

## AU NATUREL

### PERSONAL AND SALON UPDATES Musings on Time and Tide and Triggers

As I look out my office window and ponder what to say by way of updates, I see the few leaves that are still clinging to the oak trees around my home. I'm convinced that I've become allergic to these oak trees. When the season starts to change in the late summer, I'm triggered and my sinuses begin to act up rather famously. It started between 10-15 years back but seems to get worse with time. I've developed allergic asthma as a result. Doctors have done blood tests but can't tell precisely what I'm allergic to that triggers primarily in autumn. They have ruled out the skin test because my condition is so precarious, I'm at risk of going into anaphylactic shock. I thought it was surely ragweed but, I've noticed that when the last leaf falls off the trees outside my home, that's when my condition clears up. When the condition is in full bloom, I take Zyrtec (24 hr) at night and Advil Cold and Sinus every 4-6 hours. If I fail to take these tablets in a timely manner, then I have to reach for my Flovent inhaler. Without taking the medications and/or the Flovent, I would have to use an albuterol inhaler about 3-4 times a day! My doctor said: "You don't have very much room for error here." And that is true. If I were living in an earlier technological period of history, I KNOW I would be dead. I would have been killed in and by my

favorite season and region of the entire world. The irony is pretty poetic.

When I was traveling regularly to Senegal and other parts of West Africa, I noticed that the problem disappeared completely. So, it's definitely a regional condition. But that's hard to hear when I was born and raised in the Southeast of these United States. Why have I become allergic to my homeland?! Things that make you go hmm. I will not likely figure that out. So, I take the medications. I was so accustomed to living without medications for so long. But those days are over. Trust! Without the meds, I would be long gone. Back in 2018 when I returned home for Christmas after spending a month in Senegal, I cleaned my home without a mask. There was a lot of dust (which I am also allergic to now) but I wasn't thinking. I was in the zone. That evening, my husband had to drive me to urgent care because I couldn't catch my breath. I walked in minutes before closing. My condition was so serious, they got me a wheelchair, and the nurse immediately gave me a prednisone shot. I had to then drive to the emergency room to be monitored because the clinic was closing so they could not stay to monitor me for the prescribed amount of time. At that moment, I realized

### CONTACT US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION!

Au Naturel is the information sharing arm of Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa. We encourage clients who are: transitioning to natural hair, seeking a more natural look or tiring of wearing hair that is not their own, we encourage you to give us a call. We operate by appointment only. So, please call 919-844-1933 or visit our [website](#) for more information. We embrace the beauty of you.

that the reality of my health was fundamentally different from what it was. Today, I pay someone to clean. It's just a whole lot easier. In the salon, we clean literally every day. So, things never get out of hand enough for me to be concerned about it. And I never display symptoms while there. It has occurred to me that I may need to move to another part of the country or the world at a future date. But for the interim, I take the medications.

So many people have allergies these days. I can't help but feel like Mother Nature is evolving in very subtle ways that are designed to expel the viral loads of so many humans who are abusing her on a daily basis. But, that's just me being dystopian. I watch A LOT of dystopian films including Zombies. (That's another story!) A less conspiratorial culprit is aging. My mother always says: Aging is not for the faint of heart. I can testify to the truthfulness of that statement. Your body changes whether you want to or not. It's why I try to embrace each day as the gift that it is and endeavor to enjoy the fruits of my labor as much as possible while helping others along the way when I can.

Within the salon, I see the effects of aging on the scalps and in the hair of my clients and myself. But, I rarely see the age on their faces. I swear I have clients who look exactly the same as they did when I first met them many moons ago—almost 20 years ago for some! One of them has no more gray hair today than she had back then. Another has as much gray as the day she arrived,

but I dye it and she looks easily in her late 30s to early 40s. I have considerably more gray hair than I did years ago. Forty was the magic number marking the beginning of my hair color transformation. But my eldest son is graying VERY RAPIDLY! He is in his early 30s but has a lot more gray hair than I did at his age. His Dad who is six years older than me has much less gray hair than I do, so I don't know where that premature graying came from. But he's cool with it so that's all that matters.

As we close out another year of operation, I remain grateful for God's blessings. We are here by His grace alone so, we give thanks. I pray that the new year gives us more opportunities to serve the community with the gifts that we've been given. I pray God's blessings on the families of Hadiyah and Mikea. May they continue to grow and thrive in this space and place. And I pray blessings on the health and wealth of the clients we serve. 2026 was a year of transformation for our country whose impacts will be felt for many years to come. I pray that ration, reason and integrity be found in the halls of Congress and all state houses across the land. I pray that we find better ways to live and work through our differences as a people. I pray that my friends and family are healthy and well cared for. I pray that no matter the challenges that life brings, we all strive to see God's hand even in the difficulties. Peace and blessings to all for this holiday season and the coming new year.

