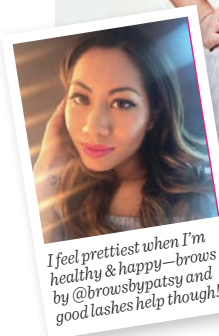


Not just face value



I feel prettiest when I'm healthy & happy—brows by @browsbypatsy and good lashes help though!

When I was little, I used to watch, transfixed, as my mum got ready before going out for an event. The way she'd fluff her hair before putting it up in her signature bun, and slick lipstick on before adding jewels and, most likely, a silk scarf. The little rituals she did as part of her beauty routine were, as in most mother-daughter relationships, passed down to my sisters and me, from never forgetting to put on eye cream to applying body moisturiser after a shower, from the age of 14. To this day, the delicate cherry-almond scent of Jergens' original body lotion will always remind me of my mum, taking me right back to that wooden chair just outside her dressing area that I'd sit on while watching her as a little girl.

They may vary from country to country, and even home to home, but the ritualistic aspect of beauty is an undeniable part of its appeal. I find it fascinating to see how this changes across the world, particularly since it is often based on inherent cultural influences, be it due to traditions, climate or local living conditions, or

indeed that particular society's typical genetic makeup and their definition of beauty. Which is why I was so interested to hear about an initiative by L'Oréal based on the science of local observation, which they called "geocosmetics," that saw them equip "bathroom laboratories" with cameras all over the world to study their consumer behaviour. Some of the most intriguing findings: In

China, it's common for women to incorporate massage techniques into the application of their skincare, while in Brazil, the hair, body and nails are highest on the list of importance, with most women getting their nails done at least once a week (and thus explaining the creation of so many Brazilian permanent hair straightening techniques). In Germany, hair styling is so varied that they claimed 12 radically different uses for hair spray, while in India, men are also very particular about grooming, often using talcum powder to avoid shiny skin and keep feeling fresh. And depending on where you go, people seem to be obsessed with trying to make their skin either lighter or darker, a concept that I, as someone of a mixed-race background who is proud of both sides, always find a little heartbreaking. Regardless of your personal, cultural or even familial beauty values, I think we can all agree that true beauty comes from within, made up of empathy and a kind and open heart, and that the rest is just frosting. And that whether you're more of a natural beauty gal or a makeup-loving belle, we also can't deny that finding things that make us feel a little prettier, be that shinier hair, longer lashes, a slick of bright lippie, or even a spritz of perfume, can add a real spring to your step. I recently watched a video online about a UK-based hairdresser who takes to the streets of London with his entire kit in his backpack and approaches homeless people to offer them a free haircut. The look on their faces when they finally peer into his mirror afterwards, exclaiming how they now felt confident enough to go in to a job interview, or just be reminded of who they were before hard times had fallen on them—for some, they hadn't seen themselves groomed in years, even decades—was one of the most beautiful things I had seen in a while. What makes you feel beautiful? Be it a product, beauty ritual or even an act or a feeling, we'd love to know, so tell us on social media at @womenshealthme! Have a beautiful month, and we'll see you in October.

Yi-Hwa
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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

15 SECONDS

Pick up your organizer and commit to scraping out time—even if it's just 30 minutes—for this 21-day programme that will see you getting leaner, stronger results, and fast. "Score A Better Body Now," p.58

5 MINUTES

Tack a few moments on to the end of your beauty routine and give your makeup brushes a quick wash. Think of the bacteria you're getting rid of! "So Fresh and So Clean," p.32

15 MINUTES

Grab your foam roller and give yourself a little session before bed, after waking up, or whenever you can: It'll help release tight muscles and negative emotions. "Discuss: Mind," p.20


30 MINUTES

Have a squiz through our feature on these amazing women who are shattering glass ceilings and achieving incredible things for a serious dose of inspiration. "Game Changers," p.90

60 MINUTES

Grab your rolling pin and whip up this delicious Sour Cherry Buckwheat Galette—not only is it tasty, it's also packed with antioxidants and low in sugar. Score! "Bitter? Sweet!" p.76

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