

CHIC-TRIBE

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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DARE TO DREAM

**SINETHEMBA
MADONDO**

ISSUE 33: SEPT/OCT 2026





YOU ARE ALLOWED TO GROW
AT YOUR OWN PACE. YOU ARE
ALLOWED TO BEGIN AGAIN. YOU
ARE ALLOWED TO BECOME
SOMEONE YOUR YOUNGER SELF
COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Tribe,

There is something special about spring. The world begins to feel a little lighter. New leaves appear, flowers bloom, and we are reminded that growth does not always happen loudly. Sometimes, it happens quietly, beneath the surface, before anyone else can see it.

That is the spirit behind our **September/October issue, Bloom: Renewal, Growth & Health Awareness.**

This season also gives us an opportunity to reconnect with where we come from. September is a month of heritage, a time to celebrate the cultures, stories, creativity and traditions that continue to shape who we are. At Chic-Tribe, we believe that celebrating African women means celebrating the many layers of our identities, from our roots and communities to the women we are becoming.

And then there is growth. Personal growth. Career growth. Creative growth. The kind that comes from choosing yourself, starting again, taking up space and giving yourself permission to evolve.

For our cover, we are celebrating **Sinethemba Madondo**, a woman whose story reflects the courage, ambition and evolution that this issue represents. Her journey is a reminder that blooming does not mean having everything figured out. It means continuing to grow into yourself, even when the journey changes along the way.

As we move into October, our attention also turns to health awareness, particularly breast cancer awareness. This is an important reminder that caring for ourselves should be part of the conversation all year round. Knowing our bodies, prioritising our health, asking questions and encouraging the women around us to do the same are all acts of self-care.

Inside this issue, we are bringing you stories, conversations, beauty, fashion, lifestyle and practical inspiration for the woman who is constantly becoming. We want this issue to feel like a breath of fresh air, while still giving you something meaningful to take with you.

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BLOOMING, IN HER OWN LANGUAGE

Sinethemba Madondo on dreaming, growing, creating and taking care of herself along the way

Sinethemba Madondo has a way of making people listen. Sometimes it is through a story, sometimes through her unmistakable delivery, and sometimes through a conversation that leaves you thinking about your own life a little differently. What began as a creative outlet has grown into a community built around authenticity, wellness, storytelling and personal growth.

Away from the character people have come to know online is a young woman navigating several versions of ambition at once. She is a creator, a Psychology student, a woman building her own path and someone who is still learning what it means to take care of herself while doing all of it.

For our **Bloom: Renewal, Growth & Health Awareness** issue, we wanted to talk about more than the things Sinethemba is known for. We wanted to get into the woman behind them, what is changing, what is staying, and what she is learning in this particular season of her life.





Your content has a very distinct personality. How much of that came naturally to you, and how much did you have to give yourself permission to become that woman online?

My content exudes a huge part of who I am which is witty, smart , and entertaining . Starting content creation I wanted to show just that and I allowed myself to embrace my creativity and talent without overthinking the process.

“Dare to dream with me” has become such a recognisable part of your world. Has being someone who encourages other people to dream ever made you more conscious of what you are allowing yourself to dream about?

Yes it has, dare to dream is a phrase I chose to apply towards my life at the beginning of 2025.

When posting about it, I did not know that life was going to change from that day going forward. This has allowed me to truly believe in what good life has to offer and view failure as redirection and success as a high five from life .

You can take something as ordinary as going to the kitchen and somehow make it feel like an event. Where do you think that ability to find possibility in ordinary things comes from?

It comes from choosing to be optimistic and positive towards a lot of aspects in my life. It comes from reading books , watching a lot of movies growing up and always being cooped up in the house letting my mind travel to places I see in movies and imagine in books .

On the cover



You are studying Psychology while also creating content around wellness and personal growth. Has being immersed in the subject changed how you deal with your own life, or do you sometimes have to switch off the Psychology student and just be a person?

I am halfway through my psychology journey and what I have learnt has contributed towards my outlook on life. A huge part of psychology is mostly about also finding yourself and I am on that path, this has not changed how I handle life but instead it is providing guidance and wisdom towards Sine growing as an individual and an academic .

Wanting to be a psychologist one day is one of my dreams. I have many dreams . So it is a hat that I will wear with honour one day and I believe is a huge part of my purpose I can still be myself and still embrace my career path , creating content has helped me get in touch with myself as well.

Your platform has grown, but so have you. Is there anything about the way you create now that the Sinethemba who started out would probably question?

No , what I create now is a reflection of who I am and my talent , Instead the Sine who started would find this surreal.



You've managed to build a creative career while pursuing something as demanding as a Master's in Psychology. Do you think your idea of success has changed since you started, or are you still chasing the same things with a different understanding of them?

I do not have one idea of what success is, success to me is in the little things and the progress I make when I reflect from the year before the current. I believe in attracting what I want and need. What success is to me has not really changed but I have a more creative outlook on life and the opportunities it brings. I still want the same things and more of what life has to offer.

RIP CLEAN GIRL: 6 UNFILTERED TRENDS TAKING OVER SPRING/SUMMER 2026

Fashion trends are like exes, fun for a while but best left in the past when they no longer serve you. But essentials? Clothing essentials are your ride-or-die, your wardrobe's Avengers, always ready to save the day when you're standing in front of your closet, dramatically sighing, "*I have nothing to wear*"

As a Chic-Tribe Digital stylist (hence the "*Chic-Tribe Style Spin*"), I'm here to make sure your wardrobe is serving looks, confidence, and longevity.

Let's be honest for a second: we are collectively *exhausted*. We spent the last few seasons slicking our hair back so tight our scalps were crying, smearing ourselves in unscented body oils, and convincing ourselves that wearing biwggw linen on a humid afternoon in Johannesburg was "effortlessly luxury".

The "*Clean Girl*" aesthetic had its moment, but let's call it what it was, a full-time job disguised as minimalism right pretty girl?



Written By:
Oratile Mokgatle



1. SCULPTURAL DRAMA & THE RETURN OF THE '80S SILHOUETTE

The Vibe: Powerful, unapologetic, and taking up physical space.

Say goodbye to soft, body-hugging loungewear that shrinks you down. Spring/Summer 2027 is all about volume, think exaggerated power shoulders, dramatic peplums, and structured bubble skirts.

In line with our growth era, this trend is about claiming room in every space you walk into.



