


7 People Share How Their Hair Became an Expression of Their Identity



Hair plays a significant role in how we choose to define and express ourselves. Here, seven people share their stories.



Have you ever felt your mood improve when someone compliments you on a fresh cut? Or enjoyed a boost of confidence after styling it just right? It may seem superficial, but the mental effect is much deeper than a bit of external validation. The decisions we make about our hair are intricately linked to our moods and how we want the world to perceive us.

“Hair is one of the few attributes of our appearance that we have significant influence over,” says Rebecca Newman, a psychotherapist in Philadelphia.

I define myself as a queen, and my hair — no matter the color, length, or style — separates me from the crowd.

Or leave it just the way it is. With freedom comes personal identity. Of course, our hair doesn't completely define who we are. But it can be an extension of our personalities and a reflection of how we feel internally. And when we aren't able to wear our hair the way we want, it can feel like a loss. “When people can't exercise their stylistic choices, they can feel disoriented,” says Newman. “Sometimes they say they don't feel like themselves or they no longer stand out positively.”

纽约市

On the flip side, “hairstyles let you channel your expressive side,” says Ebony Butler, Ph.D., a psychologist in Texas.

“In therapy, it can be very healing for people to tap into their creativity and make something. The ability to go from an idea to something tangible brings people a great deal of joy and confidence. Styling your hair can do that.”

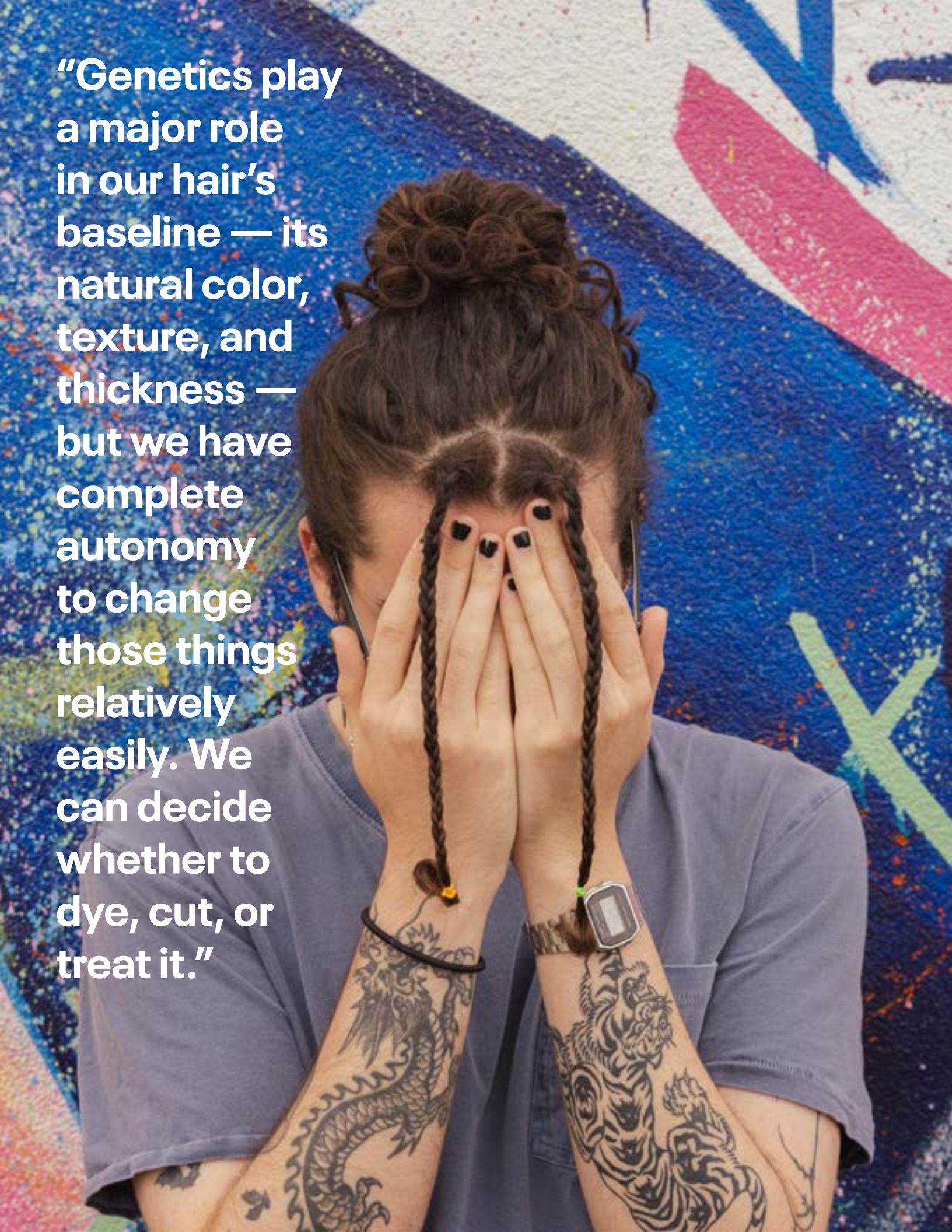
It’s also a way to embrace your culture. More representation of different styles, colors, and textures can help dispute the preconceived notions of youthful, Eurocentric beauty being the standard. It enables people to honor all the traits that make them unique.

