

Molly..... Coming to accept Alopecia, is not only a personal trek, but one of informing others about differences that exists amongst us.



When I was two I began losing small patches of hair on my scalp. Hair grew back and fell out again in the same patterns. As I grew older the patches of hair progressively became worse and my parents took me to see a whole range of doctors and specialists. When I was eight, I was diagnosed with Alopecia Areata. To be diagnosed with a 'condition' was a big thing for an eight year old. And the distinction between diseases that made you die and diseases that were merely conditions was not clear to me and my friends.

As soon as I began school, my parents helped me to cover up the patches of missing hair. With clips, with special ways of combing the hair over the patches. It didn't quite register with me why this was necessary. The implications of losing hair weren't quite apparent either. And as the patches became more prominent on my head, attempting to hide them became pointless. I went through grade two quite comfortably showing my bald spots to the world. It wasn't because I was 'brave' as some people made a point of telling me. It was because I truly became use to my gradual change of appearance. Just like ageing a year or two happens slowly without you even realising. At the conclusion of grade two however, I began to take a liking to baseball caps - back to front of course. And in the same way that I had learnt to feel at ease with my hair loss, I gradually learnt to feel safe and secure wearing a hat. They became my sense of security and I became fearful of revealing my head. Although I didn't get picked on very much during this time, children sensed that I wasn't willing to reveal my secret and this tempted some to pull my hat off.

At twelve, I had changed schools and I was in a happy place of life. Areas of my head grew thick amounts of hair which sparked a small glimmer of hope for the rest of my alopecia. However, further into the year, my hair once again fell out, rather rapidly and to a sizeable degree. With my thirteenth year lurking in the near future, a sleepless night lead to my decision to start wearing wigs. This was a large shift in my thinking about Alopecia, as I had never enjoyed the idea of pretending to be something else. Getting a wig would also require shaving away the remnants of my hair. Overall, deciding to get a wig was a process of letting go and a decision to move into a new faze of life.

I've now worn suction-cap human hair wigs for seven years. Wearing wigs allowed me to feel a little bit more normal during high school. It allowed me to focus on other things in life and move on to a certain degree. While wearing wigs has always had its pros and cons, ultimately they have prevented me from expressing who I truly am. In my twentieth year of life I have finally begun to explore the idea of who I am without hair. Who I am as a bald women and who I am as a person who's appearance changes nothing about who they are on the inside.



Recently I was asked, 'why wouldn't you where a wig? It looks great - you could never tell.' In the past, the notion that a wig could look so real or that I could pass as having real hair was a compliment, a triumph maybe. Today, this statement offended. Of late the question for me has become, 'why should I wear a wig?' - why should I be pretending to have hair, when i have none at all? Most importantly, why should I hide my physical appearance from the world, concealing the existence of baldness from the world altogether.

Coming to accept Alopecia, is not only a personal trek, but one of informing others about differences that exists amongst us. Having acquired a visible difference in life, I now aim to stop camouflaging my truth and make a visible difference to how others see the world.

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