

People Look Up to Me

Growing up, we subconsciously associate tall people with authority. Parents, teachers, upper classmen, they know more than us. They help, teach, and give guidance to us and we want to be just like them. It's more than being big in stature, it's being the bigger person. I've experienced this first hand, I coach a youth ultimate frisbee team and being closer to the kids in age means that they look to me for help with things they don't feel comfortable talking to their parents about. Whether it is speaking up for yourself, making new friends, or learning new plays, I help kids with more than ultimate frisbee. It's incredibly rewarding to be heard and listened to, especially by someone you look up to, so even if I don't know exactly what to say to my fourth grade players, I do know that I can help by just lending an ear.

I have not lived in Portland my whole life. I was born and lived in California through 4th grade. My next door neighbor was a young man two grades older than me and therefore taller than me. He was the coolest. He would take me around and show me everything he knew. From secret paths to edible plants, we would adventure around exploring and in my case learning. He acted as a mentor to young me, imparting wisdom and guidance that can only come from other kids.

When with kids my age I was always the biggest and it creates a different attitude. Where I relied upon my neighbor they relied upon me. Much like my current situation where I am a senior on the school volleyball team. Having natural physical advantages I happen to be one of the best players on the team. It leads a lot of new players to look to me for instruction. Being tall means that I lend support and yet do not always receive it. Helping people is an amazing feeling, but we all need help, especially me. When making mistakes on the court I very rarely get constructive criticism. People think I know what I am doing. Instead of receiving helpful feedback I end up getting critiqued for my inadequacies. You're tall, you should be better than! If I was your height I would be way better than you. It is nice having someone to look up to. It puts my neighbor into perspective. He was more than my friend, he was my role model.

Being tall is more than just height. It's demeanor, poise, when height comes up in conversation people not physically tall can be referred to as such. This is because of the way they carry themselves. Affluent, virtuous, confident people are referred to as tall because they are mentally large, because they fill that role model position, because people look up to them. I'm going to the National We the People Competition in Washington D.C. with the constitution team at Grant High School and my coach is barely 5'5, I look up to her all the same. She stands on a pillar of hard work that I only hope to achieve. Being tall is more than just standing over people, it's bending down and picking them up. I am tall not only because I'm 6'4 but also because I give back and lift up kids who don't have the ability to lift themselves. Just as others have done for me.