Does Race Still Matter When Choosing your Hairstylist?

March 28, 2014 By Mona Ramsey

You're walking through your local grocery store when you see the hair of your dreams on another woman. After determining that her hair texture is a lot like yours while spying on her in the can goods aisle, you finally get up the nerve to speak to the one person who has hair you've always wanted. She appreciates the compliments you shower her with and suggests that you see her hairstylist--a well-educated professional in the world of beauty. The "mystery lady" is confident your hair will never be the same if you just give her beautician a chance. You excitedly take a referral card and later that evening you schedule your hair appointment. The next week you arrive with high hopes and anticipation that this could be the start of a new you. Then, IT happens. The stylist comes to greet you and she's not of your race. In fact, her hair texture is the total opposite of yours. Now, panic sets in, but it's too late.

Your mind starts turning while you try to have a proper consultation in the stylist's chair. There are two conversations going on at this point, but only you can hear them both. It usually goes a little something like this:

Stylist: What would you like to have done today?

You: I would like a basic blow out.
In your head: I'll start with something simple. She can't possibly mess up a blow out.
Does she even know what a blow out is?

Stylist: I will be using these products on your hair today. I prefer them because they provide the moisture and shine your hair craves without leaving your hair weighed down.

You: OK.
In your head: What in the world is she about to put in my hair?? Well it can't be that bad.

Stylist: ?? (She says something, but you don't respond because you are so caught up in the conversation in your head...The girl in the grocery store looks great, the girl in the grocery store looked great, the girl in the...

Stylist: Ma'am, let's get you shampooed.

Your whole appointment is consumed by the alternate conversation in your head and you don't even get the chance to relax. She announces that you're done and turns you towards the mirror and...your hair is breathtaking!

To say you just had a pleasant surprise is an understatement. You are delighted and immediately feel relieved. So what was all of that stress for anyway? Here’s what I think:

Traditionally, women have frequented local salons owned and operated by someone from their culture. While many have found amazing stylists this way some often felt very limited in who they could choose to make them beautiful. I have definitely seen a shift in the last 10 years of women of all races branching out and finding the most talented stylist who is educated in their hair texture regardless of race. After all, great hair styling, in my humble opinion, has nothing to do with race and everything to do with understanding textures and skill. I say don’t limit yourself. Fabulous hair is never boxed in.

As a professional hairdresser, I am proud of the fact that my clientele ranges from women whose tresses resemble that of the gorgeous Lupita Nyong’o to lovely ladies whose locks favor Jennifer Lawrence. With a passion for education and high quality training through Eufora International, I have been able to bridge that cultural gap. I would be lying if I said it was always easy. I’ve been on the other end of the spectrum where I could feel the doubt oozing from someone of a different race, but instead of letting that discourage me I always did my thing and wowed them.

So if you have been hearing all about an amazing stylist who can rock out your mane and have you turning heads, don’t let their complexion determine if you will give them a chance. If they are educated, talented and you have already been referred to them then I say go for it.

What’s your opinion on the subject? Do you think race matters anymore when it comes to who can and can’t do your hair?

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