

## IT IS WHAT IT IS – BUT WHAT IS IT?

By Sarah Holloway  
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My eyes no longer tell me whether what I’m staring at on the floor is a leaf, a bug or an unpleasant deposit left by the dog that wasn’t let out in time. As people frequently say these days, “It is what it is.” Yes, it is, but I won’t know what it is until I gingerly pick it up with a paper towel for a closer examination.



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There are many things in today’s world that I would be hard pressed to identify. The number of choices at the super market for toothpaste, hand lotion, body wash, shampoo and clothes detergent are bewildering to a brain easily rattled by too much information.

When I was young, we used to save rain water (we’d never heard of acid rain) to wash our hair with. We thought it was softer than tap water and we used lemon juice for a rinse. It seemed to work fine at the time. I never thought of looking at the components of shampoo back then but now I see dozens of bottles with long lists of ingredients I never heard of, and I wonder what I’m pouring over my head.

Either my sense of smell has deteriorated along with my eyesight or bath soap doesn’t have as strong a fragrance as it did in the olden days. I remember putting bars of Sweetheart and Cashmere Bouquet (“The fragrance men love!”) soap in my linen closets and dresser drawers and loved the sweet, clean sent it left on towels, sheets and nightgowns. Ivory soap still smells bland and clean – and it used to float.

Palmolive used to made with olive oil, but I haven’t checked its ingredients lately. I loved the sharp, antiseptic scent of Lifebuoy (“Health Soap”) to guard against dreaded B.O., and Lux toilet soap was said to be used by the cover girls and screen stares in the 40’s, which guaranteed its popularity. All of these had distinctive, lasting fragrances.

But now we have Body Wash that comes in zillion different bottles and brands and plain old sap seems messier compared with these liquids. I can’t detect much difference in them or any riveting scents. I got out a magnifying glass recently and slowly made out the following contents on my present bard: “Water, Petrolatum, Ammonium Laureth Sulfate, Lauroamphoacetate, Louric acid, fragrance, Trihydroxystearin extract, Sodium Chloride, Guar, Butyrospermun Park 11 (Shea Butter), Hyroxypopyl Trimonium Choride, Citric acid, DMDM, Hydantoiun, Podium Benzoate, Disodium EDTA, Peg 14M.”

I could never (and later did) get this information off the Internet. Most of the bottles I examined contained some of the above along with other ingredients just as mysterious, but I still use it every day.

And there you have it – It is what it is, but WHAT IS IT?

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\*Read more “Writer’s Corner” at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>