

12-13-19 Being yourself

While standing in a crowded room, I passed an attractive young woman, who was bald and her head was full of tattoos, sort of replicating a short haircut.

She was gorgeous! And I felt compelled to tell her so.

I said, "I love your head!" And then I wondered, was that the right thing to say? It did not matter, as this was a gracious young woman and she understood and appreciated the compliment.

She thanked me for the compliment and explained she had alopecia. She went on to say that not everyone understood, and she told me she is a hairdresser!

This lovely and unexpected conversation with a "stranger" continued.

Her tattoos replicated the territory and look of a short haircut, including some curls onto her face in front of her ears. I must say, it was beautifully drawn!

I told this woman how I was reminded of how beautiful my daughter looks with her very short hair, now returning after chemo for breast cancer.

She is not the only person who has told me and shown me how beautiful women can be in very short hair or even bald. And why not? Bald men are handsome!

I was also reminded of a long-time co-worker with alopecia. When she changed to a new wig, I would say, "Oh I love your new haircut!", when I knew it was a new wig. Also, this same woman, after years of wearing wigs, finally one hot day, just took it off, placed it on a desk and continued her presentation, as wearing the wig was causing sweat to drip down onto her face.

The young woman nodded her head in understanding.

She explained that at first it was a difficult adjustment. Also, some people thought the tattooed head was weird. She went on to explain that it helped her to be herself and accept herself.

That sounds as though it should be easy for all of us, but don't we know it isn't? Why is it difficult for us to accept ourselves and be ourselves? Why do we feel so compelled to meet the standards of others?

I suppose there are lots of sociological answers and explanations to my questions. I loved this young woman's descriptions of how she discovered the comfort zone of just being herself.

Imagine that! Just be yourself and love yourself the way you are!

I said to her, "So, a problem resulted in a gift?" And she acknowledged, yes, that was the case.

Life is like that. Challenges and problems can bring gifts of awareness, gifts of comfort when we are out of our comfort zone and gifts of beauty we would not have pursued if not for the challenge.

Who are we supposed to be if not ourselves?

I smiled and told the young woman that I very much enjoyed our conversation. The feeling was mutual.

Who knew that complimenting someone's head would lead to such a rewarding conversation?

Despite my initial uncertainty as to my choice of words, there was no uncertainty about this woman and the beautiful lessons she had learned about being comfortable with herself. I was grateful that I met her and spoke to her. I had been given the gift of lessons learned and the wisdom of someone loving and accepting herself. When you are in the presence of such a person, the calmness and love is felt. A gift indeed!

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