

## **Simone..... I have gradually learnt to love myself, including all the good, bad and ugly things.**

Hi, my name is Simone and I first developed alopecia areata in 2013 when I was 26 years old.

It started out as a small bald patch on the side of my head, but this soon spread very quickly. I would notice clumps of hair falling out in the shower, clogging the drain, however I still refused to shave or cut my hair. Whenever I'd show any family or friends their reactions were ghastly, but despite this I remained positive and hopeful my hair would soon return.



I went through a hard time dealing with the adjustment of my alopecia, whilst also facing the prospect of newly single life on my own, leaving an abusive long-term relationship. I felt as though nobody would ever love me with this 'ugly' condition.

It finally became apparent to me that I may be faced with losing it all and so I explored the idea of a wig. I remember feeling incredibly embarrassed about having to purchase a wig, and was even nervous about making the phone call to the wig salon. I purchased a human hair wig and had it coloured and cut to look similar to my own hair. I couldn't believe the life-like quality of the wig, and even though it costed an arm and a leg, it was worth it just to finally feel comfortable and beautiful.

In 2014 my alopecia areata became totalis, and by 2015 I developed universalis. I think the worst thing was losing my eyelashes and eyebrows, because everybody would notice and comment that there was 'something different' about me. I work in a clinic where I consult with clients all day long, and it got to the point where I couldn't go a day without someone commenting on my changing appearance. Despite the awkward encounters I felt relieved that nobody could actually tell that I was wearing a wig. I was excited to discover the AAAF facebook support group as I finally felt that I was not alone in dealing with the ups and downs of alopecia. I even met up with one of the girls from the group, and it was such a comforting feeling being able to relate with someone like me.



I think the best thing that has helped me deal with and finally embrace my alopecia is having the ability to wear a wig. It has given me the ability to go forth with self esteem and confidence, whilst dealing with the emotional side of alopecia. Although I have found it incredibly difficult to keep up with the cost of wigs, as they do not last forever. I have had to turn to synthetic wigs, however they do not have the same life-like quality of the human hair wigs. But I can't complain!

Throughout my time with alopecia I have come to accept my condition and even feel grateful for the way it has changed my outlook on life. It was my alopecia which finally made me realise the stressors I was dealing with, and remove them from my life. I have gradually learnt to love myself, including all the good, bad and ugly things. I finally have a new lease on life where I am grateful for what I have, and no longer sweat the small stuff. I get through each day with hope for the future.

I am also content with the fact that not everybody may embrace my condition with an open heart. I have realised that some people just can't see the beauty in someone with alopecia, but that's ok, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind.

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