



Insight

Truvy Invites You to Let Your Hair Down and Listen

January 17, 2013 was a historic day for the US – the First Lady used her brand new Twitter account to debut her new ‘do: Bangs! Since that day, Michelle Obama’s bangs have become as iconic as Anna Wintour’s bob, Farrah Fawcett’s lengthy tresses, Marilyn Monroe’s platinum curls and Shirley Temple’s ringlets. Truth be told, most of us care a lot about hair – our own and other people’s, whether we have it or not, whether it’s “good” enough or we’re having “a bad hair day.” After all, hair is part of how we present ourselves to the world, or as sociologist Rose Weitz writes, “Our hair often seems magically emblematic of our selves.”

Hair is not only a personal statement; it’s also a mirror of our lives. Remember the musical *Hair*? It reflected an entire generation. Similarly, as the civil rights movement promoted Black pride, many African Americans abandoned their ironed look for big, natural Afros. And long before that, aristocratic women in 18th century Europe wore their hair in ornate sculpted arrangements sometimes as high as two feet atop their heads as a way to show that they had the leisure time and the staff to maintain such fashionable coiffures.

Steel Magnolias is all about hair: Shelby’s bridal up-do, complete with delicate Baby’s Breath; the free-flowing casual locks she sports for the holidays, and the short cut she gets when tragedy threatens to cut her own life much too short. The women in Truvy’s salon bond around hair, and in so doing, they reveal much more than their dark roots. That’s the beauty of this touching story – that six women can grow to become true friends, to love one another and support one another because the salon is a safe place to reveal who they really are.

Hair salons are, in fact, unique places – businesses that are at once public and intimate, where people from various walks of life literally let their hair down. How many times have you been in the salon chair and overheard the person next to you revealing potentially dangerous details of their private life – dating disasters, diagnoses, personal indiscretions – that they wouldn’t share anywhere else (except, perhaps, a confessional or a therapist’s couch)?

We are vulnerable in our hair stylists’ hands, and contrary to what we may think, that vulnerability increases our openness and creates a trust that we don’t feel with most people, other than family and close friends. That’s why we’re drawn to the stories we hear in Truvy’s salon – because, not only are they familiar and funny, they come from an open and vulnerable place that makes us ultimately remember that we all are human, and that the greatest gift we can give one another is, simply, to listen.

-Lauren Simon
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