

Pearl — I wouldn't not change my circumstances for the world.

Growing up in today's society, hair is such a massive part of a girl, and to my, and my families horror, I lost it all when I was only 7 years old. I'm forever thankful it was only my hair Alopecia effected, although at the time, it was the worst thing to ever happen to me. How was I supposed to grow my self-confidence when every time I looked in the mirror I hated what I saw? Or every time I went to school my peers at school tormented me? I wore a wig for a couple months although living in Cairns (30-degree heat!) it quickly knotted and became too hot to consistently wear every day. I can only imagine how hard it would have been for my mum. She constantly did her best to make me believe I was beautiful, buying me special Alopecia hats and scarfs, and in 2011 she organised my head to be painted and my photo was posted on the front page off The Cairns Post.



8 years on and I'm better than ever. After about three years of hatred for what had happened to me, I truly started to love myself. I moved schools, met a bunch of amazing people and grew as a person. I realised that I cannot change my circumstances, so I may as well embrace them. I've completely given up on wigs and hats as I don't really feel the need to wear them.

I'm fifteen years old and healthier than ever. I am a Muay Thai (kickboxing) fighter and train every day of the week except Sunday. I'm so passionate about health and fitness and wouldn't not change my circumstances for the world. Muay Thai has really changed the way I see myself, and although I did love myself before, now I feel truly strong. And in my opinion, nothing can get in the way of a woman who feels truly strong. Every day I wake up thankful, as losing my hair was the biggest blessing in disguise I could ever receive. I would never have had the confidence to get in the ring, let alone be as exuberant and resilient as I am, if it weren't for the years of trial I dealt with. You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only option you'd have.

I have truly reached a point where I am not only mentally strong, but I am physically strong too. I put all my effort into training, as fighting is what I'm truly passionate about. I'm that person in my friend group that tells everyone that they're beautiful, because they are. A day never passes where I feel sad or resentful for what life has thrown at me because every single part of me is happy.

