

Bold Beauty Is Being Beautifully You

Living with Alopecia

By Afrykah WubSauda



It has often been said that the worst thing you can do is come between a woman and her hair. Our society has always placed a great deal of emphasis on hair as a direct measure of beauty. Hair is used as adornment for men and women alike and most of us are more connected to our hair than our own spirituality. The loss of hair is such a devastating concept for most people that even the mere thought of short hair can cause a panic. Julia Crittendon is living with a loss of hair disorder called Alopecia and she is living her life like it's golden.

What is Alopecia? Alopecia is spot balding that takes place on the scalp and body. Alopecia is an autoimmune disorder that is triggered by autoimmune diseases such as asthma, eczema and allergies. There are also hereditary factors involved as well as environmental triggers, stress, pregnancy hormones, radiation and birth control. The truth is that there are numbers of causes of Alopecia and this is why it can affect anyone. Alopecia is very common and there are over 5 million people living with alopecia in the U.S. alone.

Within the hair industry, Alopecia has often been mis-

diagnosed by stylist as "stress" or chemical over processing. During pregnancy, alopecia has been misdiagnosed as a "pregnancy issue". Alopecia is very common and can only be diagnosed and treated by a dermatologist. In the early stages of Alopecia, spots in the head become very tender and can either directly fall out or shed over time. Because Alopecia can be caused by stress, it can also be made more aggressive due to the stress caused from the impact of the initial hair loss.

Like many others, Julia was living a life in which her hair was her crown and glory. She frequented the beauty salon and maintained her hairs' image. Julia had a normal life. She became married and began to have children. There was a unique series of events, however, that led up to Julia's initial hair loss. First and foremost, Julia suffered from allergies. Julia moved to a new neighborhood off of Westport road that had an overwhelming amount of power lines that later was found to be high in radiation. Julia shortly thereafter was involved in a major car accident that was very stressful in her life and she was also on birth control.



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It was not long after these series of events that Julia began to experience an itchy and sore scalp. In no time, Julia had lost a patch of hair. It had only been a couple of months since she gave birth to her daughter so immediately she attributed the hair loss to the baby. The problem was that 8 months down the line, she was still losing hair. Julia went to a series of doctors and dermatologist but it wasn't until she went to see an endocrinologist that she was able to get an accurate diagnose. After sharing her experience with her doctor, he was able to show Julia how these series of events including her allergies were all connected and very much the cause of her Alopecia.

Over the course of the next few years, Julia went back and forth with hair loss and hair re-growth. She realized how attached that she was to her hair and how embarrassed she was about her hair loss even around her own husband. Julia's husband reinforced to her over and over again that she was beautiful but to no avail. Julia didn't feel beautiful. Every time her hair grew back in, she became more attached to it which eventually caused an even greater devastation when the hair came back out. Julia has went through a series of wig wearing and low caesar cuts to short locks and each style was infiltrated by alopecia. Julia had finally had enough. Julia came to the realization that her esteem and self worth was being enslaved by her hair. At that point, Julia had only one option. She broke the chains in which her hair loss had placed her and she unveiled her shame. Julia went to the mirror and shaved her head, never looking back. This IS who she was. She was a beautiful woman living with Alopecia.

In that very moment, Julia understood. She understood that she had to give this disorder a platform and also give it a little "sexy". Julia met many women who was suffering the way she had suffered and all of a sudden found herself being an inspiration to others. Everywhere she went, people began to adorn her bald head and as she revealed that she had alopecia, they revealed that they had it too. Julia was on a mission, and that mission became respectfully entitled, Bold Beauty is Being Beautifully You.

For more information on Alopecia and Julia Crittendon go to www.bbibby.org