

# Embrace your skin



 Ninu Galot Ninu Galot

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WRITTEN BY

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London-based Ninu Galot has spent the last 14 years hiding behind full-length clothes. The property developer by profession, who has been dealing with vitiligo (a condition that makes skin lose its normal pigment leading to pale patches), is now ready to talk about her condition and help others deal with it. She admits that initially it affected her self confidence and morale tremendously and it took her a long time to love her skin. Ninu who was recently in the country shares her story. When I was 11 years old I got my first patch of vitiligo. It was the size of a one rupee coin on the back of my neck. It didn't bother me much then. I went to see my GP and later took some homeopathy, but it spread even further. I always believed there was a solution for everything but couldn't find a cure for it. My doctor suggested a steroid cream. Then my sister found out about a UV light treatment in Milan which I did for 14 years. In October 2016, I decided to stop. I noticed there were patches on my hands and realised I couldn't cover it anymore. I had to accept and control it. I started to read spiritual books like the *The Power Is Within You* by Louise Hay. It taught me to change my mindset. I travelled around South East Asia and realised no one else was noticing my vitiligo. I was my own worst enemy. I decided to take up singing, acting and dancing in London. I even participated in a fitness competition, the Pure Elite contest in the International model category last October. It took me six weeks to get in shape, but helped me become stronger physically and mentally.

## **What brings you to India?**

I have spoken about my skin condition in London. I want to do something for the Indian women who are suffering. The stigma here is really bad. I met a woman from the Shweta Association who told me no one wants to marry girls with vitiligo. Even girls whose parents have it are discriminated against. Such girls often have to compromise and marry someone with a disability. I feel fortunate to be a British-Indian.

## **What is the message you want to spread?**

For some reason no one wants to talk about it. It affects your self esteem and confidence. It is not contagious, nor is it a disability. I want to help change mindsets and get more people to accept the condition. My family has been very supportive. When I started talking about it, so many of my friends came out and told me that they wish they knew sooner. Models like Winnie Harlow have highlighted the issue and turned their weakness into a strength. If I can, I'd like to be an inspiration to other girls, and talk about it on social media. I want girls to feel comfortable talking about it. And hope they learn to embrace their skin. I actually started living instead of trying to fix myself. It's important to love yourself.