Neliswa Ngweni

Fashion

FOR PERSONAL STYLING



Glasses



Earrings



arm cuff



Hair

Thigh high boots



bag

STYLE BOARD SUMMARY

- MOOD: ELEVATED SEMI-CASUAL ELEGANCE
- STRUCTURED CORSET MINI DRESS - SCULPTED, FEMININE SILHOUETTE
- RICH CHOCOLATE TONES ADD WARMTH, LUXURY FEEL
- THIGH-HIGH
- GOLD ARM CUFF
- TINTED GLASSES
- SUITABLE FOR GALA DINNERS, DATE NIGHTS, SOCIAL EVENTS, AND STYLISH OUTINGS

A structured blazer paired with light-wash denim or a midi skirt tells the world you're not just present; you're leading the conversation.

The CT Style Spin: Layer an oversized boxy blazer over a local graphic tee for a polished, street-smart look that transitions seamlessly from a morning coffee run in Rosebank to sunset drinks in Camps Bay.

2. SENSORY DRESSING & TANGIBLE TEXTURES

The Vibe: Tangible comfort meets emotional wellness.

Health awareness isn't just about what you consume, it's about how your environment and your clothes make you feel.

Spring/Summer is discarding itchy, restrictive synthetic fabrics in favour of rich 3D textures, airy open-stitch, delicate knits, and liquid satins.

This is fashion as self-care. It's about wearing pieces that feel soothing against the skin, allow your body to move freely, and support your mental well-being throughout a high-pressure day.

The CT Style Spin: Look out for locally made sheer mesh overlays, breathable linen blends, and 3D beaded details crafted by home-grown artisans that add texture without feeling heavy in the summer heat.



3. UNAPOLOGETIC CLASHING & DOPAMINE HUES

The Vibe: Colour therapy in full bloom.

If I see one more head-to-toe camel outfit, I might scream. The beige banishment is officially in full effect! Spring/Summer embraces high-vibrational, clashing colour palettes that radiate energy.

We're talking green paired with deep magenta, electric blue layered over fiery poppy red, and rich cocoa brown spiced with sweet pastel pink. Colour is an instant dopamine hit, proving that renewal starts with shedding the fear of being seen.

The CT Style Spin: Embrace our vibrant South African sun. Pair a bold teal or cobalt blue wide-leg trouser with a punchy yellow top. It's bright, joyful, and deeply coded in the optimism of an SA summer.

4. "JEWELLERY-MAXXING" & HERITAGE BROOCHES

The Vibe: Nostalgic heirloom energy with a modern edge.

The era of delicate, paper-thin gold chains that tangle the moment you breathe is officially paused. Enter jewellery-maxxing: thick gold cuffs, chunky geometric earrings, stacked bangles, and the triumphant return of statement brooches pinned onto unexpected places like denim jackets, collars, or waistbands.

Lately accessories are becoming emotional anchors, pieces that tell a story, honour heritage, and make an outfit feel personal rather than copy-pasted from an algorithm.

The CT Style Spin: Raid your grandmother's jewellery box or support local markets. Mix vintage gold brooches with modern beaded statement pieces for a look that feels uniquely yours.



5. RELAXED FLUIDITY: THE NEW POWER TAILORING

The Vibe: Elegant, unrestrained movement.

Rest, recovery, and boundaries are central to true health awareness, and our tailoring is reflecting that exact mindset. Tight, constricting trousers are out; fluid, wide-leg pleated pants and sweeping silk skirts are in.

This is power dressing designed for a woman who values her peace. It's tailored, but it swishes when you walk. It looks expensive, but it allows you to actually eat lunch without needing to unbutton your pants under the table.

The CT Style Spin: Pair high-waisted, wide-leg linen trousers with a sleek pointed mule or casual sneakers for that ultra-chic "I have my life together, but I'm not stressing" aesthetic.



6. CONSCIOUS CRAFT & THE "SLOW BLOOM" WARDROBE



▀ *The Vibe: Sustainable, intentional, and deeply rooted.*

The ultimate shift away from the "Clean Girl" trend is moving past disposable, ultra-fast fashion cycles. A true season of Bloom requires fertile soil which means investing in local talent, upcycled garments, and slow-fashion labels that prioritize ethical production.

Instead of buying 10 cheap polyester micro-trend items every month, the Spring/Summer girlie is building a curated, intention-filled collection of high-quality statement pieces that tell a story of longevity and renewal.

The CT Style Spin: Champion local South African designers and thrift markets. Wearing a piece made by a local designer isn't just a fashion choice, it's an investment in our creative community's collective growth.

THE FINAL VERDICT

The "Clean Girl" era taught us discipline, but Spring/Summer 2027 is teaching us joy. This season, allow your style to bloom without asking for permission. Wear the clashing colours, buy the oversized blazer, pin the brooch, and step out into the sun feeling grounded, healthy, and outrageously fabulous.

After all, why stay muted when you were born to flourish?



BLUSH, BUT MAKE IT LAST

Blush has officially moved from finishing touch to one of the main characters in the makeup routine. From soft washes of colour to visibly flushed cheeks, people are embracing blush in a much bigger way. But with “blush blindness” becoming part of the beauty conversation, there is also such a thing as losing perspective and adding more because we simply can't see it anymore.

Then we move into how to get the look without going overboard:

1. **Start with less than you think you need**

Especially with highly pigmented liquid and cream blushes. Apply a small amount first and build gradually rather than trying to get the full colour payoff in one go.

2. **Place your blush intentionally**

Placement can completely change the effect. Higher on the cheeks can give a lifted appearance, while bringing a little colour closer toward the centre of the face creates a softer, more youthful flush. The key is blending rather than creating a hard block of colour.



3. **Cream, liquid or powder?**

This would be a useful little section explaining when each formula works best. Cream and liquid formulas can give that fresh spring finish, while powder can help set the look and add longevity.

4. **Don't forget the rest of your base**

If you're going heavy on blush, keep the rest of the complexion relatively balanced. You don't necessarily need full coverage, heavy contour and intense blush all competing for attention.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MAKEUP LAST WITHOUT FEELING CAKEY



Prep, don't overload.

A lightweight moisturiser and sunscreen can give the skin what it needs without piling on multiple heavy layers underneath makeup.

Give skincare time to settle.

Applying makeup immediately after several skincare products can make everything slide around. Give your skincare and SPF a little time to settle before starting your base.

Use thin layers.

Instead of applying one thick layer of foundation or concealer, use a smaller amount and build coverage only where you actually need it. This keeps the complexion looking more like skin.

Powder strategically.

