

Hair: An Emotional Journey

Cynthia Parrott

Mother Had Heavy Hands

My mother told me that I was born with beautiful black hair. But she had heavy hands, and it hurt when she did my hair. I remember how she combed my hair out after she washed it. The pain was too much to endure. She would always say, "Sit still and be quiet!" I would sit in that chair teary-eyed with a towel around my neck, hoping that the tip of my ears didn't get burned with the pressing comb. Oh, how I despised it. After she was finished, she would say, "You can go outside and play; just don't mess up your hair."

As a teen, I started caring more about my appearance. I remember my mom saying how important it is to always look your best before leaving the house. My teen years were about fashion and hair. I had no need for wigs or hair weaves because I had enough hair of my own. I was at that age when my mom had no control over my hair anymore, so I decided to put some color to my hair. That was my first experience with hair dye; it was a burgundy rinse and it looked really nice on me. I was pleased with my new look.

Braids and Bald Patches

As time went by, I wanted a new look, so I decided to try braids. It took some hours and it hurt, but once it loosened up, I was happy with my new look. I continued to wear braids into adulthood,

which ended up being a mistake. I learned how to braid my own hair, and after wearing braids for so many years, I caused damage to my scalp and hair follicles. I consulted my beautician,

and he explained that the constant pulling on my hair had caused some bald spots. I felt sad and worried about how I was going to look to the outside world. Although I knew the harm I was causing, I still chose to continue wearing the braids. It was an addiction I had.

I was losing my hair in small patches, but I could cover up the bald spots with more braids.

Alopecia Has No Love for Me

The bald spots got worse and I started noticing that my eyebrows were thinning. I talked with my doctor, and he diagnosed me with Alopecia Areata. There is nothing I can do about this because there is no cure for it. I get very emotional at times because Alopecia took my precious hair away from me.

It has been a year now and I'm feeling better. But I still hope and pray that one day my hair will grow back. I loved my hair because from the beginning it was God's creation. To me, my hair made part of me feel free. Now, I am getting used to wearing wigs. I see that I look pretty in them, and I am pleased again about how I look. I am beautiful, and I'm not ashamed of me anymore.

Cynthia Parrott is a student at Next Step Learning Center in Oakland, CA. She likes helping people. Whatever she does, she tries to do her best.

AFTER YOU READ: In your own words, tell the story of Cynthia's emotional journey regarding her hair.

