

# AU NATUREL



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## The 40 Year Twitch

By Schatzi H. McCarthy

It's October—my favourite month of the year, for obvious reasons. This year, I turn the big 40!! I'm actually willing to admit it! It's because my son Jamar got a hold of his birth certificate while registering for high school and now the 'cat's out of the bag.' His comment: "Mummy (*pregnant pause*) I saw my birth certificate. And well,... let's just say, I know your secret. It's safe with me" (as he dons a Cheshire cat grin). My response: "Yeah, yeah, whatever!" The curious thing is that since his brother asked me my age (for the ka-zillionth time) just two weeks ago, it seems that Jamar is a young man of his word. So I can now proudly state that I'm 40 years young. But what does that mean?

Well, it means that: 1) I still have a lot of growing up to do. That was evident just last month. One day, I came home from the office *cursing like a sailor*, literally!! I didn't even stop by the salon. I was on a tirade!. My husband had to listen to it all. He just nodded, as he always does, with his very serious expression that says, 'Don't say a word. Just listen and nod. Say the wrong thing, and she might be yelling AT YOU instead of TO YOU.' Poor Lloyd! I was relieved the kids weren't home but that wouldn't have tempered *MY* wrath. They're good kids but they know Mom's got issues and can be "*mad crazy*" when she wants to be. ☺ The day was so bad that I called my mother. Thank God for mothers. She is patience and resolve personified. But I do remember her in her *hey-day*. (I guess you can say that's when I was taking notes Mom. ☺) At any rate, she responded by singing me a lullaby. "*This is the day that the Lord has made...*" Imagine me in a tub full of water, *RANTING* and my mother singing me a lullaby. It did in fact sooth the savage beast. I started to smile and then thought, "I'm 40 years old and my mother is still singing me lullabies!" Thanks for the reminder to always give thanks Mom. Needless to say, I can use a good dose of maturity.

2) I have a lot of living to do. When I reflect on the past 40 years, I realize it's been good but I still have a lot I want to do. Visiting France has been on my "to do" list for a while but somehow the Ivory Coast is far more appealing to me of late. I also haven't written the novel that I started while in Jamaica. My computer crashing didn't help matters! But, I've re-written the lost material and expanded upon it considerably. But finishing will take concentrated time. Which begs the question, what about my soul? When do I take time for that? I would argue, everyday that I pray, write, create

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and be. But, when is the down time. My life is very busy!! That's a good thing, right? I mean, *idle hands*... But truth told, I don't really take enough "me-time." I have a massage therapist who can attest to that fact. Just imagine. I own a day spa designed for relaxation and I don't take enough me-time. It's pretty understandable really. YOU relax and see a beautiful carpet. I see a need to get the carpet cleaning scheduled. *You catch my drift*. But, it's all good.

Somebody's got to pay attention to the details. All the same, I better start logging some me-hours soon, or my poor soul will perish. Case in point...item #1. I would like to mature gracefully, so I'll work on item #1 even harder!

3) I have a lot to be thankful for and a lot to give. When your mind is in *create mode*, you often forget the shoulders that you're standing on to reach that mark. I pray that I will always remember and know that the backs that I stand on are much broader than my own. When I look at the resolve and grace that was employed by my grandmothers and the trials they endured... Well, I am humbled. They were cut from a different cloth—a rich, beautiful silk—timeless, durable, graceful and unyielding. Well.... call me *spandex*—modern, easily worn and yielding but only willing to stretch so far—in a nutshell, impatient. For what? Hmmm. (Sounds like achieving growth in items 1 and 2 will require a delicate balancing act.) One thing I know: If I am to become a gift for which others feel thankful, it will require more giving and surely more back and shoulder strengthening on my part. This next generation looks like a hefty lot. ☺

Forty years, it's an awakening. Not a rude one; more of a gentle shudder. A time of reflection and planning. I'm thankful that I have the opportunity to see the day. When I consider the fact that the majority of clients at *Schatzi's* are younger than I am, I know that I am at an appropriate place in life. So, this edition of *Au Naturel* is dedicated to, what else—aging gracefully in a world of beauty. Enjoy and Embrace the Beauty of You.

## Easy Tips for Aging Gracefully

Reprint of Article posted on [www.healthguidance.org](http://www.healthguidance.org)  
By Krishan Bakhru

1. Have a purpose in life. Women who enjoy long, fruitful lives inevitably feel that they have a reason to live and a purpose that they are meant to fulfill. This is different for every woman, because each of us is unique. If you are not clear about your purpose in life, begin by following what brings you joy and helps you to feel a part of the whole. Know that it is never too late to begin doing what you love and to cultivate listening more to your inner wisdom than to external "shoulds."