You don't need to powder your entire face until it looks flat. Focus on areas where you tend to get shiny, such as the T-zone, and leave areas where you want a more natural finish alone.

Blot before adding more powder.

This is a big one for warmer days. If your skin becomes shiny, blot away excess oil first instead of immediately layering more powder on top.

Otherwise, you can end up with the exact cakiness you're trying to avoid.

Use setting spray as the final step.

A good setting spray can help bring the layers of makeup together so the finish looks less powdery and more seamless.

Bloom Beauty Rule

The goal isn't perfectly matte skin. It's makeup that still looks like you.

Spring makeup should feel lighter, fresher and easier to wear. Let the blush be the statement, keep the base breathable, and don't be afraid to let a little natural skin show through.



Luminous
• E R A •

*Almond,
vanilla and
a hint
of caramel*

LOVING EVERY
SHADE

SPF 15
HAND LOTION

Shea Butter - Olive Oil - Glycerin
Hydrate | Nourish | Anti-Ageing

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BY PORTIA DIETA

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER: WHY A MOTHER'S WELLBEING MATTERS

For the woman who spends her days caring for everyone else, perhaps it is time to remember that she deserves care, too. Motherhood is often romanticised through its tenderest moments, the tiny hands reaching for yours, bedtime stories, familiar laughter filling the home, and the quiet satisfaction of watching a child become their own person. But beneath the beauty of motherhood lies another, less frequently acknowledged reality: the extraordinary emotional, physical and mental demands placed upon the woman carrying it all.

Mothers are often expected to be endlessly available. They nurture, organise, provide, comfort, protect and problem-solve, frequently placing their own needs somewhere near the bottom of an ever-growing list. Yet there comes a point when self-neglect can no longer be mistaken for strength. The woman who nurtures everyone else deserves to be nurtured, too.

When Caring for Everyone Becomes Forgetting Yourself

There is a particular kind of exhaustion that comes from constantly being needed. It is found in the early mornings, the packed schedules, the responsibilities that cannot be postponed and the mental checklist that continues long after the house has gone quiet. For many mothers, being busy becomes so deeply woven into everyday life that exhaustion is simply accepted as normal.

But constantly running on empty should not be the definition of a successful mother. Somewhere beneath the roles and responsibilities is a woman whose body, mind and spirit also require attention. Her health cannot always be postponed until the children are older, the workload is lighter or life becomes less demanding. There will always be something that needs to be done. There must also be room for the woman doing it.

A New Definition of Self-Care

Self-care has become a familiar phrase, but perhaps its meaning deserves to be reconsidered. It is not always a spa day, a weekend away or an elaborate wellness ritual.

Sometimes self-care is far less glamorous and far more essential: making a doctor's appointment, taking prescribed medication responsibly, eating a proper meal, getting enough sleep, drinking water or acknowledging that you are not coping as well as you appear to be. It is learning to recognise that your body is not an afterthought.

Health awareness means becoming intentional about understanding your own wellbeing, knowing your health history, attending appropriate screenings and check-ups, paying attention to persistent changes and speaking to a healthcare professional when something does not feel right.

Too often, mothers become experts at noticing every change in their children while overlooking the signals coming from their own bodies. Perhaps renewal begins with learning to listen to yourself with the same attentiveness.



The Quiet Importance of Preventative Care

Motherhood teaches women to think ahead—to pack the extra clothes, anticipate the tantrum, prepare the meals and plan for tomorrow. That same foresight should extend to personal health. Regular medical check-ups and age-appropriate health screenings can help identify potential concerns early. Understanding factors such as blood pressure, nutrition, physical activity, sleep and emotional wellbeing can empower women to make informed decisions about their health.

This does not require perfection. It could be choosing a nourishing breakfast instead of rushing out the door without eating. Taking a walk after a long day. Preparing meals that support your energy. Going to bed earlier when your body is asking for rest. Wellness is rarely built through one dramatic transformation. More often, it is cultivated through small decisions repeated with intention.



The Health We Cannot Always See

Physical health is only one part of the picture. A mother's emotional and mental wellbeing deserves equal consideration.

The pressure to be present, patient, productive and composed can become overwhelming, particularly when there is little opportunity to process the weight of everything she carries. There should be no shame in admitting that motherhood can sometimes feel difficult.

Seeking support, speaking to someone you trust, creating healthier boundaries or consulting a mental-health professional when necessary are not signs of failure.

They are signs that you recognise your wellbeing matters. Strength is not always found in enduring silently. Sometimes, strength is found in saying, **“I need support.”**

Rest Is Part of the Work

For many mothers, rest can feel almost indulgent. There is always another load of washing, another email, another meal, another responsibility. But rest is not the absence of productivity. It is part of sustaining the person responsible for so much of the productivity in the first place. A mother who allows herself to pause is not neglecting her family. She is replenishing herself so that she can continue showing up with greater presence, patience and energy.

A quiet morning. A book before bed. A walk alone. A cup of coffee enjoyed without rushing. An afternoon nap when possible. These moments may appear insignificant, but restoration often happens quietly.

What We Teach Our Children About Women

Perhaps one of the most powerful reasons for mothers to prioritise their health is the example they set. Children are watching. They observe how mothers speak about their bodies, how they respond to exhaustion, whether they seek medical attention, whether they allow themselves to rest and whether they believe their own needs are worthy of consideration. When a mother takes care of herself, she communicates something profound to her children:

You do not have to disappear in order to love someone completely. She teaches them that caring for yourself and caring for others can coexist. That boundaries are healthy. That asking for help is courageous. That health is something to be valued rather than taken for granted.

Nurturing the Nurturer

There is an undeniable strength in motherhood, but strength should never require self-abandonment. The goal is not to become a mother who does everything perfectly. It is to become a woman who understands that her wellbeing belongs in the equation.

Because your children need you, but they also need a version of you who has room to breathe, heal, laugh, dream and live beyond the demands of the day. So, perhaps this is your invitation to check in with yourself.

Make the appointment. Drink the water. Take the walk. Eat the meal. Ask for help. Protect your peace. Rest without guilt. Pay attention to what your body is telling you. Make space for the woman beneath the title of “Mom.”

Nurturing your children should never mean forgetting to nurture yourself. And in choosing to care for yourself, you are not taking anything away from the people you love. You are reminding them, and yourself, that ‘Mom matters, too.’



Becoming, Not Just Giving

Motherhood is an evolution. The woman you were before children may not be exactly who you are today, and that is not something to mourn. There is beauty in becoming. As children grow and seasons change, mothers deserve opportunities to reassess their own lives, aspirations and wellbeing.

