

What Happens When They Don't Grow Back

The Upside
Down View of Life
After a Bilateral
Mastectomy

Peta-Ann Wood

After breast cancer treatment, Peta-Ann is elegantly rebelling. She is staying flat. Being herself. Stylishly. Authentically. No boobs required.

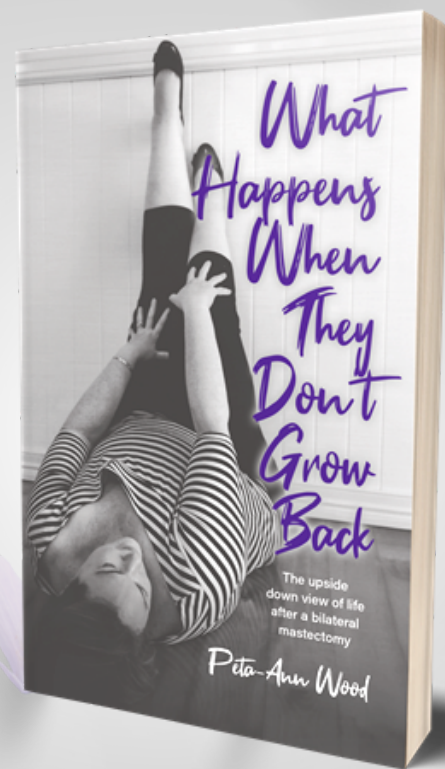
From Peta-Ann's unique view of life with giant breasts and then without, no subject is sacred in this light-hearted, somewhat quirky tale about life after a bilateral mastectomy. Do not expect normal from this book. Normal is, in fact, debunked.

Every now and then we are presented with life situations that challenge our status quo and how we perceive ourselves, and how we feel society perceives us. Sometimes we allow these things to define our confidence and our personal style. This is an insight into how and why Peta-Ann went against society's perception that women need breasts to be accepted and chose to stay flat - meaning no prosthesis, no reconstruction, and very concave ribs.

Throughout this odyssey there was much ignoring of her own inner-knowing and intuition. But Peta-Ann got there, and she shares how. Her elegantly unique toolkit is filled to the brim with the science stuff, the woo-woo and everything in between.

By sharing her experience and toolkit, Peta-Ann hopes others will find their own voice. Take up their own space. Stand in their own personal power. Ask their own questions. Find their own truth. Celebrate their uniqueness.

And above all, be able to choose and voice what is the best option for themselves - and only themselves - post mastectomy, whether that is staying flat, reconstructed or prosthesis-upped.



Author:	Peta-Ann Wood	Paperback:	9780228879336
Email:	peta-ann@peta-annwood.au	Hardcover:	9780228879343
Genre:	Memoir	Ebook:	9780228879350

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Peta-Ann Wood

As well as being a retired communication specialist, having spent 25+ years in the media, PR and communication industry, Peta-Ann is also a Holistic Counsellor; Reiki Master; Colour Therapist and lover of divination tools. She is also a breast cancer survivor and had a bilateral mastectomy in her mid-40s. Growing up with extra-large breasts, Peta-Ann decided to elegantly rebel against society's version of normal after her mastectomy. She has chosen to stay flat - meaning no prosthesis, no reconstruction, and very concave ribs. This decision came after much soul-searching, trial and error and discovering the odd things that may occur to your mind, body and spirit after having a bilateral mastectomy. Throughout the odyssey, she also discovered she didn't need to find herself or a new normal. She just needed reminding to celebrate her uniqueness. This is Peta-Ann's first foray into the world of publishing and has chosen quite a disruptive topic to kick things off. Her writing style is intentionally akin to hanging out and having a cuppa with her. So grab a cuppa and enjoy the odyssey.

A look Inside

Introduction *What truly is normal?*

A few years ago, I got me a-thinking . . . what does happen when your breasts don't magically grow back after a bilateral mastectomy? Will you ever be viewed by society as normal? How did your ability to choose the best path for you vanish? Why do we consistently ignore our intuition and gut feelings when we go through trauma? Such ponderings have led me on one very interesting path. Grab a cuppa and let's have a gander at life upside down after a bilateral mastectomy.

First things first. What is this word 'normal'? Who defines it really? I grabbed one of my many versions of the Oxford Dictionary—yes, I have a few—and it is an adjective which means 'conforming to standard, usual, regular, ordinary'. So why is everyone so hell-bent on feeling normal? It truly is such a benign word.

I've known since birth that I didn't fit into the society-accepted version of normal. You know, when you don't fit in because you're always too something. For me, I was too big, too tall, too smart, feet too big, breasts way too big, hair too thick or too curly . . . the list goes on. To quote my younger brother, 'Not fitting in with society's version of normal is exactly how I fit in.'

I chose at an early age to not subscribe to what someone else's opinion of normal was. For me, I choose to be elegantly unique, stylish and authentic, and, as an introvert, to keep much of my thinking inside my head. Until now, that is.

To set the scene, I'm living well, with and beyond breast cancer. I was diagnosed a couple of months prior to my forty-sixth birthday, and my initial surgical treatment was a bilateral mastectomy and lymph node removal. I have subsequently chosen to 'stay-flat', meaning no prosthesis, no reconstruction, and very concave ribs, or divots, if you will. This was my educated choice of what was best for me. I am highly supportive of everyone's individual choices in this space, whether you choose to have reconstruction, wear prosthesis or none of the above. It's your choice, your decision, and, quite frankly, no one else's business.

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