

AU NATUREL

WHEN IT'S TIME TO CHANGE... Health and Wealth Updates

It's been a minute since my last missive; two months to be more exact. I've been pondering and reflecting as always. But, I've been doing more reading than writing. So, I didn't feel the vibe to print. The sky is blue and beautiful today, the foliage is verdant and I feel at peace. Within my personal life, I've been fighting powers and principalities. We had a major victory two weeks ago. So, it's good to feel that time and tide are on your side. I won't go into the details. But suffice it to say that government bureaucrats who wield power and authority like kings and magi are as dangerous as corporate barons, charlatans and thieves. What makes the scenario tragic is that they have no immediate gain to be had from the show of authority (unlike the others), only an impermanent ego boost. [Woe is vanity!](#) Lord, help me to see it in myself. I forgive the transgressors, now that the scales of Justice have fallen on our side of the

battlefront. But, I should have forgiven them sooner. I fear the battle may have taken a negative toll. So much so that my blood pressure is on the rise for the first time IN MY LIFE! I'm not amused to say the least. I am the same weight that I was in college. Up until now, I also had the same blood pressure (about 110/70). As a vegetarian, I eat healthily and I exercise regularly. So, I'm not a likely candidate for hypertension, though it tends to run in my family. The truth is: When I realized at age 16 that every time I ate pork I got a headache, I simply gave it up AT AGE 16! I'm not someone who has ever needed to learn things the hard way. So when my husband says about my elevated BP: "Well, you're getting older." My response is: "I don't want to hear that! I've made choices all my life, every day of my life to avoid being in a doctor's chair or on medication. So, I will not go quietly into the night. I will resist!!" I'm

A PRELUDE TO PILGRIMAGE

As some of you may know, I'm preparing my mind, heart and spirit for a sojourn in Egypt--[home of the oldest Christian Church founded by St. Mark in 42 AD](#). It will be only my second visit to the Continent. I visited in 1988 and have not been back since. So, I'm particularly thrilled to be returning "home" after almost 30 years! Strangely, a sister recently said, "Wow! While you're in Egypt, you might as well visit Africa!" I simply said, "Egypt is in Africa. I'm going to Africa." And then, I changed the subject. Many have asked, "Why Egypt?" Well, I've answered that question in many ways. But, the bottom line is I'm very interested in understanding: 1) Pre-Nicene Christianity; and 2) the spirituality (not the religion) of the people who predated the Jews of the Old and New Testaments. God existed before the beginning of mankind. So, I'm fascinated to understand what ancient peoples believed about Him. Their polytheism, myths and rituals do not fascinate me greatly, though I confess that I was recently amused to learn that [the goddess Aset \(Isis\) braided the hair of handmaidens to help her gain information about the whereabouts of her deceased husband Ausar \(Osiris\)](#). Clearly, the hairstylist has been revered for millennia by women of color! But, I'm more interested in ancient texts. I recently came across [a translation of ancient texts](#) that reminds me of Genesis, John, 1 Corinthians and the Psalms. And I have only read two chapters of it so far! Very interesting! As always, "may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in His sight." Amen.

monitoring every aspect of my life with surgical precision with a view to implementing a change. The close personal monitoring has an amusing twist to it though. While looking in the mirror just the other day, I took off my satin woolylock (which protects my hair when I'm sleeping) and busted out laughing because of the abundance of gray hair. I felt like an anomaly. I said to myself: 'Schatzi, you have the body of a 20 year old, the face of a 30-40 year old, and the hair color of a 60 year old. What the HELL?!' It was funny!!! How does the body age so disproportionately?! I can laugh about it BECAUSE my face and body don't match my hair. If they did at this age, I think I would have been crying! ☺ All the same, I accept my fate. But, not the elevated blood pressure. The pattern that I'm observing is that it is elevated at the start of the week and levels out to normal by Wednesday. The early part of the week is typically when my sleep is most sporadic as well. So, it's clearly stress related. The question is: What do I change about myself and my life to reverse the trend? My acupuncturist believes that sleep alone is the culprit. I wouldn't argue with that because there's a definite correlation. But, I'm working on it. I have to because I don't have pork to give up, I don't need to lose weight and exercise more, I don't need to give up high cholesterol, fatty foods, I don't smoke and drink alcohol, and I don't have a high stress job. I DO love salt; but, recent research evidence shows that [salt intake will not give you high blood pressure](#). So, there! (My tongue is

sticking out but you ALL can't see it! ☺) Overall, I believe we don't really understand hypertension. It's easy to point at obvious bad habits as the culprits when we as a society live so contrary to good health. But, I don't fit the paradigm, and therefore, I will not accept an easy solution. All the same, I'm not stressing. I live way too healthily to be stressed about what may be perfectly normal. In fact, I'm passively fascinated by the process because it's new and different. I'm learning more about myself through the process so in the end, I'll be better for it. But, I won't accept age as a valid reason. I'll find out what is my trigger, and I'll fix it; because, I'm that health conscious. My body is my temple. Need I say more?