What do I need now? What have I been postponing? What part of myself would I like to rediscover? What does being healthy, fulfilled and well look like in this season?

Growth does not always require adding more to an already crowded life. Sometimes it means releasing what no longer serves you. Sometimes it means slowing down. Sometimes it means choosing yourself without guilt.

THEMBI MAESELA: BEGINNING AGAIN, ON HER OWN TERMS



Article: Sarah Banda, Photos Supplied

Sometimes the life you planned for yourself is not the life you end up living. For Thembi Maesela, an unexpected beginning became the foundation for a life built around business, community and creating opportunities for others.

There is a version of Thembi Maesela's story that could easily be told through the things she has accomplished.

Entrepreneur. Philanthropist. Community leader. Founder of Marumo Green Projects. Founder of Queens With Purpose South Africa. Advocate for women and people living with disabilities.

But before any of those titles came the part of her life that she could not have planned for.

Thembi fell pregnant at the end of her matric year and later discovered that she had not passed matric. At a time when many young people around her were moving into the next chapter, she found herself unemployed, pregnant and unsure of what her future would look like.

It was a difficult place to begin.

But it was still a beginning.

What stands out about Thembi's story is not simply that she eventually moved forward. It is the way she has come to understand that particular chapter of her life.

"I think if I had passed my matric and everything went smoothly in my life, I would not be here – helping children and parents."



It is an unusual way to look at disappointment. Most of us spend years wishing we could rewrite the moments that did not go according to plan. Thembi has instead found a way to look back and recognise that some of the things she once considered setbacks helped shape the person she became.

That does not make the difficult moments easy. It simply means they no longer get to have the final word.

Her journey back into education, work and entrepreneurship became part of a much bigger story. Over time, Thembi built a career that allowed her to create for herself while also creating opportunities for others.

Her entrepreneurial work through Marumo Green Projects sits alongside a strong commitment to community development. And in 2019, she founded Queens With Purpose South Africa, a registered NPO focused on empowering women, supporting communities and creating more inclusive spaces, particularly for people living with disabilities.

The organisation has grown into a platform for upliftment, empowerment and recognition, including its inaugural Women's Awards in 2026, which celebrated women making an impact in their communities, workplaces and professions.

There is a thread connecting all of this work:
Thembi understands what it means to need an opportunity.

Perhaps that is why creating opportunities for other people has become such an important part of her own journey.

There is something different about leadership when it comes from lived experience. It can make you more aware of the person sitting on the other side of an opportunity. The young woman who needs someone to believe in her. The parent trying to find a way forward. The person living with a disability who is still too often excluded from spaces where they should have a place.



Thembi's work is not about pretending that obstacles do not exist. It is about refusing to let those obstacles become the only thing people see.

And that idea feels particularly fitting for our Bloom issue.

We often talk about blooming as though it is the reward at the end of a perfect journey. As though you struggle, overcome everything and eventually arrive at a polished version of yourself.

Real life is rarely that neat.

Sometimes blooming means starting again at 20-something. Sometimes it means going back to the classroom. Sometimes it means building a career after a chapter that left you questioning yourself. Sometimes it means discovering that the thing you thought would hold you back has actually given you a perspective you could never have learned elsewhere.

Thembi's story reminds us that starting again does not mean you have failed.

It means you are still willing to believe that there is more ahead.



HERITAGE IS MORE THAN A CELEBRATION

Our heritage lives in the stories we carry, the traditions we protect and the parts of ourselves we choose to pass on.

September is Heritage Month in South Africa, a time when we are reminded of the many cultures, languages, traditions and histories that make up who we are.

But heritage is more than wearing traditional clothing for a day, preparing a familiar dish or posting a flag on social media.

It is also about memory.

It is the language spoken at home. The stories told by grandparents. The recipes that somehow survive from one generation to the next. The music, names, customs and beliefs that remind us where we come from.

For many young Africans, heritage also means figuring out what to keep and what to change.

We are growing up in a world where cultures constantly meet. We can be deeply connected to where we come from while still creating something new. We can honour tradition without feeling pressured to live exactly as previous generations did.

That is part of what makes heritage powerful. It is not frozen in the past.

It evolves with us.

As women, we also carry a significant part of that history. We carry stories from our mothers and grandmothers, sometimes without even realising it. Their sacrifices, creativity, strength and choices often influence the women we become.

So this Heritage Month, perhaps the question is not only, What are we celebrating?

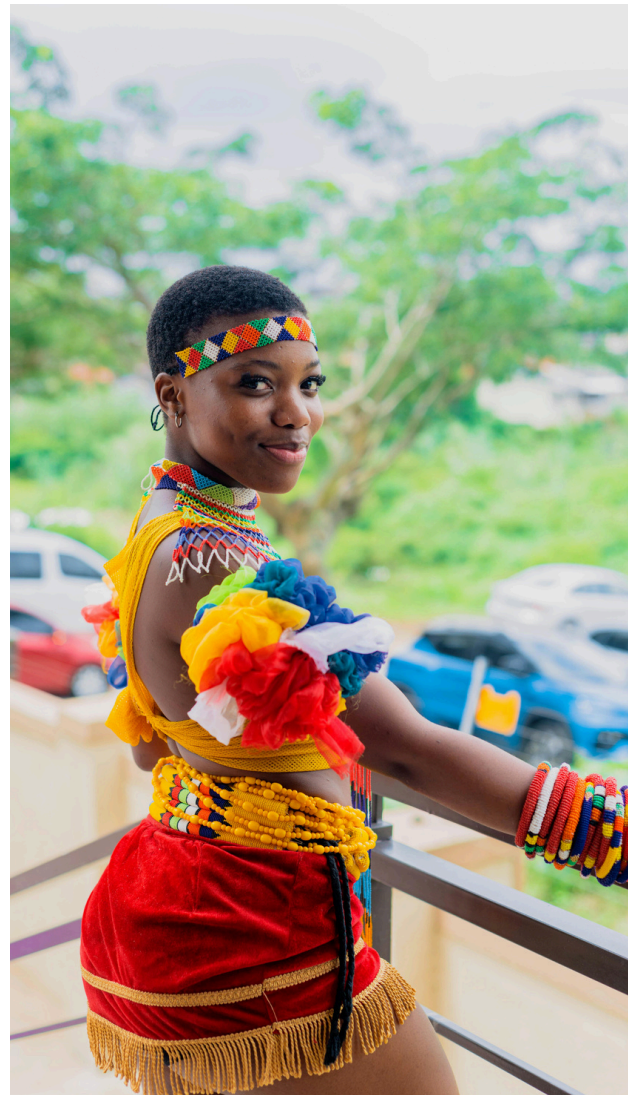
It is also, *What are we carrying forward?*

What stories deserve to be remembered? What traditions do we want the next generation to know? What parts of our culture can we preserve while making space for a new African identity?

