

Many times when we discuss "black hair," "natural hair" or "ethnic hair" we are talking about one category of black hair and forgetting that not all people of color have the same hair type. Because many people of color have mixed heritage (no

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pun intended), no one description will suffice to define how everyone's hair will look or behave under any given circumstance.

Our hair comes in three broad categories which can be broken down into sub-categories. In general the majority of people of color have hair that could be defined as wavy, curly or coily to one degree or another. Our three basic hair types are coily, curly, and wavy.

Coily Hair Types

Coily hair can appear to be very strong and durable. It is actually the most fragile of all hair types because it has the fewest cuticle layers. It can be fine and thin or coarse and wiry. It doesn't shine but, when healthy it has a sheen and is cottony soft to touch. When it is wet, coily hair will usually shrink, and can look up to 75% shorter than what it actually is.

Coily hair defies gravity and when left to its own devices has the tendency of growing up and out before it falls down, which can make it appear thicker than what it actually is. The many coils make it harder for the natural oils from the scalp to reach the ends making it the driest of all hair types and prone to breakage making keeping it moisturized a necessity.

Coily hair strands can coil into little cylinders ranging from the size of a pen to the size of the spring inside the pen. Strands can have tight waves that look like the letter "s". Or they can be more bendy than curly with strands that are bent on angles like the letter "z".

Coily hair is the most versatile of all our hair types. With the proper care and techniques, it can be very easy to manage.

Curly Hair Types

Curly hair has a looser coil pattern than coily hair. A strand of curly hair can range from looking like a loose loopy letter "s", well defined ringlets to a corkscrew the size of a large crayon. It is very springy and when pulled will snap right back. It has a lot of body and like coily hair it can appear to be more there than what actually is.

Curly hair usually lengthens with the weight of water when wet but returns to its curly state when dry. But it will become more curly or frizzy when there is humidity in the air.

It shines more than coily hair than but not as much as wavy hair. It usually lengthens with the weight of the water but returns to its curly state when dry. But will become more curly or frizzy when there is humidity. The many curls also make it harder for the natural oils from the scalp to reach the ends.

Wavy Hair Types

Wavy hair tends to be coarse. The strands are usually thicker than both curly and coily hair. Each strand is shaped like a very loose elongated "s." Wavy hair

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characteristically lies close to your head.

It has the most shine of the three hair types. It takes on a straight look easiest of all types but it resists being curled.

Note from Schatzi: In short, no wave pattern or hair texture is better or worse than any other. All types have their strengths and weaknesses. Your challenge is simply to learn to turn what you perceive to be a weakness into a strength. Start by re-affirming your love for your natural hair and your commitment to care for your hair in a way that respects its own rhythm and flow.

Do You Shampoo? (Commentary & Article for Consideration)

Note from Schatzi: I first became aware of the *no shampoo approach* to the care and maintenance of naturally curly hair after learning of Lorraine Massey's book [Curly Girl](#). (Check it out on Amazon.com. It has rave reviews.) The *no shampoo approach* is one that I've gone back and forth with myself. When I tried it the first time a few years back, I thought "this ain't gone work for me." But I was sneezing so much during shampoos that I felt compelled to try harder. So, I opened my mind and my heart and came to really respect the results. It wasn't rocket science, I just used a conditioner to cleanse my hair and a deep conditioner to condition it. What I found: Yes, your hair can get clean without shampoo!!

Well eventually, I fell off the wagon. I think I'm really a sucker for the smell of shampoo and the lather of it all. But since working in the salon, I really believe that I'm developing a hyper-sensitivity to the cleansing agents in shampoos. Even all-natural shampoos like Dr. Bronner's and other shampoos made with organic products seem to cause me the sniffles and sneezes. So, I've recently returned to the *no shampoo approach*. So far, so good. If you're interested, try it out for yourself. It's a definite win-win for increased manageability as the natural sebum is not fully stripped from the hair during the cleansing phase (unlike the effect created with shampoo) and therefore, tangles are totally avoided. The attached article is for those total naturalists who prefer home-made methods. I've tried baking soda and water before but I honestly prefer using conditioner. I'm a sucker for fragrance. But if you like, let us know.

No Poo: Just Say No to Shampoo

Reprint of an article of the same title posted on www.mynhcg.com

No 'pooing is simply using something other than shampoo to wash and cleanse your hair. Why would you want to do this? Well, there are various reasons:

You will not expose yourself to harmful chemicals that are found in most shampoos. So it is good for your health.

You'll save money on products. The simplest method uses baking soda and apple cider vinegar.

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Many people have reported that their hair has become easier to manage. Who knows, you may too.

Do we really need shampoo?

No, not unless you like to tinker under your car and get oil in your hair when you do. Sweat and most dirt that we get in our hair can be rinsed a way. A very mild cleanser is all that we need to get our hair completely clean.

Many shampoos are made up of harsh detergent. Many of the ingredients are quite similar to those that go into dish soap.

