

Cate Moore: What Being Tall Means To Me

How's the weather up there? Do you play basketball? You have to be taller than that! All things I've heard many times before. All my life, I've towered over all my friends. At just nine years old, I was already five feet tall. I slouched over, trying desperately to fit in. In my quest not to be noticed, I avoided everything that would draw attention to myself. School projects, plays, or even speaking out in class terrified me because I didn't want any more people looking at me than I felt already were. I would slouch in my seat or hunch my shoulders to make myself shorter and smaller. I avoided heels in elementary and middle school because I didn't want to be taller than all my friends.

During my sophomore year of high school, my club volleyball coach encouraged me to embrace my height after years of trying to hide it. Slowly, I began to come out of my shell. In volleyball, height is always an advantage, and as the tallest on the team, I was placed front and center on the court. As I began to thrive in volleyball, getting kills and blocks left and right, my height seemed less like an annoyance and more like an advantage. I got compliments from random girls at volleyball tournaments, and while outside validation wasn't what I needed, it opened my eyes to my height being something positive. I began to see how being tall was unique and gave me something not everyone has. I mean, I can reach the top shelf in every grocery store. How many teenage girls can say that? For the first time in my life, I felt proud of my height instead of embarrassed.

Embracing my height did not only give me more confidence about my looks, but it strengthened my ability to present confidently to others. When I sat down for my first in-person interview, sitting up straight helped calm me and prepare myself. The interview was for the Grant Constitution Team, a competitive team focused on answering constitutional questions. The Constitution Team requires me to draw attention to myself. I sit with a panel of judges staring at me and my five unit mates. We present a memorized speech and answer follow-up questions. Confidence is a key requirement, something that my height now helps me achieve. Instead of making me nervous, my height gives me strength. My height encourages me to sit up tall, which gives me the strength to jump to answer the constitutional questions I am being asked, exuding the confidence that I have built over the years of trying to accept my height. Being tall is no longer a burden, but something to love and appreciate.

I love my height. I love being able to see people over a crowd. I love being able to walk quickly through the halls of my school when I'm late to class. I love that I wore heels to prom to honor my mom, who at my age was too scared to wear heels to any school dance. Most of all, I love that my height gives me the confidence to stand out, and I just hope that there is a tall little girl out there that will see me loving my height and be inspired to love hers too.