Heritage is not simply where we come from.

It is what we choose to remember, protect and pass on.

And sometimes, protecting heritage looks like the simplest things. Speaking your home language with pride. Teaching a child a family recipe. Asking an elder about their childhood. Learning the meaning behind a tradition instead of simply repeating it. These small acts keep culture alive in ways that a calendar date never could.



Because the future of our heritage does not only belong in museums, history books or annual celebrations. It belongs in our homes, our communities and in the everyday lives of the generations coming after us.

We do not have to choose between honouring where we come from and becoming who we are. We can do both.

ELLEN DZONZI: GROWING THROUGH CREATIVITY, STRATEGY AND PURPOSE



WRITTEN BY
SARAH BANDA



A creative communications and brand marketing professional, Ellen has built her career around storytelling, creativity and the art of creating meaningful connections between brands and their audiences. Her journey is one of continuous evolution, moving from digital content creation and social media communications into campaign planning, brand activations and event execution.

Her professional growth has unfolded alongside her time at Envision Brand, where each new opportunity has allowed her to expand her skills and understanding of the industry. What began with developing digital content and social media communication skills gradually grew into a deeper involvement in campaigns, giving her the opportunity to see how creativity and strategy work together.

For Ellen, communication is more than simply putting content into the world. It is about understanding an audience, knowing what a brand stands for and finding ways to communicate that message with intention. This approach has helped her develop stronger audience engagement while contributing to the visibility and growth of the brands and campaigns she works on.

As her experience has grown, so has her interest in the world of events. Working behind the scenes on brand activations and event delivery introduced her to another side of creative work, one that requires planning, coordination, attention to detail and the ability to bring multiple moving parts together.



It is a progression that has seen Ellen grow from a content-focused professional into a more well-rounded communications and brand marketing consultant. Today, she is increasingly drawn to event project management, where she can bring together her strategic thinking and creative instincts to help create experiences that people remember.

With every new responsibility, Ellen has gained a broader perspective on the work she does and the value she can bring to a project. Rather than viewing each stage of her career as separate, she has built on what came before, allowing her experience in content, communications and branding to inform the way she approaches campaigns and experiences today.

But perhaps one of the most defining parts of Ellen's journey is her willingness to remain a student of her craft. She actively seeks opportunities to learn, grow and receive mentorship, recognising that building a meaningful career is not about having everything figured out at once.

Her journey also reflects the importance of being open to change. As industries evolve and new opportunities emerge, Ellen has allowed herself to explore different sides of her profession rather than limiting herself to where she started. That willingness to evolve has expanded not only her skill set, but also her vision for the kind of work and impact she wants to create.

Looking ahead, she is focused on building a career that brings together creativity, strategy and purpose. She wants to contribute to brands and projects that offer real value while continuing to develop the leadership, project management and creative skills that will shape the next chapter of her career.

In many ways, her journey reflects the spirit of Bloom. Growth does not always happen all at once. Sometimes it looks like learning a new skill, stepping into an unfamiliar role, discovering a new passion or realising that you are capable of more than you once imagined.

For Ellen Dzonzi, the journey is still unfolding. And with every new experience, she continues to grow into the professional and creative leader she is becoming.

LAUNCHING SOON



WHEN OCTOBER ENDS, WHAT HAPPENS?

Breast cancer awareness should be more than a month of pink. It should be an ongoing conversation about women's health, access, support and what happens after the campaign ends.

October arrives, and suddenly everything turns pink.

Pink ribbons appear across social media. Brands change their logos. Offices organise awareness days. Women share reminders to check their breasts. There are campaigns, fundraisers, walks and countless posts encouraging us to show our support.

For a few weeks, breast cancer is everywhere.

And then November comes.

The ribbons disappear. The campaigns move on. The pink products leave the shelves. The conversation becomes quieter.

But breast cancer doesn't follow a calendar.



Written By: Sarah Banda

For the women living through diagnosis and treatment, there is no end date attached to October. There are appointments to attend, decisions to make, questions to ask and, for many, an entirely different reality to navigate.

Perhaps that is where our understanding of breast cancer awareness needs to grow.

Awareness Has to Become Action

Knowing that breast cancer exists is not the same as understanding what to do when something doesn't feel right.

Awareness should encourage women to become more familiar with their own bodies and to take changes seriously. It means understanding that a change does not automatically mean cancer, but that it is worth speaking to a healthcare professional when something feels different or concerning.

It also means knowing that breast health is not something we should only think about when October arrives.

Health conversations often happen when there is already a problem. We wait until something hurts, until something becomes impossible to ignore or until someone we know receives a diagnosis.

But preventative healthcare asks us to pay attention before a crisis.

That conversation needs to become normal.

The Part Nobody Puts on the Poster

There is a tendency for cancer conversations to become inspirational very quickly.

We hear words like fighter, warrior, strong and brave. We celebrate women who have fought through treatment and come out the other side, and there is nothing wrong with celebrating resilience.

But women going through cancer do not have to perform strength every day.

Some days may be hopeful. Others may be frightening, exhausting or overwhelming. A woman can be grateful for her support system and still be scared. She can be positive and still have difficult days. She can want encouragement without wanting to be told that everything happens for a reason.

There is room for the complicated emotions that come with illness.

Sometimes awareness means allowing women to tell the truth about what they are experiencing without turning their story into an inspirational slogan.



A Diagnosis Doesn't Affect One Person

When one woman receives a diagnosis, the impact rarely stops with her.

Families can suddenly find themselves navigating unfamiliar medical language, appointments, treatment decisions and financial pressures. Partners may not know how to provide support. Children may have questions they don't know how to ask. Friends may desperately want to help but have no idea where to begin.

This is why support needs to be practical, not just emotional.

“Let me know if you need anything” is well-intentioned, but someone going through treatment may not have the energy to identify what they need and then ask for it.

Sometimes support looks like preparing a meal. Taking someone to an appointment. Helping with errands. Checking in without demanding an update. Sitting quietly. Listening when they want to talk and respecting their silence when they don't.

The small things can become significant when someone's life has been turned upside down.



The Pink Economy

There is another conversation worth having: what happens when awareness becomes marketing?

