

My height has always been an integral part of my identity. When I meet people—before they learn my hobbies, interests, personality, or even my name—they always notice my height. How tall I am is always my first impression on them. From being born a ten-pound baby to today, where I lean over my desk typing, my height has remained one of my most defining traits and has deeply impacted the way I live my life. Being tall means a lot more to me than just being capable of helping old ladies at the store reach the top shelf. To me, being tall is a reminder to stand out against the grain of the world and be proud of who I am.

Since elementary school, I have never been able to exactly fit in. Whether I was being placed at the end of a classroom in a seating chart, or directed to stand in the very back of every group photo, I was always being reminded of how I was like no one else around me. Eventually, I had outgrown all the other kids in my class, and soon even the teachers would fall under my stature. At first, this stark contrast between every single one of my peers made me feel alienated and became a constant reminder of how I didn't fit in. I had become shy and dreaded social interactions with fear that I could further the divide between me and everyone else. Then I had a realization: perhaps I was born with my height not as a looming burden, but instead as a soaring reminder to be myself. If I wasn't meant to blend in, then why should I worry about not sticking out? I began to embrace my height and develop a more extroverted personality. Whenever I would feel awkward, I would remind myself of how my stature already marked me as unique, so I should accept it.

After I was able to get over my fear of being different, I actually discovered great pride in my height and who it made me. Comments about how tall I was as a child that once discouraged me were reframed in my mind as reminders about how amazingly unique I was. This fondness for being unique has followed me in my life since. Whenever I'm in a group, I find dignity in being the designated selfie taker with my long arms. Being tall has also given people new opinions on me; often, they correlate my height with maturity. When others are nervous in social situations, they will look up to me in order to handle them. Even if I am just as scared, I'll lock their images of me in my mind and use them to help push myself through my own limiting concerns. I am proud to be a tall beacon of help for people to rely on, and this pride helps me prove them right. I no longer yearn to fit in amongst groups; I now strive to be a towering leader for others to put their faith behind. My height has greatly helped me fill this role by not just giving me the physical attributes to be nominated for it, but the pride and bravery to seize it. Despite all the anxiety my height once cursed me with, I value the person it has molded me into. I have no idea who I would be if I hadn't been born the way I was, but I do know that I would be nothing like the person I am so proud of being today without it.