Most shampoos also contain chemicals like sodium lauryl sulfate, and sodium laureth sulfate which are skin and eye irritants.

The Alternative

If you want that clean feeling without using shampoo, all you need is baking soda, warm water and apple cider vinegar.

Mix:

1 tbs baking soda

1 cup warm water

Pour into a spray bottle and spray on hair. Work the mixture through your hair. Let it sit for about 60 seconds. Rinse out with cool water or this ACV rinse.

Mix:

2 tbs apple cider vinegar per cup of water

Pour over hair.

How it works

Baking soda is a natural gentle cleansing agent. You can use it for all sorts of cleaning purposes from brushing your teeth to cleaning your counters. ACV is a mild natural antiseptic. When used on hair, it balances pH, helps to detangle, clarifies and seals the cuticle.

The warm water opens the cuticle and allows the baking soda to penetrate the hair. The cool water closes the cuticle, softens your hair, cuts down the frizz and enhances curls.

Note: A little bit of baking soda will go a long way. If you need more liquid, just add more water. Using too much baking soda or leaving the mixture on your hair too long can make it frizzy or dry it out.

Skin Care Discussions

Note from Schatzi: As many of you are aware, we are now offering skin care

services courtesy of licensed aesthetician Andrea Richardson. The next series of articles speak to the rich history that African peoples have of good skin care practices. For your personal skin care tips and consultation, Andrea provides complimentary advice. As for salon services, my personal favourite is the SPA facial. Andrea uses products from the Eminence Organic Skin Care line. Treat yourself is you've considered it. It's well worth the investment. Your soul will bask in the experience of it and your skin will glow with appreciation!

Did Ancient Egyptian Makeup Have Protective Powers? (Reprinted article by Randy Dotinga posted on www.msn.com on January 24, 2010.)

SATURDAY, Jan. 23 (HealthDay News) -- The stunning eye makeup worn thousands of years ago by Queen Nefertiti and other Egyptian royals may not have been used to enhance beauty alone: New research suggests that the ancient cosmetics may have helped prevent or treat eye disease.

Some ancient Egyptians thought their lead-based black eye makeup could protect against illness. Until now, scientists haven't believed this because lead-based substances -- such as paint -- can make people sick.

In the study, published in the current issue of the journal *Analytical Chemistry*, researchers analyzed substances from ancient Egyptian makeup containers that are preserved at the Louvre museum in Paris. They found that the substances raise the production of nitric oxide in skin cells, which can help boost the immune system and prevent or treat eye infections.

According to study author Christian Amatore, of the Universite Pierre & Marie Curie, and colleagues, eye infections could develop due to exposure to contaminated water and may have commonly struck ancient Egyptians.

While it's not known if the makeup was specifically produced for health reasons, "it is clear that such intentional production remains the first known example of a large-scale chemical process," the study authors wrote.

How Ancient Facial Skin Care Methods Can Keep You Looking Young (Reprinted article by Amy Austen posted on ezinearticles.com)

Did you know that there are ancient facial skin care methods which can keep you looking younger? Different cultures each have their own beauty secrets and special ingredients that they use to keep themselves looking radiant and glowing. Now, you can reproduce many of these same treatments at home. If you use them you will see how your skin and your

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"Natural is always best and by picking facial skin care products with natural ingredients you can improve the look and texture of your skin."

Embrace the Beauty of You.

health can benefit.

Most of these ancient beauty practices work well because they are natural and rely on ingredients with a long tradition of effectiveness. This means that if you use the same products and techniques, you will be avoiding many harmful chemicals that are so common in modern synthetic skin care products.

One example of an ancient facial skin care method is Ayurveda. Recently, many of the principles that are part of this holistic approach to health and beauty have become more and more widely known and promoted. It is a safe and effective system because it looks at the entire patient in order to customize the products and processes that are being used.

Ayurveda uses the approach that the body must be in balance for optimal health and beauty. It recognizes that inner health can affect your appearance and tries to treat the entire patient. This is good because any improvements in your appearance mean that you are getting healthier overall, instead of simply covering up a problem.

You don't need to closely follow any one ancient skin care routine to benefit from the wisdom that they can pass along. You can use many of the ingredients that they use in your own skincare routine and benefit from them. For example, the use of milk is one that is common to Ayurvedic beauty. It helps to clear away dead skin and moisturize the skin underneath. If you look for facial skin care products that include lactic acid, you can get the same benefits.

Another ingredient that is commonly used in Ayurveda is honey. Manuka honey in particular has been proven excellent at combating skin problems and can help with everything from moisturizing to fighting bacteria in cuts and pimples.

Remember that natural is always best and by picking facial skin care products with natural ingredients you can improve the look and texture of your skin. Being able to do this without putting your overall health at risk is truly priceless.

Note from Schatzi: On behalf of the staff of Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa, we wish you all the very best for a wonderful and prosperous 2010!!