October has become a major commercial moment, with companies introducing pink products, campaigns and limited-edition collections. Some of these initiatives genuinely contribute to meaningful causes, and supporting them can be valuable.

But the presence of pink packaging alone is not impact.

As consumers, we can ask better questions.

Where does the money go? Who benefits? Is the campaign supporting research, screening, treatment, patient support or education? Is the organisation transparent about its contribution?

Breast cancer awareness should not become an opportunity to sell women a product wrapped in a pink ribbon without meaningful action behind it.

The ribbon should represent something more than a marketing colour.

Access Is Part of Awareness

There is also a reality that awareness campaigns can sometimes overlook: knowing what to do and being able to access the care you need are not always the same thing.

For many women, healthcare decisions exist alongside financial, geographical and practical realities. The cost of appointments and transport, waiting periods, work responsibilities and access to appropriate healthcare can all influence whether someone seeks help and how quickly they can receive it.

That is why a serious conversation about breast cancer has to include access.



We cannot tell women to prioritise their health without also acknowledging the systems and circumstances that can make doing so difficult.

Health information needs to be understandable and accessible. Screening and diagnostic services need to be available. Women need to know where they can go when they are concerned about a change.

Awareness should help close that gap, not simply remind women that the gap exists.

What Happens After Treatment?

Even the word survivor can make it sound as though the story ends when treatment does.

But life after cancer can bring its own adjustment.

There can be follow-up appointments, uncertainty, changes to the body, emotional processing and the challenge of finding a sense of normality again. Someone who has completed treatment may look well while still carrying an experience that has fundamentally changed them.

This is another reason we need to move beyond the October narrative.

Support should not disappear when treatment does.

So, When October Ends?

We keep talking.

We keep learning.

We keep encouraging women to take their health seriously throughout the year. We support people living with cancer and those who care for them. We ask where our money is going when we support campaigns. We advocate for better access to healthcare. We make room for honest conversations that are not always neat, positive or inspirational.

And we remember that the woman behind the pink ribbon is a person before she is a campaign.

Breast cancer awareness should not be measured by how much pink we see in October.

It should be measured by what remains when the pink comes down.

Because awareness that lasts beyond the campaign is the kind that can actually make a difference.



FROM GRADE 9 BAKER TO YOUTH TRAILBLAZER.

By Oratile Mokgatle

What started in Grade 9 as a creative outlet for a young girl trying to find her place has quietly blossomed into Huncle's Sweet Treats. For founder Joy, building her brand while balancing university life hasn't been about following a rigid playbook, it's been a continuous journey of renewal, personal growth, and learning to flourish on her own terms.

As Joy expands her vision beyond curated gifts with Trails & Treats, she is building a holistic space for young women to prioritize their well-being, step into their power, and support one another. We sat down with Joy to discuss her evolving journey, managing the student-entrepreneur hustle, and why taking up space is the ultimate way to bloom.

LET'S START WITH JOY BEFORE WE GET TO THE ENTREPRENEUR! WHAT WERE YOU LIKE GROWING UP, AND WHEN DID CREATING SWEET TREATS FIRST BECOME SOMETHING YOU GENUINELY ENJOYED?

Growing up, I was a very energetic child. I loved playing, I was very sporty and competitive, and I enjoyed activities like soccer and traditional indigenous games. I think that part of me, the energy, competitiveness and willingness to try things, has stayed with me even as I've grown older.

I discovered my love for baking in Grade 9. I started experimenting with cupcakes, cinnamon buns and small cakes. They definitely weren't perfect in the beginning, but I enjoyed the process of creating something with my own hands and seeing it come together. Baking became a space where I could express myself and be creative.

The sweets side of the business came much later, when I was at university. That's when Huncle's Sweet Treats began evolving beyond baking into the sweet treats and gifting business it is today.

HOW DID HUNCLE'S SWEET TREATS COME ABOUT?

Huncle's Sweet Treats actually started as a small baking business when I was in Grade 9. At the time, it was more than just baking for me. I had moved to a new school and was trying to find my place, so creating became a way for me to express myself and create a space where I felt like I belonged.

As I grew older, my interests changed and the business evolved with me. When I went to university, I started exploring sweets, gifting and different ways of presenting treats. What started as a simple baking idea gradually became Huncle's Sweet Treats.

Looking back, I love that the business has grown alongside me. It has never been something I had completely figured out from the beginning, it has been a journey of experimenting, learning and discovering what Huncle's Sweet Treats could become.

WHAT INSPIRED THE NAME HUNCLE'S SWEET TREATS?

The name actually came from my Instagram name. I've always been known as "Huncle Berry", so when I started thinking about a name for the business, Huncle was something that already felt personal to me.

Adding "Sweet Treats" simply reflected what I was creating at the time. The name has stuck with me throughout the journey, and I've grown to love how personal it is to my story.



WHAT MAKES YOUR TREATS AND GIFTS UNIQUE?

I think what makes Huncle's Sweet Treats unique is that we focus on more than just the treat itself, we care about the experience and the way it makes someone feel.

Whether it's sweets in a cup, a sweet bouquet, a sweet kebab or one of our larger gift options, there is an element of fun, creativity and thought behind the presentation. I want our products to feel exciting to receive and to give.

As the brand continues to grow, I also want Huncle's Sweet Treats to stand for something bigger. It's not only about selling sweets; it's about creating experiences, building community and eventually creating opportunities for young women to grow and thrive.





HOW DO YOU BALANCE SCHOOL AND YOUR BUSINESS?

I've had to learn how to make things work rather than waiting for the perfect amount of time to do everything. Having a schedule helps me a lot, and I usually use my weekends to focus on the business.

I also think it's important to acknowledge that the business wasn't always as demanding as it is now. As Hunclé's Sweet Treats has grown, I've had to become more intentional about managing my time, prioritising what needs to be done and knowing when I need to focus on my studies.

It hasn't always been easy, but I'm learning that balance isn't necessarily about giving everything equal time. Sometimes it's about knowing what needs your attention most at that particular moment.

WHAT HAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP TAUGHT YOU ABOUT YOURSELF?

Entrepreneurship has taught me that I'm much braver than I thought I was.

I've realised that when I really want to make something work, I'm willing to figure things out, learn along the way and do whatever is necessary to move forward. I've also learned that I don't need to have everything figured out before I start.

There have been many moments where I've had to step outside my comfort zone, make decisions, approach people, put my work out there and simply trust myself enough to try. Entrepreneurship has shown me that I'm capable of more than I sometimes give myself credit for.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR?

