

VesnaI have so often heard the saying "Everything happens for a reason"...so for what reason did I get Alopecia Areata???



My introduction to Alopecia Areata (AA) began 30 years ago when I was 16, in the prime of a teenage girl's life. This is the time you start experimenting with make-up, new hairdo's & of course, start noticing boys. Well that was a short lived period in my teenage life, so my story begins.....

During a visit to my hairdresser, I was told I had a bald spot about the size of a 5 cent piece on the top of my head. Curious, I went to the doctor who told me I had AA, which is an auto-immune condition that made my hair fall out & he referred me to see a Dermatologist. I started fretting as my beautiful thick dark hair started to rapidly disappear within the space of a month!



Pre-internet days, little was known about AA & my first visit to a Dermatologist was one that I care to forget! He was very unsympathetic with his explanation of what AA was & all I remember from the appointment was "It's only hair" & the scariest comment of all, "There is no cure". This is where my emotional rollercoaster ride began....

I lost most of my hair by my 18th birthday, but over the next 6 years, I went through multiple cycles of my hair growing back, then falling out again. Then just as it almost all grew back & I thought I had finally beaten AA, that's when it happened...I lost my eyelashes and eyebrows. This was the hardest loss to bear & since that day, I've never had a full head of hair again! During those years, I tried every claimed treatment, cure, even various diets, but it was all in vain... I still have AA.

For a long time I hated AA....I hated the way I looked & I grieved for my hair. I felt like I was the only person in the world with this condition. This was the most depressing time in my life, my family & friends didn't know how to console me!

Time passed & I found an AA support group & after the first meeting, my life changed....I met others like me & I realised that I wasn't alone anymore! I was even inspired to shave off what remained of my hair & bought myself a wig to compensate.

A few years (& wigs) later on, my attitude changed to having AA & the way I wanted to be perceived. I realised that I wanted to let others know about AA. That's when I met a foundation called Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation (AAAF). Then it hit me like a bolt of lightning, here was my calling! Things happen for a reason they say!

Well, my reason was to tell people about my journey, help spread awareness & support others through their journey, by sharing my experiences of living with AA. Well, I just had to volunteer for a cause close to my heart. As some of you know, I am currently the AAAF Secretary! I love telling people about AA & what the foundation stands for.

My life today....I love who I am, I have a partner who doesn't define me by my hair, I love bike riding, hiking & my nieces and nephews think I have a cool party trick too....I can take my hair off! I accepted having AA....& all of its patchy baldness. Maybe the dermatologist was right, it is only hair!



www.aaaf.org.au



Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation Inc.

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