

March 2021

AU NATUREL

THIS YEAR MARKS 15 YEARS OF SERVICE Celebrating another milestone

It occurred to me a few weeks ago that we have hit our 15-year milestone! July 2021 represents 15 years of service to the Triangle community.

It's honestly hard to believe that we have seen so many seasons at 258, but we have! We are grateful. It has frankly been a rollercoaster ride. Business ownership is the single most difficult thing that I've ever done. (Raising people runs a pretty close second though.) I think I have the added challenge of operating a business while employed elsewhere. THAT'S NEVER EASY!! Over the years, I've met many people who asked, "Why not immerse yourself

and watch your business grow exponentially?" But, I've never had the desire for full immersion. I am mostly an introverted, analytical problem solver. The salon brings out the extroverted creator in me. And while NONE of my clients would believe that I'm an introvert, it's the truth. When I'm seated quietly in front of my computer with a challenging issue to arrest, I'm most "at home." It's why I have most consistently engaged with the natural hair care community through our monthly newsletter. Writing it is an exercise in discovery: What can I create today when I have two days left in the month and absolutely NO IDEA what

IN HONOR OF OUR 15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY, WE WILL BE STROLLING DOWN MEMORY LANE THROUGH THE PAGES OF THIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

SOULFUL REVERBERATION: SAGE INSIGHT

As noted above, I went to the SCORE Office in Downtown Raleigh in 2005, to share my vision for a natural hair salon with two retired former business owners. They were two gray-haired White men. I sat down, they thumbed through my business plan, stopped primarily on spreadsheet pages and asked: "Why do you want to do this?" I answered with enthusiasm like I somehow need to convince them of the righteousness and viability of my vision. They were disinterested and unmoved. They rapid fire grilled me with a few other questions. I responded but they didn't really care about my responses. Then one of them asked, "How are you going to make money while getting this business off the ground?" I said, "I'm not quitting my job." He retorted, "That's the smartest thing you said since you walked in here." Then, they proceeded to wrap up as they had heard all they needed to hear. The final thought was this: "YOU WILL SURVIVE BY YOUR SHEER WILL AND DETERMINATION. NOTHING ELSE." I have NEVER forgotten those words. I wish I could find those men to thank them. They told me precisely what I needed to hear.

to write about? I also have been challenged to make consistent, predictable income with benefits. The salon was built from the ground up. So in the beginning, there was nothing. When I walked into the SCORE office years ago, I was armed with a business plan and a dream. But, I was also working in the field of international development—another dream of mine. So, I didn't intend to scrap a longtime dream for a newly emerging one. It felt too risky and honestly too limiting. Overall, I'm glad that I can multi-task. I've had some very rich and full experiences while engaging the left AND right sides of my brain. Through it all, I've learned that I'm an innovator FIRST! Problem solving is all about innovation and the skill comes to me rather naturally. But, business requires sitting in the same environment on the same pathway and innovating on old themes. I, on the other hand, have held no less than

10 very different job titles throughout my career. Sounds like madness but I've enjoyed the ride. In truth, I was able to conceptualize and implement *Schatzi's* because I was bored stiff at my job at the time and felt that I wasn't employing enough of my brain or my skills. So, I wrote my business plan sitting right at my FHI desk, receiving "excellent" performance reviews throughout my tenure there. What can I say: God made me. He knows far better than I. 😊

In honor of our 15-year anniversary, we will be strolling down memory lane through the pages of this monthly newsletter. As memories arise, they will be penned. The aim is prayerfully to illustrate how God's grace, hard work, community spirit and a passion for the image of Blackness has kept us alive through the years.

Embrace the beauty of you.

WHAT DOES UNHEALTHY NATURAL HAIR LOOK LIKE?

A methodology to diagnose your own hair health challenges

Introduction: As a naturalista for about 40 years of my adult life, I can honestly say that I've been blessed to have pretty healthy hair. I always took for granted that my hair was healthy because I was not putting chemicals in it, using a lot of heat or generally combing and brushing on a regular basis. All of these things have a long-term effect of stressing the hair out and giving it a dull, lifeless look. Other more outward signs of unhealthy natural hair are extreme dryness (high porosity) and breakage in sections of the hair (low elasticity). I have always worn protective styles, so hair manipulation abuse has just not been a major concern for me. But in recent months, I've observed a phenomenon that had me somewhat confounded. I'm sharing my experience to guide others to do your own introspective work to discover the challenges that you may be unknowingly causing on your natural hair care journey.

Problem Identification: I noticed that small fibers of hair were regularly falling on my sink with them being primarily two to three inches in length. Because I keep my hair twisted, I was puzzled about the reason for this

problem. In short, my life has not fundamentally changed to warrant this different hair outcome. Why?

Brainstorming/Generating New Ideas: I scoured through books about aging hair and learned quite a lot which I've shared in the past two issues of *Au Naturel*. But, none of the things that I read seemed to satisfactorily explain my problem in a way that made sense to me. So, I've analyzed my habits and my lifestyle. Through research about my changing hair reality and my hair behavior, I was able to decipher a cause and a solution.

Root Cause: Because my hair is aging, my hair follicles are smaller and my strands are thinner. This is a new reality. As such, I make my twists smaller than they used to be to get a full, voluminous look. This is a behavior modification upon an old hair habit. Because my twists are so long, I often have to disentangle the ends while loosening my hair to prepare to shampoo. Sometimes, I am impatient to get through the process and wind up pulling or tearing my hair towards the ends to expedite the loosening process. This is not a new reality for me but my hair is less equipped to withstand the strain. As such, my thinner hair strands, when

strained, are more prone to break. The result is and will ultimately be shorter hair. Perhaps this malpractice of mine explains why my hair length is shorter than it used to be. It's a logical deduction.

Solution: So to address and arrest this situation, I trimmed my hair to be sure that my ends are healthy. To maintain my longer tresses, I have three choices: 1) Make larger twists; 2) Change to a different protective style; or 3) Ensure that I pay ample time and attention to the ends of my hair while loosening to avoid the strain. I may also want to blow-dry less frequently, although I don't typically blow-dry more than six times a year. So, I doubt that will make a significant impact. My choice is number 3. I have forgotten my own cardinal rule of hair care: **Never try to comb and style your hair in a hurry.** That rule relates equally to hair loosening. So, I will endeavor to do and be better. I confess that I used to take MUCH BETTER care of my hair when I was not caring for the community. But,

I have no regrets. It is what it is. I will just vow to always do my hair loosening on different days from styling to eradicate the desire to rush. With that said, I encourage you to check out our salon blog to read a reprint of the article "The Greatest Challenge of Going Natural." It includes this cardinal hair care rule along with other helpful advice. It's strange to say that after 15 years of community service, I need to take my own advice. But, such is life.

In conclusion, I have outlined my process of self-diagnosis in an effort to highlight the steps that you too should go through to approach your own hair care conundrums. After identifying the problem and edifying yourself about what causes these issues, you engage a process of reasoning to determine the root cause of your concerns and to propose a solution. Hopefully, you will find this four-step process of hair challenge diagnosis a useful tool to address your own hair care needs. Happy styling! 😊

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