2. Accept and love yourself. There is no one quite like you in this world, nor is there likely to ever be again. Focus on appreciating the incredible gift of life that you have been blessed with, and remind yourself daily that you have something special to offer to the world. Loving and accepting yourself just as you are will free your energy to care for yourself in healthy ways.

3. Learn to relax. Learning to flow with life is essential for your well-being. No matter how healthfully you eat or how much you exercise, if you are chronically stressed your body and your mind will suffer, and your enjoyment of life will be dramatically diminished. Stress literally attacks your body and your brain by creating cell-destroying free radicals. Nourish a sense of physical and emotional calm through relaxation exercises, meditation, yoga, and other practices that you find balancing.

4. Eat a diet of whole, natural foods. Forget restrictive diets and focus instead on nourishing your body with a wide variety of delicious, fresh, whole, nutrient-dense foods. In addition, supplement your diet with extra vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, essential fatty acids, and other nutrients that are known to support health and longevity.

*"The spiritual eyesight improves as the physical eyesight declines."*

*Plato*

*"I grow more intense as I age."  
Florida Scott-Maxwell*

5. Move your body daily. Regular exercise strengthens your cardiovascular system, muscles, and bones, keeps you flexible, improves your circulation, brightens your mood, and helps you to maintain a healthful weight. Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of moving your body and experiment with different forms of exercise to find what is right for you.

6. Avoid exposure to toxins. Chemicals in foods and water, poisons in household and garden products, and environmental pollutants are major causes of free radicals, which damage your body's cells, cause degenerative disease, and accelerate the aging process. Make a deliberate effort to eliminate these harmful substances from your life.

7. Cultivate joy. Your mind plays a critical role in not only your mental health, but in your physical well-being. There are many ways to nourish a positive attitude, including consciously cultivating gratitude. The healthiest people are those who see challenges as opportunities for growth, instead of as obstacles. Feed your spirit daily in simple ways such as spending time in nature, being with family and friends whom you enjoy, and meditation. Discover what feels good to you, and do it every day.



Photo from [www.blackskin.com](http://www.blackskin.com)

## Poetically Speaking...

I would like to start this month's write-up with a word of thanks and praise. As many of you are aware, Row Lewis is actually the host of Poetically Correct, our monthly poetry sharing series at *Schatzi's*. Well, Row has been dedicating time to family for the past few months. A while back, her father, Rev. Raymond C. Lewis, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. She has been in Florida for quite a while with the family. Well according to Row, her family was told on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> that the "cancer is in remission" and the doctor's "have nothing to treat." What a blessing! With an entire congregation and a family of EIGHT(?) children praying for you, suffice it to say that God has shown his favour. ☺ To Rev. Lewis, I give thanks. I do not know you, but I know that you are good man. As they say, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. Judging by the character and presence of your child Row, I know that you are a beautiful person. I take great joy in the news of your recovery.

September's poetry sharing series was a communal treat. There were old friends and new, with soulful words to express the realities of the world. The Bullocks were an added treat: Mr. Bullock is indeed a poet extraordinaire. This young man came with a notebook full of original works, which according to him are just his latest works. He's been actively writing since the 3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE!! His pieces were truly heartfelt. I hope to hear more of your pieces soon, my brother. Until then, I invite all to come to Poetic Paradise, located at Jamaica Paradise Café on Thursday, October 25, 2007. Poetically Correct will not be held this month. Instead, Schatzi's is co-sponsoring the Poetic Paradise event, which is hosted by award winning poet Monica Daye of Shairi's Radio Show. Doors open at 7pm. The show will begin at 8pm. Sign Up for open mike will take place between 7:15-8pm. Open mike will include poetry, singing, neo-soul, conscious hip-hop and more. Jamaica Paradise Café is located at 1030 North Rogers Lane, Raleigh, NC 27610 off of New Bern Ave. Hope to see you there!! In the interim, the next two poems are reflections on aging. I aspire to be the first. The second is an abstract that reminds me of how mother will be as an old woman. It makes me laugh every time I read it!! I just can't help myself. Mom's colour is GREEN. And trust me, she wears it well. ☺

*Age is opportunity no less,  
Than youth itself, though in another dress,  
And as the evening twilight fades away,  
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.*  
*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

### Aging Gracefully

Gazing in my mirror,  
I have confidence in my curves,  
determination in my eyes,  
strength, ability, intellect,  
class and style.  
Surrendering all that is youth  
from memories to metaphors  
of experiences that molded me.  
It's a gift.  
A magnificent journey  
neither unexpected nor unwelcome.  
An aging art with  
haunting mixtures  
of wisdom and warmth.  
An accumulation of all experiences  
with no regrets and lessons learned.  
Accepting what I cannot change,  
life gets easier  
as I become mature.  
Responsive and unafraid,  
like a natural rhythm,  
I wear it very well.  
I give aging gracefully a  
whole new meaning  
and I am loving  
every minute of it.

