

What Being Tall Means To Me

Everybody I have ever met wishes they were tall. Since I was in kindergarten, people have been asking how tall I was. Everyone always asks two questions: “*How tall are you?*” and “*Do you play Basketball?*” Though it is not always in that order, these interactions have influenced my attitude when I am meeting new people. I always expect those two questions, and prepare for the inevitable shocked responses. This is an aspect of being tall that individuals of average height are unaware of. They never mean anything by it, but they often do not realize how frequently those same questions are posited to people of great stature.

Many would look at this anecdote and see grievance, but I have come to take it as an opportunity. The fact that people always ask about my height means that I am always noticed, and people are interested in me. This is a gift, because no matter where I am I will always stand out in the crowd. When I went to Missouri Boys State in the summer before my Senior year, there were always massive crowds and lines of my peers. It was very easy to lose one’s group in the huge mess. However, I would be walking, and people I knew would find their way up to where I was, because they could see me over everyone else in the herd. Once they had found me, I was able to help them find where we needed to be, because I could see things better than they could. In essence, I was their guide, despite the fact that I was as lost as they were. This opened my eyes to how tall people like me are perceived. Many are intimidated because they are not used to seeing someone stand a full head over entire crowds. However, when I opened up to them and showed that I was a considerate, agreeable person, their perceptions changed.

This is what being tall means to me; It allows me to be somebody others can look to for help and direction. In my experience many look at tall individuals with a sense of wonder and fascination. That gives tall people a privilege and responsibility to be a good citizen and role model, because everything they do garners more attention. That is one of the reasons I have always felt that it was important for me to be an example of moral behavior to the younger runners on the Cross-Country team at my High School. People listen to me, and as such my prerogative is to instruct them in things which will help them, not just to be better teammates, but better people. When asked for input, I genuinely think about what will be best for them and what they need, because they trust me enough to value my opinion, and I want them to know that their trust is not misplaced.

Being tall is about more than being able to reach things on the top shelf for the elderly. It gives people the capacity to either lead the way in doing the right thing, or be the reason for others going astray. I have realized that if given the choice between the two, I never want to be the reason that people behave poorly. To me, being tall means having the gift of being able to make a difference in other people’s lives by inspiring them to be better.