As far as news and current events, I'm totally out of the loop. When I noticed my rise in BP, I turned off NPR first thing in the morning. If I can't do anything about it, I don't need to know about it. But some stories find you even when you're not looking. One such story was [a tragic tale of neglect](#). The Grenfell Tower fire in London is a horrific reminder of the perils of allowing profiteers to define standards which should be properly regulated for the benefit of public safety. It's an outrage. But, it's an old tale indeed. [Hear this sister from Greensboro, NC tell the tale from another perspective](#). It's time to change our outlook on corporate profits and greed. This is not rocket science. It is righteousness. Lord, give us the strength to resist the melody of madness. It is indeed a sweet sonnet!! *Sigh*.

ARTISTIC INTERLUDE

Vocal and Box Office Favorites

Musical: Okay, y'all. I've been on a jazz vibe of late. I just recently heard [this sister](#) for the first time and fell in love instantly. Her voice quality reminds me of an interesting cross between [Macy Gray](#) and [Dinah Washington](#). [Did I nail it or what?](#)! ☺ Nice! Her timbre's sharp edge is the silk that demands notice. I LIKE! Last issue, I said I'd be living somewhere in Europe if I had the gift of scat; but, I more than likely would be in Montreal. I LOVE THAT CITY! It is the only city on the planet that I visited and felt an instant connection with. I felt as if I'd been there before;

maybe in another life. Who knows? The ONLY REASON I'm not there now is that it's too blasted cold!! That's all.

And unless you think I'm a total sexist, I must speak truth. Arguably, the most versatile jazz vocalist who has ever lived is [Al Jarreau](#) who passed away in February--[two days after announcing his retirement](#)!! He said, "If I aint singing God, I'm done. Beam me up y'all!" While in the salon, I played his CD a few years back because I was just in that kind of mood. My client was so confused. She said, "What is he saying?!" She didn't

ask with curiosity and wonder. Rather, her tone was one of annoyance and frustration. How do you answer such a question about a jazz vocal legend? What's he saying! My dear if you don't know, I can't explain it to you. I think I changed the CD. I didn't want my brother to go out like that. He deserves to be lauded not leered. So, that was that. I keep him on the dl for the most part. But, when I'm in a mood, I go there. And when I'm really feeling spry, I take [this brother](#) along for the ride. [Here are the masters together!](#) So pretty! Interestingly enough while Al Jarreau is a jazz vocal god, my favorite male jazz vocalist would have to be Michael Franks. [I don't quite know why.](#) But, there's something about this guy's voice that does it for me. Always has. ☺ From a purely esthetic vibe, he has a blessed energy. But from a technical perspective, he reminds me of the servant with one talent. Al Jarreau was the servant who was given five talents and turned them into ten. But, Franks is the anomaly. Because instead of burying his one talent and being scornful about receiving only one, this brother worked his talent in so many ways and so completely that he actually "gets blood out of a turnip." He is not a virtuoso, and he honestly appears to fight for each note outside of the middle C vocal range of tenor. In a quirky sort of way, his style is reminiscent of [Thelonious Monk--who used dissonance to punctuate melody.](#) Listen carefully for Franks' [use of dissonance](#) in this piece. Yes, the sharp and flat notes are clearly written into the music score. But his interpretation is not just because he's clever. He's working hard for those notes! That's turning a weakness into a strength! Even his harmonic interpretation has a pure, simple resonance that is reminiscent of The Monk! His song lyrics are usually a brief snapshot of life--tangential and free. I love his

style!! This brother took his one talent and said, "Thank you God. I'll make you proud." I say, "BRAVO!!" ☺

Cinematic: In the realm of cinema, it's been all about thrillers for me lately! On the week-end of May 19th, I binged on thrillers to the point of anxiety. The choices were: [The Split](#) -- because I LOVE psychopathic dramas, [The Girl with all the Gifts](#)--which I errantly thought was a British X-Men spin-off (wrong!!) and [Dark Angel](#)--because I LOVE psychopathic dramas, though this piece was eerily too real for words re: its counter-plot on the plight of womanhood in Victorian England. After watching these very different macabre productions, I was spent. I barely got to sleep Sunday night with images of murder and mayhem wreaking havoc on my brain waves. I wouldn't recommend that you watch them all so closely together as I did. Cauchemar!!

At any rate, The Split was the hands-down victor of my week-end box office binge. The casting of James McAvoy as the lead character was a stroke of genius! If you stop the DVD, rewind, and watch him very closely as he morphs from one to another of his 24 personalities, you appreciate the raw talent of this young man. BRILLIANT!! The Girl with all the Gifts was a total surprise! I expected X-Men and got Zombies...although my sons assured me that zombies in the movie were the next stage of mutant evolution and therefore were truly Z-Men. As for the Dark Angel, by the time I watched home girl wipe out so many people, I couldn't get to sleep. The movie left a lot of questions; but then, I imagine so did her life. To encapsulate so many of her lethal deeds in a storyline that spans approximately 2 hours of time was rather skillful. If you miss a scene, you've missed a key point in the plot of this film. Choose cautiously; but when you do, Enjoy!

