I will preface my reflection by telling you, I have always been a tall person. I was born a long and lanky baby. Whenever my mom took me to my well visits, I always “fell off the height chart for my age”. So, I know no other life than the life of a tall person.

Being tall has influenced my daily experiences in so many different ways. My height has shaped how others have seen me throughout my life. For example, my mom was always judged for having a five year old still in diapers, despite the fact that I was only two and a half at the time. Tall kids are perceived to be older, more mature and capable of more, even when they are not.

When I walk into a room, I feel like I am seen by everyone that is in that room. My tall stature has caught the attention of several coaches over the years. When I was in middle school, I wandered into the high school weight room to hang out with a few friends who had talked me into lifting weights with them. Right away, I was spotted by the head football coach. He approached me and asked “How tall are you?”, “What grade are you in?” and then of course, “You need to play football for me! Have you ever considered playing?” It led me to play four years of football in high school which has had a positive impact on my life. The basketball and wrestling coaches had also tried to convince me that someone with my height needs to be on their teams, but the other sports were not of interest to me.

There is an emotional impact of being tall too. As a tall person, self-acceptance and resilience are concepts that I have worked on all my life. Standing out isn’t always what it’s cracked up to be. There have been several times during my life that I have just wanted to blend in with the crowd but was unable to as I towered over most others. I have had to learn over the years to embrace my tall attribute. Yes, my tallness does make me different, but at the same time that tallness makes me special. I have learned over the years to “stand tall” literally and figuratively.

Let’s talk about the downfalls of being a tall person. Yes, it has a few. I will not be one of those guys who can walk into a store and buy jeans or pants off the rack. I will forever be an online shopper for those. I will always be the person who pays more for an airline seat so that I can have the “emergency exit with more leg room seat”. I will forever be the guy who has to adjust the seat back when driving or riding in other people’s cars. Don’t get me wrong though, I much prefer to be a tall person over a vertically challenged person.

Ultimately, being a tall guy has unique challenges, whether it be always being seen in a room full of people or people assuming I have athletic abilities because of my extra

height. My height has helped shape the person I am today. Like any other physical trait, my tall stature does not define the person who I am, it just adds to my story.