

What Being Tall Means to Me

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Growing up in a family where every member towers over the average height, I've often felt like I was part of a peculiar tribe. Standing at 6'5", it was no question that I belonged to that peculiar tribe, no matter if I liked it or not. At times, my height has led to feelings of awkwardness and alienation, but as I've matured and grown, it has blossomed into a source of pride and empowerment.

From a young age, I was extremely aware of my stature. Being taller than my peers often made me feel like I was walking through life on stilts while others were comfortably grounded. In school, I was always the tallest in my class, which came with its own set of challenges. While it allowed me to have a source of uniqueness, there was an obvious difference between my peers and me.

Despite that sense of alienation, my height presented opportunities that I had yet to fully appreciate. My height caused me to never get hidden or pushed out of my comfort zone during large group activities, as there is nowhere to hide. Of course, as an elementary schooler who did not want to be challenged, this was all irrelevant.

It was in sixth grade when I truly started my journey of embracing who I am and, more specifically, embracing my height. After a long trial and error of different sports, my mom recommended that I try taking dance lessons at a local studio. Given my passion for musical theater, I immediately said yes, and my perspective on my height quickly started to change. In my classes, I found a safe space to explore and use my body in ways I had never imagined. At first, I was clumsy and self-conscious, grappling with the challenge of coordinating my long limbs to the rhythm and flow of the music. However, as my experience grew, so did my comfort.

This transformative environment made me less self-conscious about my differences and instead made me focused on how to properly use it as an advantage. Ballet forced me to correct my posture, and tap made me work even harder to properly move my longer limbs to the beat of the music. My awareness of my height allowed me to realize the visual dynamics I could create on stage. While this growth was mainly for performing, its lasting effects on everyday life quickly sprouted. I discovered that being tall allowed me to project strength and confidence, qualities that enhanced my performances and helped me to think differently about my body. Rather than feeling awkward, I started to see my height as a unique advantage that added character to my artistry.

Through theater and dance, I gained not only physical awareness but also a sense of belonging. I was surrounded by a community that valued expression over conformity. In

rehearsals and performances, I no longer felt alienated; I felt empowered. The stage offered a canvas where my height, once a source of insecurity, transformed into a vital part of my identity. I learned to use my height to tell stories, embody characters, and connect with audiences in ways I never thought possible.

Today, I embrace my height with a sense of pride and gratitude. While I once viewed it as an insecurity that set me apart, it has evolved into a cherished part of me. I have come to understand that my tallness is not merely a measurement, but a unique aspect of who I am. It has shaped my perspective on life, artistry, and community engagement.