By La1retta

### Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer  
gloves  
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.  
...

By Jenny Joseph

## “I Wanna Go to Beautiful” aka The Sixth Dimension

By Schatzi H. McCarthy

This missive was inspired by the Arts. You'll know more about what I mean later. But first, let me say that beauty abounds. I see it in the most interesting places, the most curious of faces. It's everywhere. Years ago, I told my sons not to use the word “ugly” to describe the universe. Sure, war is ugly. Poverty is ugly. But not people! George Bush....well.... He's beautiful too though perhaps a bit misguided....a LOT bit!!!! Anyhoo, I honestly believe that I've been given beauty-coloured glasses. I honestly don't believe I've ever seen an “ugly” person. My husband would not agree. But, I honestly feel like the protagonist in the movie *The Sixth Sense: I see beautiful people all around me*. On the surface, it sounds kind of strange but if others felt my heart, they'd know how cool it is. Because the sixth sense connotes extra-sensory perception, I think of it as a realm of heightened awareness. So I call it the “sixth dimension.” Everyone can't sense or vibe with it. But it's real.

Case in point: A few weeks back, I saw a young lady in our consultation room with one of the stylists and her mother. When they came out of the room to join me in the reception area, the young lady said “Oh, Hi Schatzi! Do you remember me? You talked me into cutting off all my hair.” (*blink, blink*) Now, understand me. I was shocked by the reality of her words because of my history. I remember growing up and always hearing stylists tell people to cut off their hair. My thought was always: “She's got issues!! She has hair and doesn't want anyone else to have it. The @%%\$&!” So to hear someone else describe me in such a context was an immediate assault to my ears. But then, I studied her face. I recognized the facial features. When she described how her hair looked before cutting it, I combed through my mind's eye and found no memory...no recorded data whatsoever. I couldn't find her former locks anywhere. I decided to stop looking. Refocusing on the image in front of me, I studied her again. Her aura was absolute poetry. I responded by saying ‘I honestly can't remember what your hair looked like before, but as you look right now, I WILL

NOT FORGET YOU! Truly! You look like you stepped off of a magazine cover.’ The girl was all THAT...AND a bag of chips! I then thought: If I told her to cut off her hair (and I probably did, I just don't remember), she truly gained for the advice because she is flawless. Trust me, you would think so too. The stylist and I were both in absolute agreement that she was rocking the ‘fro. ROCKIN!! Her mother registered some noticeable reticence about her daughter's new-found look, but was she seeing the same face that I was seeing!!! I mean!! What I see makes my heart smile. It's inspiring. But, maybe I'm just trippin'.

Then, there is the young lady who came by the poetry reading in September. I was seated at the receptionist desk waiting for fellow poet laureates. As this young lady entered, my eyes were drawn to her immediately. She looked like an ancient African princess, though dressed in jeans and a shy, winning smile. When I approached her to introduce myself, I noticed that she registered a height of about 6'1”. Her skin was the color of milk chocolate. She was not thin. She was perfect. Her tresses were breathtaking: beautiful locks, delicately tendrilled and flowing to the middle of her back. Coal BLACK!!! I thought: ‘This sister does not need OUR services because she's got it goin' on ALL BY HER SELF! Work IT!’ I then proceeded to compliment her on her beautiful locks, as did everyone in the salon that saw them. After the poetry reading, she prepared to leave and I just had to tell her, ‘You really should consider modeling. You look great.’ She shyly received the compliment, and soon departed. All I could think was: What man would not fall at her feet if she gave him her attention? Does she even know how she looks? She showed no sign of vanity or even awareness of her magnetic beauty. That's a good thing. I thought of how awesome God is to create beauty in such an infinite variety of ways.

Then, there was the sister who came in just this past week-end. She had the Erykah Badu vibe goin' on, for real!! She had her own unique style of dress, crowned with a beautiful head wrap that said: “I AM because I KNOW!” We connected immediately. While Martina styled her hair (with me interjecting intermittently), she and I vibed for several hours about everything on Earth

Please see *Sixth Dimension* on page 5



*Sixth Dimension* from page 4

and in Heaven. I was *SUPPOSED* to be finishing this newsletter during those 3–4 hours. (*Ahem.*) But, I could not deny the power of her spirit. We had words to share. It was a beautiful experience. When her session was complete, we embraced. It was the most natural thing to do. She's just real.