One of my biggest challenges has been learning how to grow while still figuring things out.

It can be difficult trying to balance university, personal responsibilities and a growing business, especially when you're building something without necessarily having all the resources, knowledge or experience you need from the beginning.

I've also had to learn that not every idea will work exactly as I imagined it. Sometimes you have to adapt, start again or change direction. I think that has been one of the biggest lessons for me: growth doesn't always look like having everything under control. Sometimes it looks like learning as you go and continuing anyway.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNG WOMEN WITH BUSINESS IDEAS?

Take the first step and start.

You don't need to have everything figured out before you begin. Your first version might not be perfect, you might make mistakes and you might even change your idea along the way; and that's okay.

I think sometimes we spend so much time waiting until we feel ready that we never actually begin. Start with what you have, learn as you go, ask questions and allow yourself to grow into the person who can build the business you envision.

And most importantly, don't be afraid to take up space. Your idea is worth exploring.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE PEOPLE WILL REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR BRAND AND THE JOURNEY BEHIND IT?

I hope people remember that Huncle's Sweet Treats was never just about sweets.

I want people to remember the journey, the fact that it started with a young girl in Grade 9 who simply wanted a space to belong and be creative, and that over time that small idea grew into something with a much bigger purpose.

I want Huncle's Sweet Treats to represent creativity, courage, community and growth. I hope that when people look at the brand, they see what is possible when you are willing to start small, keep learning and allow your vision to evolve.

Ultimately, I want people to remember that there was a purpose behind the products and a person behind the brand who was willing to keep showing up.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR HUNCLE'S SWEET TREATS?

Huncle's Sweet Treats is entering a new chapter.

We're hosting an event called *Trails & Treats*, which is an important step because it represents the beginning of the bigger purpose I see for the brand. Huncle's Sweet Treats started as a baking business, evolved into sweets and gifting, but I don't believe it will end there.

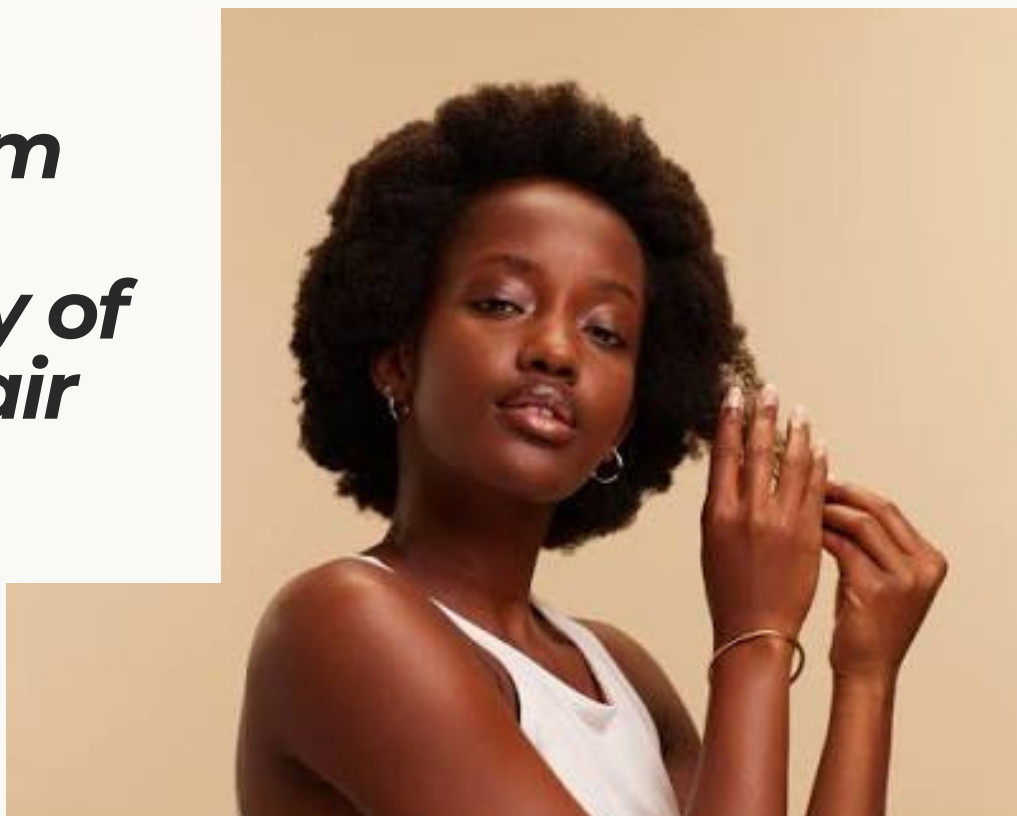
I want to create a space where young women can thrive, grow and gain direction, with the help and guidance of people who have gone before them. I want Huncle's Sweet Treats to eventually become a platform that connects young women with community, mentorship, opportunities and experiences that encourage them to believe in what they can become.

Trails & Treats is just the beginning of that vision. It's the start of a new era for Huncle's Sweet Treats, a journey from simply creating sweet treats to creating meaningful experiences and a community with purpose.

Bloom From the Roots: The Beauty of Healthy Hair

Written By:

Portia Dieta



Beautiful hair is not simply about length, volume or the latest trend. It begins beneath the surface with a healthy scalp, intentional care and an understanding of what your crown truly needs. Hair has always carried a language of its own. It can express identity, confidence, culture and individuality, while the way we care for it can become a deeply personal ritual. Yet in a world where longer, fuller and more dramatic hair is often celebrated, it is easy to lose sight of the foundation beneath it all.

Like a flower, hair does not simply bloom by chance. It requires nourishment, patience, consistency and the right environment to flourish. And sometimes, the most meaningful hair transformation begins not with what we add, but with how well we care for what is already there.

Begin Where It Matters Most: The Scalp

Healthy hair begins at the root. The scalp is the foundation from which the hair grows, making its condition an important part of any thoughtful haircare routine. Product build-up, excess oil and environmental impurities can affect the scalp, which is why regular and gentle cleansing is essential.

Rather than viewing scalp care as an occasional extra, consider making it a consistent part of your routine. A clean, balanced scalp creates a better environment for healthy-looking hair and allows you to pay closer attention to changes that may otherwise go unnoticed. Your roots deserve attention, too.

