

## Perspective and Appreciation



Most of us have things about ourselves which we don't like or even hate, and we often waste a lot of time and energy resisting or fighting these things. For most of my life, one of my "hates" has been my hair. I have very thick hair, so thick that hairstylists have often commented that I had enough hair for two or three people. In addition, my hair is naturally wavy and predisposed to frizz, tendencies which are intensified by the humid Southern California weather.

### Resisting What Is

My God-given hair was not the type of hair I wanted. I wanted the straight, sleek hair of a Scandinavian girl – or Jennifer Aniston. I have been fighting my hair texture for as long as I can remember with countless hair products, daily flat-ironing, and a multitude of chemical processes. None of these armaments ever worked to my satisfaction, so I continually searched for the next best thing.

### Magic Bullet or Nightmare?

This past November, I thought I had found it. I spent about four hours and over \$300 at the hair salon getting what is known as a "keratin smoothing treatment." The result was not the nirvana I had anticipated; instead it has been a nightmare which I couldn't have imagined. I experienced some serious breathing problems from the formaldehyde released by the chemical process, and since the product was bonded into my hair, I was unable to remove it despite repeated washings. Consequently, I opted to cut off close to half of my hair in order to minimize the deleterious effects.

Just when I thought I was past the worst of my nightmare, a delayed side effect occurred. I started to lose large amounts of hair on a daily basis. By the time I realized what was going on, I had lost so much hair that I could see parts of my scalp at my hairline and my ponytail diameter was only about half of what it used to be. Fortunately, I think the hair loss has subsided at this point, and because I had so much hair to begin with, it is not as noticeable as might be expected. However, I am still planning to see a dermatologist to make sure I am able to salvage my hair.

### Two Key Lessons...

This is surprisingly difficult for me to write about and I am not sharing this experience to garner sympathy. I have learned a great deal from this particular struggle and the point of this post is to share my insights. I have titled this post "**Perspective and Appreciation**" because those are the two key lessons I've gained from my hair experience.

I would love to be able to turn back the clock such that I had never gotten the so-called keratin smoothing treatment, but I have come to understand that I needed this experience to learn what I needed to learn. The Universe has been trying to teach me the lesson of appreciation and self-

acceptance for many years. Instead of appreciating what I had, I continued to fight it and wish for something different.

### **Taking Things for Granted**

My hair is only one aspect of myself which I would berate and negate. While I would often receive compliments on my thick and lustrous hair, I would never take them in. I was filled with hatred for my hair because it wouldn't bend to my will. Because my hair wasn't sleek and straight, I didn't show any love or appreciation for it; all of the energy I gave to my hair was negative.

Now that my hair is no longer long, thick or lustrous, I have been given **the gift of perspective**. How true it is that we often don't appreciate what we have until it is gone.

### **How often do we take things – and people – for granted until they are no longer in our lives?**

#### **Declaring a Truce**

I am declaring a truce in the war against my hair. I am now treating my hair more lovingly and am showing appreciation for the hair that is left on my head. I am affirming throughout the day, "I love and appreciate my hair." I believe that this love and appreciation will help me to save my hair. It was not only the chemicals which destroyed my hair; it was also my negativity and disdain.

How many of us treat ourselves worse than we would treat our worst enemy? How many of us **are** our own worst enemy? How much would we thrive if we were to begin to treat ourselves the way we treat our treasured pets or children?

#### **New and Empowering Vows**

From this moment on, I vow to treat myself with much more love and appreciation. I vow to start looking more at what's right about me instead of what's wrong. I know that I will stumble along the way, as old habits are hard to break. However, the perspective I have gained from my hair trauma has shown me that I **must** break those old habits. It's time to stop beating myself up and start appreciating all of the wonderful characteristics which I know I possess.

Will you join me in my new and empowering vows? Many of us wish and pray for peace in the world, but peace begins from within. Stop fighting yourself and choose to love yourself instead. I know it's hard, but we can help each other to live a more peaceful and loving existence!