

Denise... It's great that when I relax about it, other people do too and they just accept it as normal.

I lost all my hair about 10 years ago. Over a 2 week period it was all gone, alopecia universalis. It wasn't a total surprise as some winters in the past I had lost some hair on the top of my head but it always grew back in the spring.

I hid the hair loss from my husband for a week using head scarves and although I was complaining and upset, he thought I was over-reacting until I took the scarf off and he realized how bad it was. I went to a wig specialist and got my first two wigs, synthetic, which I thought looked great and real although much later I realized they really looked like wigs and not real hair. I was so relieved at the time to have what little hair I had left shaved off as it was so devastating constantly seeing it falling out everywhere and I just wanted to feel "normal" again!

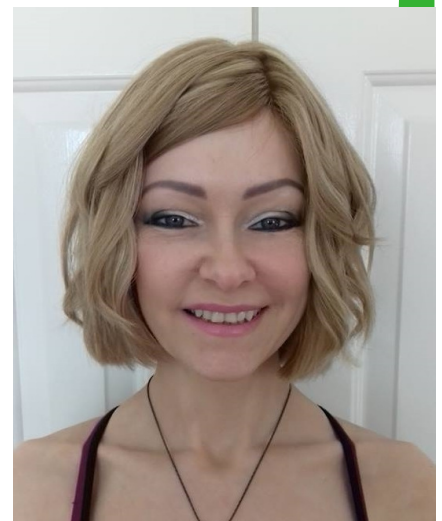
I then went into a mental block bubble (that's the only way I can describe it!) where I felt nothing for a year and a half and just got on with life. I ignored the stares and double takes from people and people talking to my head, not my face and people talking about me that didn't know me, it didn't sink in. Until, as I said, a year and a half later. I was in my therapist's office and I asked her if my wig looked natural. She was honest and said that it was obvious to most people, especially women as it was synthetic and looked un-natural. Big shock! All of a sudden my world came crashing down. I went around for about 2 months like a headless chicken, mind racing about how the last year and a half was all a lie and I wasn't normal. I looked in the mirror and the person looking back at me was a stranger. My sense of self, femininity, sexual appeal had changed. That might sound a bit over-dramatic to most people but for those with Alopecia I think they can understand that the actual hair loss is one thing but the psychological affect it has goes down to the core of the person and sense of self.

I was very lucky that I was in therapy and I was able to talk through all my problems and get them off my chest. My husband could only listen to so much which I can't blame him for and he didn't really get it.

After that I bought natural hair wigs which I like much better and although it took a lot of different wigs to get there, I finally have two brilliant ones that suit me, look natural and I find comfortable, which is not an easy task to tick all the boxes for me.

I had a "light bulb" moment one day in the gym. I thought there were a couple of girls talking about me and I ran into the toilet freaking out. I cried my eyes out for about 10 minutes. I looked in the mirror and said "right, that's it! Either you can be a victim or you can just accept this and get on with your life!". Something clicked in me from that moment and my perception changed. I took off my wig without any problems and if people looked at me, I'd say hello, which automatically they had to say back and disarmed them. When I go on holidays I take my wig off to work out in the gym and just wear a bandana. It's great that when I relax about it, other people do too and they just accept it as normal. People talk to me more and maybe in some strange way I am more approachable without hair!

Although alopecia is one of the hardest and upsetting things I've ever had to deal with, it has made me a much stronger person, less superficial and I tend not to sweat the small stuff as much.



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