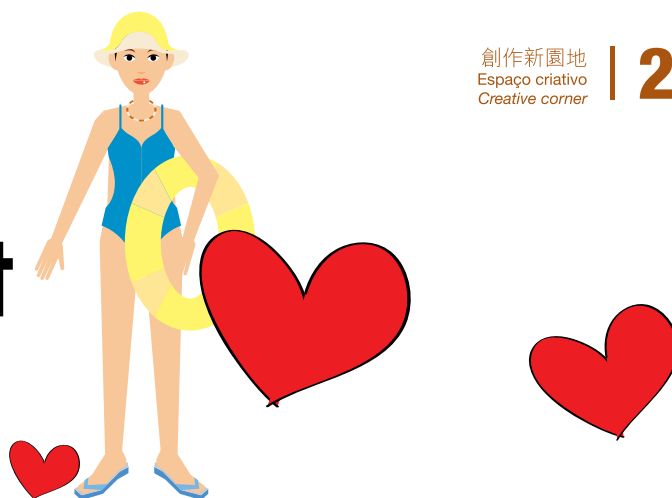


Love what you do

Rose



I remember when I was 18, I always liked standing in front of the mirror scrutinizing every inch of my face. I was always proud of myself for having a pair of big expressive eyes, long curly hair and snowy skin. When I had a pimple on my face, I spent days agonizing over what to do to it.

Praise filled my days. However, something unexpected happened to me. I found three to four bald spots on my head, and as time passed, the bald spots grew bigger and bigger. According to the dermatologist's diagnosis, I was suffering from a condition of hair loss due to stress. The worst thing was nothing could really stop it.

Tears filled my days. That was the worst time in my life. My mother comforted me with lots of touching stories, and I remember one that brought me a new life.

Kylie was a pretty and smart girl. She was also the leader of the swimming club. In fact, she was the most charming leader. She really looked like a model or a star. However, something happened to her. After she had come back from the swimming practice in which she had to swim in the saltwater for the whole day, she discovered a bare patch of skin on the top of her scalp. One month later, another bald spot was found. Then more and more appeared. The doctor's diagnosis stated that she was suffering from alopecia. To mask her scalp, she was granted permission to wear a hat to school. Though her friends were very supportive, there were some bad times. Like the time when her mother wrapped a towel around her head to dry

her hair, she burst into tears when she saw her limp hair on the towel. Mother cried, so as the daughter did.

Two months later, the time had come to buy a wig. Kylie opted for a short blonde one. Her confidence came back with her new look. But soon summer arrived and her worries came again. How could she swim without a wig? Her mother asked, 'Why not? You have forgotten how to swim, haven't you?' Kylie got the kindest and warmest message.

She decided to wear a very tight swimming cap, but she mustered up the courage to go completely bald after feeling so uncomfortable with the cap. Despite the unfriendly stares and impolite comments from swimmers, she soon adjusted to her new fresh look and her wig was tucked away somewhere in her locker.

Two months later, she won the international swimming competition, and she gave the following speech in the Prize-Giving Ceremony.

'Before I used to choose my hair-band, I used to go to the salon every month, people all around me admired that I had such beautiful hair. But now, I don't need to go shopping for my ribbons, I have more time for my swimming practice. I hope you still like me with my new fresh look.'

Everybody cheered and clapped loudly for her. She smiled back from the podium and finally added, 'Whatever you are doing, love yourself for doing it!'