So, why do I share all of this? Well, I share this information to say to my beautiful sisters that you have been dealt an unfair hand. In a Eurocentric society, you have come to embrace a standard of beauty that is antithetical to your entire genetic make-up. As such, you feel it necessary to aspire to the lower rung of a ladder that was not designed for you. We have no reason to get mad at brothers for wanting the *original*, when we ourselves seek to emulate it. (*Touché.* But, deal with it!) If brothers were bleaching and relaxing and I wanted that, a nice bronze Italian would do me JUST FINE. I have long rejected the American social norm of beauty. I threw away the hand I was dealt years ago. I play with the hand God gave me. I have long shifted the paradigm for myself, and I walk in another plane completely. As I see more and more sisters, walking in this *sixth dimension*, I am awe-struck by their grace and power and beauty. When I see how awe-inspiring they are, I know why the unfair hand had to be dealt. My sisters are simply too fabulous! So in movies and television, European women are repeatedly reminded of their beauty (as are all users of the *program* being viewed) and Black women are relegated to second best. Yes, things ARE changing, but slowly. Don't believe me. Go back to rent the movie "*Cat Woman*." The stars of this movie are Halle Berry and Sharon Stone. Now, no one would deny the unmistakable beauty of these two Hollywood queens. However, listen very closely to the words used to describe the beauty of both women. You'll be surprised. I won't tell you because it will ruin it for you. Just go back, rent it and listen carefully. When I watched the film at the movie theatre with my family and my sons looked at me upon noticing the obvious additions and omissions, I knew they were now empowered to rise above and reject the programming. Needless to say, I don't watch much TV or movies these days. *If it ain't Jet Li, I ain't goin'!* A well placed



*Lenworth Perry and Andrea Atkinson-Perry  
Wedded on September 13, 2007*

*Andrea, mi sistren: I wish you and Lenworth much love and happiness! I'm sorry I wasn't in Barbados to witness it for myself. Thanks for giving me the heads-up on your elopement. I miss you very much. My life in Jamaica seems like it was a lifetime away. But friends like you make the memories unforgettable. ☺ Lenworth: Andrea is a sweet soul that I love very much. You make her happy, so you're all right with me. Welcome to the family. I look forward to meeting you when I am next in Jamaica. By the way, I'm not a guest. Know this. My home likewise is yours. ☺*

turning back kick discriminates solely based on good vs. evil. So, I vibe with the Asian brothers kickin' rumpus and leave the love stories to the lovelorn...unless of course they're Asian love stories. I'm fascinated by these. If you can actually get to the end of the story without the lovers dying some tragic death, it's unusual. Asian films rarely have the touchy-feely endings. I don't mind the tragedy in them however, because somehow it feels rather bitter-sweet--more real to life.

As I reflect on this missive, I must confess that it was inspired almost completely by the incomparable India Arie. Many know her from her recent hit "I Am Not My Hair" which I have come to see as the mantra of *Schatzi's*. But the CD that I've been listening to of late is her *Acoustic Soul* CD. You may recall the hit "Video." And of course, there is the sensuous masterpiece "Brown Skin." Um um um. That song!! But, have you listened to "Ready for Love," "Simple" and "Always in My Head"? Suffice it say, my girl's got skills!! The serene piece "(I Wanna Go to) Beautiful" has become my favourite on the CD. It speaks to my soul. I listen to CDs a lot while working. When I'm in the zone, I need inspiration, so I call on India, many a time. She never lets me down. If you haven't listened lately, give her an ear.

Please see *Sixth Dimension* on page 6

The CD is full of soul, like the soul train of old. 😊

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So in concluding, I must say that I have come to enjoy life in the *sixth dimension*. It's really not all about hair and skin. (My girl in the photo to the left doesn't even NEED hair to be flawless. Is she awesome or WHAT?!) It's more about awareness and the celebration of life: like the sister who had a full scholarship to Duke's Divinity School. Then there's the 12 yr old I saw walking on Blount St. with his book bag. I wish you could have seen this kid. He was what every Black man should be. His hair was in a Mohawk with locks that fell down in his face and down his neck. His stride was measured. He walked with the confidence of the ancients. He looked like he was going to the library. He looked like he WAS the library! His aura was undeniably regal. As we passed him, I had to turn and look back to be sure I saw the truth. I almost beckoned my husband to stop the car! I wanted to say, "Hey, little brother. Who are you? Who are your parents? They have served you and society well." It was THAT obvious! But I couldn't accost the little kid on the street so I just sat back and smiled once he was out of my view. All I could think was: This next generation is 'gonna turn this mother out!' Hope I'm around to see it. But if not, that's cool too. So family: Welcome to the *sixth dimension*. It's good to see so many of you on this side of the cosmos. Here is where beauty abounds. ROCK ON!!

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