“Seeing your hair type represented and celebrated makes you feel validated. It proves what we’ve known about ourselves for years. We deserve to be here and take up space,” says Butler. “More inclusion of us as people of color, our hairstyles, and our likeness reinforces that we can be who we are without conforming.”

Personal hairstyling can be fun and experimental, but it can ultimately serve as a way for people to find self love. “[Our hair can] release us from the pressure to be something we are not. In fact, strengthening our relationship with it may strengthen the relationship we have with ourselves, our bodies — and other Black women and women of color.” That credo can extend to all the ways we identify: acceptance is a universal exercise.



“Genetics play a major role in our hair’s baseline — its natural color, texture, and thickness — but we have complete autonomy to change those things relatively easily. We can decide whether to dye, cut, or treat it.”





Breaking the Stereotypes:

For years, men with long, curly hair have been subjected to societal stereotypes and misconceptions. Long hair has been predominantly associated with femininity, while short, neatly groomed styles have been the norm for men.





Growing up with sisters and having my mom always do my hair made me appreciate my hair texture and ability to style it so many ways. Although my friends at school had different hair from me I always was taught to embrace my natural hair and express myself through it.



**“femininity
is not an
absence of
strength and
confidence”**

Hair to me is a way to express my personality and my acceptance of my masculine and feminine sides. Having braids can embrace femininity for me and remind me of when my mom and sisters would do my hair. Even with a curly bun and colored hair clips I'm not ashamed to show off my masculinity and strength because femininity is not an absence of strength and confidence, I believe that it makes both qualities even stronger.



**“When I look
at my hair, I
think,
‘This is me;
this is who I
want to be.’”**



Growing up I always had my hair in different styles that were unlike my peers of my same identity back then.

Now that I feel free and open to express myself as having any pronouns I feel like I can style my hair to reflect that. Some days I have cute buns in my hair and others I can clip it up and show off my shaved sides.

My hair plays a big part in my identity and I think I'm recognized by it's uniqueness and versatility.



“Those styles felt like a standard of beauty that I needed to maintain”

“I’d been trying to grow out my hair for almost 20 years, but it never quite went past my shoulders. During quarantine, like many people, I had time to think, and it dawned on me that I had to change it.

Then I saw a photo of my hair in a scrunchie, and most of the strands had fallen out because they were so broken. Straightening my hair into a bun for ballet class throughout my childhood and then wearing a sleek bob had caught up. Those styles felt like a standard of beauty that I needed to maintain, and it led to longterm hair damage.

I grew up in a predominantly white area, and I had a fear about my hair being different from my friends. I was scared that a wig or braid would fall off at school. I just wanted to blend in.





“When I was young, I’d beg my mom to let me color my hair. My favorite shows had characters with blue and pink hair and I always wanted to express myself that way. I also always felt like I had to have pin straight hair to fit in. I thought it was prettier that way. But then in high school I started taking care of my own hair. I spent so much time on it, and it made me realize that I would never straighten it; I couldn’t hurt it that way. Instead, I fell in love with it.

I wore it out in all its glory on my graduation day. Even now, I’m most comfortable when my hair is doing her own thing. Sometimes she doesn’t want to do her best, but she’s a part of me, so I show her off. When the weather is really hot, I have my hair in braids. It’s great to be able to switch it up: Or there are days when an outfit inspires a new hairstyle. Deciding how to do my hair is a way to express myself.”

Coloring my own hair is a new creative outlet for me which lets me add more color to my looks and enhance my outfits with it too. Instead of trying to fit in with others I now embrace standing out.



cut it all off if I wanted to or I can dye it bright purple

now that I know I have the freedom to do



anything I want I remember I want I love

expressing myself through my hair. I can cut

Telling Stories Through Hair





Brought to you by

scunci
BY CONAIR®