RELEASING LOCKS

The whys and hows of liberation

I decided to write this article recently when a client called me to ask that I cut off her locks. Well, I'm a stylist who is generally averse to scissors. I don't cut hair unless it's absolutely necessary; and most times, it's not. I was not trained as a cosmetologist. Any traditionally trained stylist knows that hair cutting is the bread and butter of the hair care industry. Without it, there would be no industry because it could not sustain itself. This is why your stylist growing up always wanted to cut your hair and invariably took off too much. It's all good. I'm not mad. Its life and proper

grooming is part and parcel of the journey. But as a natural stylist and a naturalista, I recommend cutting ONLY when I know it will enhance the beauty of the client and the hair style. Holding onto split ends is never desirable nor is holding onto dead, lifeless ends which are damaged from straightening. I'm quick to release these detractors. But when a client with a mane full of beautiful hair says "cut", I'm going to ask "why?" It's in my nature. I will not change. It is what it is. So when a client recently called and asked me to cut her locks, I naturally asked: "You want me to trim them?" She said, "No. I want to cut them off."

And so, the probing began: "What's going on? Are they damaged? Are you experiencing breakage?" Response: "No." "What is the length of your locks?" Response: "They come to the middle of my back. They're pretty long. I've had them for a while." So, I consider. People often want a change after years of doing one thing, so I'm starting to understand the motivation. But as a stylist whose been around for more than a minute, I also know of people who've made the decision to change their hair with a major cut, or with a new relaxer service on natural hair only to tell me later that they regretted the decision. I never want to contribute to remorse. So, I come towards the end of my consultative investigation: "I see. So, why do you want to cut your hair AT THIS TIME?" Response: "I've been wearing locks for a while. I want a change. I've worn locks before. This is my second set. I know I can restart them if I want to. But, I realized that I've worn locks but I've never worn natural hair. I don't know anything about my natural texture...what it will do, what it won't do. I want to learn more about my hair." And with that response, I'm sold. My response: "Come on in. I'll cut them off for you. When is good for you?" You see, she was knowledgeable and experienced in releasing locks but knew nothing of free, natural hair. This was a wonderful learning opportunity. And I felt it my honor to be the person to set her on a new pathway that prayerfully would be fruitful and satisfying.

When cutting locks, the approach to take depends on the client being served. Some sisters are fly all the time. So, they want the finished look to be bold and provocative. If they want to wear it loose, I may recommend that they visit a barber for a precision cut after I've removed the locks and shampooed and shaped the hair. Precision cutting is not my bag, and I won't pretend it is. Otherwise, I will focus my energy very carefully on maintaining as much length as possible while releasing the locks. I do so by identifying the defining line between where the hair is locking and where the hair is still "free." The logical next step is to cut directly on this line or slightly above it. I may do so. But, I often cut lower down the hair strand into the region where the hair is locked. There are a couple of reasons why:



- 1) Clients who are accustomed to having a lot of hair on their head will typically be shocked to suddenly have little or "no hair"--even though they have made up their mind and demanded the service. So, I try to soften the shock to their eyes and to their psyche by maintaining all of the salvageable length possible.
- 2) The hair has different textures throughout the head. So, hair in the rear of the head may lock more quickly or more slowly than hair in other parts of the head. As a result, the "defining line" between locked and free strands will not be in the same place throughout the hair. In some areas, you may have two inches of "free" hair to work with. In others, you may have only one inch. So, I look for the region of the hair that has the longest free strands

and I cut. When I have a natural feel for how much length this region of the hair will be, I cut the remaining hair to match this section. If the “long section” is somewhat of an anomaly for the rest of the client’s hair, I will find a happy median point for the client’s hair length.

When cutting into the locked section of the hair, the result is that the ends of the hair strands will be joined. I separate them with my fingers, to the extent possible and rely on the shampoo, conditioning and combing process to deal with stubborn strands that are reluctant to embrace their new found freedom. While shampooing, there will be a lot of shedding; but, that’s normal. The strands that would have been shed through the natural process are now no longer locked so they are falling away. This observation should be no cause for concern.

Next, I trim the hair down to give it an overall evenness. Some sections will need more trim than others based on how the locks were cut. After the hair is evened up, the client may want a coil or twist style to get an early orientation to how their natural hair texture behaves. I often discount this initial service as a gift to the client’s new self-perception. That’s naturally up to you. But, many women will leave it with it free so that they can go home and play. And that is how it should be.

Once the service is complete, I give the locks back to the client. I do not throw away a client’s locks. Yes, I throw away loose hair but not locks. It probably has a lot to do with my Jamaican connection and my reverence for locks and the lock journey. For this reason, I will gather the locks in a bag and will give them to the client to dispose of in the way that they feel is appropriate. That’s my own quirk; but, I’ll surely not change it. You will surely develop your own style. But make sure that the client is truly ready for the transition. It’s takes years to grow locks that the length that I cut off. It will likewise take years to grow back the hair. You NEVER want to be seen as putting short-term profits ahead of the long-term needs of your client. So, ask questions to be sure. And then, release the locks. Liberation also has its natural advantages! ☺

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