Hair Craziness

March 3, 2014 By Beautiful Black Hair

Is it only my imagination or do people treat you different depending on how you wear your hair? The reason for my question is because while sifting through a number of hair blogs, I read a few posts by black women who said they had experienced a change in people's attitudes when they transitioned from relaxed to natural hair. The stories they recounted reminded me of what I experienced several years ago when I stopped straightening my hair.

But, first, let me offer a little background history. At one point, I worked for a teen entertainment publication that focused on hip-hop and R&B music.

One evening, after washing my hair, I simply decided to braid my hair into plaits. It had been a long, exhausting day and I had a concert to cover at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The last thing I felt like doing was blow drying my hair only to add more hours to the ritual to straighten it again then use a curling iron on top of that to give my hair style a little life.

I'd had enough, so I worked some product through my hair then combed and sectioned it off so I could put my tresses into several braids. Tonight, I thought, this was just going to be the way it had to be.

When I got to the Garden, I found my friend and colleague already seated in an area reserved for press. The seats we were in was one level down and in front of another few rows of seats another level up that was also earmarked for reporters and music journalists. Since the concert hadn't started, many of us were jumping around, going back and forth to make quick visits to other rows to chat with colleagues and coworkers.

After the management announced the show was about to begin, everyone returned to their seats. As I settled into my chair, my friend leaned over and asked me if I had seen one of our colleagues and said her name. But I hadn't seen her and told my friend just that.

"Well, she saw you," replied my friend. "She wanted to know if you'd lost your mind!"

My hair, it seems, had prompted this remark. After that, I wore my hair natural more often than not. Then, I put away my straightening comb for a really long time.

Well, the critical colleague who made the comment wasn't a really close friend of mine, so at that time I could care less what she, or anybody else thought. I wore my hair the way I wanted to wear

it and shrugged off the folks who had negative things to say.

Amazingly, years later, when natural hair became the fashion I'd see many of these naysayers sporting locs, twists, braids and Afros. But then, you know what? People make me tired.

So, when I went to that "Garden Party" to reminisce with my old friend and enjoy the concert, what I came away with is exactly how Ricky Nelson ended his song.

"You can't please everyone, so you've got to please yourself."

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