



My natural hair journey started out of convenience, when I stopped getting a relaxer because doing so every 6-8 weeks was expensive. I was a college student at the time, so to save money I started getting my hair shampooed and flat ironed in between relaxers. I quickly noticed that it was just as straight as it was with a relaxer, silky and soft. In 2009, I started going to a natural hair stylist, and was excited about my bra strap length, relaxer-free, Remy weave-looking tresses.

I started paying more attention to my hair, especially when it was wet. As I ran my fingers through my hair, I realized that I had curls, and even waves. I always wondered what my hair would look like sans the silk press, and six years later my wonder became real.

From 2014 to March 2015, I was working in an environment that was oppressive – mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. I still remember the day I showed up to work wearing Senegalese twists, and was looked at like I was an alien. On the other hand, when my hair was bone straight, I received countless compliments. I longed to be the purest form of myself, and that included wearing my natural hair.

Unfortunately, I felt like I couldn't do it while working there. Due to various circumstances, I quit my job and truly began my natural hair journey. Two weeks later, I made an appointment to get the big chop. With each snip and falling strand, I shed all of the negativity I held about myself, kinky hair, and what it meant to be beautiful.

It was the beginning of my quest to love all of me unconditionally, regardless of what society defines as beautiful or acceptable. I love each and every one of my kinky curls – the shrinkage, the frizzy ones, the few that do their own thing, even the ones that are constantly in my face.

Wearing my hair natural is how I show appreciation for all of what the Creator has given me. God said that the hairs on our heads are numbered, and each strand is counted. From the same place we hold knowledge and a

lifetime of memories grows a unique collection of fibers that no one has but you. Your hair was made especially for you – to frame your face, to compliment your eyes and express who you are, literally from the inside out.

Overall, my natural hair journey has been a learning experience, full of self-discovery, teachable moments and plenty of changes. From numb arms and a sore neck after DIY styling to frustration in the “awkward” stage, it was all worth it, and I would do it again.

I feel free, alive and beautiful because I am me; and I am proud of who I am – a beautiful, strong, soulful Black woman, with a crown of curls that bring life!

~Sharee Silerio

My Bio: Sharee Silerio is a St. Louis-based freelance writer and television and film producer. She has covered culture, race, politics, social justice and media literacy. Read more of her work at ShareeSilerio.com then follow her on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).



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