



Getting the chop

Can you lose your identity by getting a haircut? Sarah Blinco quite literally finds out...

Every few years as the seasons change I find myself casually eyeing photos of short hairstyles — cute bobs, messy beach crops and sexy layers. Infrequent browsing becomes more determined, and the excitement of a new do dawns.

I inevitably commit. Let's cut this long boring hair. Yes!

I browsed, bookmarked, and was even clickbaited by *InStyle UK* when the magazine declared the look of the year is a "hot platinum blonde buzz cut", as showcased at Paris' Haute Couture Fashion Week in July by Katy Perry, Cara Delevingne and Karlie Kloss.

Those ladies are never wrong. We should all do this, right? There's nothing like a rebellious visit to the salon where you announce to your gleeful stylist, 'Let's do this — I'm ready for a change and to let the world know I'm not afraid — you have my blessing to CUT!'

I showed up on time, gave the salon dog, Dolly, a hug, and then produced my efficient Pinterest board full of inspiration and examples. My stylist smiled and nodded. I felt confident.

Other blondies will understand the process — colour first, then toner, wash, condition; all the while gossiping, flicking through magazines and scrolling Instagram (trying not to pick out too many more photos that demonstrate how we might like to look at the end of this big event).

The scissors appeared and the chirpy apprentice primed her phone in order to Instagram my transformation. The examples I shared showed a choppy blonde look that fell a little above the shoulders. My hairdresser went to start at that length, but during a moment of miscommunication when I wasn't entirely paying attention (I was actually filming Dolly for Facebook because I am a [crazy] dog-lover), a lot more hair came off than I expected.

The bob was chic and shapely. But oh, it was short.

Some of you reading this know me and you've likely heard me preach about how change is great — go for it, put yourself out there,

quit the job you hate, fall in love, move overseas, go travelling, adopt a rescue dog, cut your hair off... all excellent ideas.

The crisis of identity that followed was kept secret, except from Cooper, my long-suffering better half. He offered support. "You look ten years younger," he said. Bless him. 'Yes,' I thought, because I haven't had this cut since I was 15!

At this point all I could see was long hair — film, television, magazines, my own selfies. Long hair, everywhere.

This all happened right before we went on a holiday and, in hindsight, part of the problem for me was trying to style a brand new cut while using harsh hotel hair products. My hair wasn't moving. I defiantly refused to be in photos. I didn't look like me. I consider myself to be quite 'low maintenance', and was surprised by my reaction. I took to Google to try and make sense of it all. *Psychology Today* explained: "Because it is so visible, hair becomes a part of a person's identity. It helps define the persona you aim to create... Hair can also influence the way you define yourself to yourself, as an extension of your identity."

By the time I returned to my day job, I had started to master the look. I was even warming to the new me. My manager tentatively complimented the change, and followed with a story about how he'd once thought he was doing the right thing by acknowledging a colleague's cut only to have her promptly burst into tears. #firstworldgirlproblems

Now I'm back though. The 'brave' one with the cute crop; the blondie who does things the others won't [are not crazy enough to] do. People seem to like it. I do now too. Did I lose my identity? Yes, for a bit. Was it worth venturing outside of my comfort zone? As I always say, definitely.

Get it girl Sarah Blinco is a business communications professional. She blogs about life, travel and digital media at travellivelearn.com and @sarahblinco on Instagram.