## A CURL BY ANY OTHER NAME... Debunking the Gina Curl "Healthier Alternative" Myth

I can honestly say that when I began to script this article, I had a long deep sigh. In my mind's eye, I saw two decades of time and commitment to sharing the natural hair story, and I say two decades of the wider society's "wheel and come again." I have seen style trends come and go. But, the recurring theme is to change what God gave you and make it "better". Frankly, it's exhausting to witness the back and forth. A new generation emerges and an old song plays: Try this new revolutionary product that's going to fix your hair and make it beautiful. Well, I have long believed and

concluded that God does not make mistakes. So, I reject ANY and ALL processes that demand I permanently alter the character of the curl pattern that God coded within me. Anyone who knows me knows that.

Well last month, a young lady whose hair I began styling when she was six years old asked: "Ms. Schatzi, can you do a Gina Curl on my hair. It is a curl that is not chemical and won't damage my hair. My Mom says if you can't do it, I can't get it." I had never heard of a Gina Curl because I frankly don't keep up with all the trends and fads that emerge. I'm not a good stylist in

that way, I confess. So, I asked her to please share the [link to the product/procedure](#) so that I could do some research. After looking at an application video, I contacted her back, looping in Mom, to explain that the Gina Curl is the Jheri Curl. I then explained to her what the Jheri Curl was and what the Gina Curl is. I won't bother to explain the nuanced differences between the two products. The website does a fair job of that. In short, I told her the procedures are not fundamentally different. The Gina Curl is the same chemical process as the Jheri Curl which is the same chemical process as the permanents that White women used to get back in the day. The difference is that the Gina Curl is truer to the mainstream permanent process because it does not rely on curl activator to keep the hair moist. It is a dry curl which makes it more convenient and more natural looking. But it is NOT a natural process. It is a chemical process. She then asked if I could do it in my shop. My response paraphrasing was: I'm sorry. I cannot. I am not licensed to do chemical services. And if I was, I would not do it because my salon's entire vision is built on rejecting chemical services that permanently modify the curl pattern. My salon sinks are virgin. Chemical services have not been done in our salon and you can tell when you smell the air inside our salon. I'm sorry about that.' She texted me back a little later to say: "Mom said I can't get it." I responded: "Your hair is the way God wants it, and you do a good job with it. So you should embrace the beauty of you, just as He made you. He doesn't make mistakes. I can assure you of that." She responded: "Thanks. I will try to keep that in mind."

When I reflect on the matter, it makes me a little sad. Because women in droves have walked away from the relaxer, which is [known to cause fibroids and other physiological problems](#). But when we walked away, someone was right there to sell us wigs by the tons to ensure that the Black dollar continues to feed global capital. We've always used braid extensions for the occasional change of pace, but even now, they are being called into question for their safety, as noted in my recent blog post "[They don't like us.](#)" I am convinced

that if there are chemicals on the extension braids that are dangerous, then the wigs and weave hair likely have the same problem. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to surmise why. This reality begs the question: What is really safe? Well, one known exception is human hair wigs and weave hair which are surely safe physiologically. But the damage that they are doing to Black women mentally, spiritually and psychologically will likely never be measured. So, the logical answer is to "embrace the beauty of you" by wearing what your Momma gave you. As I have often said, there is nothing to fix with Black hair. We simply are charged to learn what works for our unique curl pattern and roll with it. My Mom started twisting my hair back in 1981, and I have not found a better style to match the unique texture of my hair and my lifestyle. I have never been diagnosed with fibroids though I assumed it was inevitable that I eventually would be because most people I knew had them. When I went to Egypt and saw the statue of Cleopatra wearing twists, it only confirmed that the style is divine perfection fit for a queen. I am not saying that everyone should wear twists. I'm saying that our hair is fearfully and wonderfully made, and we should embrace it as it presents. We have the flexibility to wear straight and curly hair, and the beauty is found in the variety that only natural coily hair can fully achieve when it is NOT permanently altered. Truly, the world knows this truth already. The only people who need convincing of this truth are Black women. Until we awaken from our disillusionment, we will continue to demand products that mimic the look of others while being as flawless yet carefree as possible. As long as we remain in this mind state, the global markets will give us what we demand, caring little for our long-term health and exclusively of their short term economic gain. Through this process, we will continue to be sold and resold "healthy" innovations that represent the magic bullet that we seek, while fundamentally a Curl by any other name will still smell as bad and be as damaging as the chemical that it is.

Embrace the beauty of you.