



The Full Treatment

The media depicts, and we perceive, individuals who get manicures, massages and the like as rich, powerful and/or glamorous. One entertaining exception is Peggy, the matriarch of the humorously dysfunctional Bundy clan on "Married ... With Children." Although the Bundys are not financially comfortable, the resourceful Peggy does not work or cook. She watches TV and eats bonbons all day, and she is always at the beauty parlor, getting the full treatment.

Peggy would drop her bonbons at the plethora of affordable pampering resources in Atlanta, intown and beyond (check out the comprehensive pampering guide in the January 2000 issue of *Citymag*). In a city as diverse and frantic as ours, Atlantans desperately require these amenities for physical and mental wellness. These affordable and varied personal treats include massages (\$65-\$80, one hour), manicures (\$50-\$70), pedicures (\$40-\$60), aromatherapy (\$75-\$90, 75 minutes), reflexology (\$50-\$65, 45 minutes) and peels (\$75). If you are daring, try acupuncture or waxing. Most of these sites sell premium pampering products and also have evening and weekend hours to accommodate the hectic Atlanta lifestyle.

Most of us are so frazzled — personally and professionally — that we usually discover our need to be pampered, and the preferred method, through loved ones or friends. In a memorable episode of "Seinfeld," Jerry's girlfriend, a masseuse, gives his friends massages, but not him. She considers giving a massage to be work. Ironically, as everyone raves about her massages, Jerry

becomes very tense that he is not getting one. Even Al, Peggy's harried shoe salesman husband on "MWC," had a pampering preference: a haircut from his favorite barber. (The son of a master barber, this is my favorite form of pampering too).

So, you know when and how you need to be pampered, but do you want to do it alone or with loved ones or friends? I prefer the latter and so do my pampering-savvy friends. A while back, my girlfriend, her young daughter, and I were at the opening of a mall and received a free in-store massage at a Bath and Body Works shop. The child eagerly requested to go first. When I asked her why, she said that she wanted to be relaxed for a math test the next day. A brilliant student, she excels under any circumstances, but must have had some concerns about the test. Stressed or not, the young girl knew that she needed — and wanted — to be pampered. Inspired by the child's openness and the presence of loved ones, I was relaxed and oblivious to the crowd when I was stretched out.

Living in Atlanta is a day-to-day test, from professional and familial responsibilities to traffic. Accordingly, personal pampering is a necessity, not a luxury. If you prefer less frilly ways to please yourself, treat yourself to dinner at your favorite restaurant, buy a CD, go to the theater, or do whatever activity refocuses and recharges you. No matter your choice, be a true Atlantan and rush to do it.

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