

When Everything Comes Together

Posted on [April 24, 2015](#) by [cindyricksgers](#)
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I like Goldie Hawn.

I always have.

I like her style, her laugh, her personality.

I *love* her hair. Whatever the length, it always comes across as purposely tousled, a little messy. It suits her.

The thing is, I've always thought that style would suit me, too. I *feel* like that wild mane would fit my personality. The trouble is, I can't pull it off. It's not just that my hair is the wrong color

and the wrong texture. It's not only my small stature, short neck or round face. It's worse than all of that.

The fact is, though I *think* of myself as a bit unconventional, kind of wild, somewhat bohemian, when it comes right down to it, at least as far as the hair, I just can't stand it.

I have tried.

I would pull my hair up into a sloppy ponytail...then take it down, brush it smooth, and secure it into the meekest ponytail possible. I would pull out a few tendrils around my face and neck...and before long would be lifting each strand to tuck it back into place. I would make a loose, off-center, over-the-shoulder braid...but then redo it into a neat, centered braid, secured at both ends. I would get a daring short haircut, imagining something edgy and spiky...but by the time I walked away from the bathroom mirror, I would have tamed it into something better suited to my grandmother.

Now, with age, I have settled into a cut and styling method – though not ideal – that works for me. The cut is a slightly layered, long-ish bob. I dry my hair with my head hanging up-side down, then toss my head, letting the hair fall where it wants.

Then I take the brush and smooth it all into something very conventional before going out the door.

It's about control. It crops up in many aspects of my life.

I rarely sing or dance in public.

Though I love bright colors, my home and my wardrobe are mainly black and white.

I hold pretty firmly to the theory that there is one right way to do a thing, and I try to adhere to it.

Inside, I'm a wild bohemian artist.

Outside...something else entirely.

Cats, for their dignity and reserve, would be the pet that would suit me best. For many years cats were the only pets I had. Cats being cats...and me being me...we spent much of our days just ignoring one another. Settled in my lap if I sat down to watch a movie, curled around my feet in bed at night, basking in the sunshine as I worked in the garden, my cats were companionable but not needy.

For several years now, I've had dogs instead. They like a little more interaction; they want more attention. They hate it when I leave, are thrilled when I come home and want to be near the action, always. If I'm at the kitchen sink, both dogs find excuse to be in the kitchen. If I am sitting at the desk, they lounge on the cushion beside me. When I am in the shower, Rosa Parks

watches from her spot beside the heater. Clover, who hates a bath, waits just outside the bathroom door.

Dogs will not be ignored. I find myself chatting with them through the day. Sometimes I just talk to myself about them, knowing that they are listening.

“That Clover Sue is a good, good dog,” I’ll say, “We’re so lucky to have that Clover Sue!”

Her tail wags in response.

“Rosa Parks goes out the big door,” I announce to the room, “Rosa Parks does number two outside!”

She struts proudly in for her reward.

Clover sleeps on her own cushion beside my bed.

Rosa Parks starts out in the bed with me. My sleep is altered by her presence; I’m aware of her movement just as if I had a small child in the bed with me. Most nights, once she knows for sure that the time for pets and pats, ear-scratches and belly rubs is over, she curls up at the foot of the bed. Sometimes, especially on cold nights, she moves up to the “spooning” position, tucked in behind my knees as I lay on my side. Now and then she chooses to sleep on my pillow, in the space between the top of my head and the headboard.

Usually, mornings after sharing the pillow with my small dog, my hair looks like a rat’s nest.

Or maybe a dog’s nest.

But, every now and then...

Every great now and then...

I look in the mirror and think, with joy,

“I have Goldie Hawn hair!”