Growth Is a Journey, Not a Race

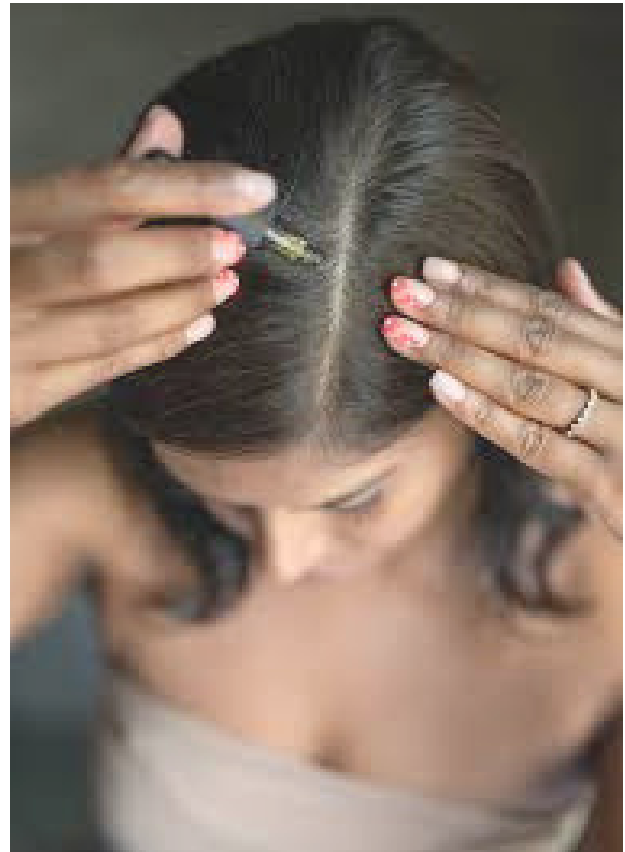
Hair growth can be one of the most anticipated parts of a hair journey, but healthy growth requires patience. There is no overnight solution capable of replacing consistent care. Hair naturally moves through different growth phases, and factors such as genetics, age, hormones, nutrition, stress and overall health can influence the way it grows.

Instead of becoming fixated on length alone, consider the bigger picture. Is your hair retaining length? Does it feel strong? Are your ends healthy? Is your scalp comfortable? Are you experiencing unusual shedding or breakage? Sometimes, progress is not measured by how quickly your hair grows, but by how well you are able to maintain the hair you have.

Moisture Is Everything

One of the simplest ways to support healthier-looking hair is to pay attention to moisture. Dry, brittle hair is more vulnerable to breakage, making hydration and conditioning important components of a balanced routine. Depending on your hair type and needs, this may include a suitable moisturising shampoo, conditioner, leave-in treatment or regular deep-conditioning sessions. The key is understanding your hair rather than following every trend you encounter.

What works beautifully for one person may not necessarily work for another. Your hair has its own personality, porosity, texture and needs. Learning to recognise these differences allows your routine to become more intentional and far more effective.



Protect the Crown You Are Growing

Healthy hair is not only about encouraging growth. It is also about protecting the growth you already have. Heat styling, excessive manipulation, harsh chemical treatments and consistently tight hairstyles can place stress on the hair and scalp. Protective styles can be useful, but they should still be installed and maintained with care.

A hairstyle should never cause persistent pain, excessive tension or discomfort. Even something as simple as using a satin or silk bonnet or pillowcase can help reduce friction while you sleep. The goal is not to avoid styling altogether. It is to create a balance between expression and protection.



Trim the Past, Make Room for the Future

There is something symbolic about letting go of damaged ends. While trimming does not make hair grow faster from the scalp, removing severely split or damaged ends can help prevent further splitting and support a healthier-looking appearance. Sometimes, holding on to damaged length can become counterproductive.

A healthy hair journey may require accepting that a small trim today can contribute to stronger-looking hair tomorrow. Growth is not always about keeping every centimetre. Sometimes, it is about knowing what needs to be released.

Nourishment Begins Within

Haircare does not stop at the products sitting on your bathroom shelf. The body requires adequate nutrition and hydration to support normal hair growth and overall health. A varied, balanced diet provides important nutrients, while staying adequately hydrated supports general wellbeing. This is also where health awareness becomes an important part of your hair journey.

Significant or persistent changes in hair shedding, texture or growth should not always be dismissed as a cosmetic concern. Hair can sometimes reflect changes happening within the body, so unusual or ongoing changes are worth discussing with a healthcare professional. Your hair may be part of your beauty routine, but it is also connected to your overall wellbeing.

Learn Your Hair, Then Listen to It

One of the most empowering things you can do for your hair is to become curious about it. Learn your texture. Understand your porosity. Notice how your hair responds to different products. Pay attention to how it behaves during different seasons.

Recognise what leaves it moisturised, what causes build-up and what contributes to breakage. You do not need an elaborate twelve-step routine. You need a routine that understands your hair. Haircare should be less about chasing perfection and more about developing a relationship with your crown.

Let Your Hair Bloom at Its Own Pace

There is beauty in allowing things to develop naturally. A flower does not rush its bloom, and neither should your hair journey. There may be seasons of growth, seasons of shedding, seasons of change and moments when progress feels almost invisible.

The temptation is to compare your journey with someone else's, particularly in an age where social media can make everyone's hair journey appear effortless. But healthy hair is personal. Your texture is different. Your lifestyle is different. Your genetics are different. Your needs are different.

Comparison can make you overlook the progress happening right in front of you. Celebrate the small victories: healthier ends, a calmer scalp, less breakage, better moisture retention or simply finding a routine that works for you.



A Crown Worth Caring For

Haircare is often treated as beauty maintenance, but perhaps it deserves to be viewed as something deeper. It is an act of attention. It is learning to slow down enough to notice what your body and hair are asking for. It is choosing products with intention, protecting your strands, caring for your scalp and understanding that consistency will always matter more than quick fixes. Your crown does not need to be perfect to be beautiful. It simply needs to be cared for.

So, as you enter a new season, consider giving your hair more than a new style. Give it a reset. Revisit your routine. Reassess what your hair needs. Let go of habits that no longer serve it and make room for practices that encourage health, strength and renewal.

Because the most beautiful hair journeys are not necessarily about becoming someone else's version of beautiful. They are about learning to appreciate, understand and nurture your own crown.

Bloom from the roots. Grow with intention. And let healthy hair be the foundation of your beauty.

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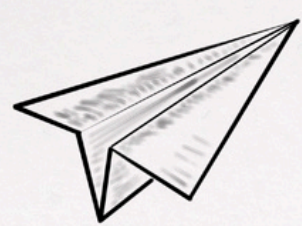
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