

Standing at 5'11, I've spent most of my life literally seeing the world from a different perspective than my peers. Being tall has always been a defining part of who I am- it's the first thing people notice about me, and it's shaped how I move through the world both physically and emotionally. For a long time, I saw my height as something I needed to adjust to. Over the years, I have realized that it's not just measurement; it's a symbol of strength, confidence, and individuality.

Growing up, my height made me stand out. In middle school and even elementary school photos, I was always the kid in the back row, towering over my friends. Shopping trips often ended in frustration when every pair of jeans turned out to be two inches short. Even now, finding pants long enough feels like a victory worth celebrating. And while I can laugh about it today, those small challenges once made me wish I could just blend in. But being tall has taught me how to embrace what makes me different rather than trying to shrink myself to fit in.

Sports became one of the first places where my height felt like an advantage rather than an obstacle. I started playing volleyball, and suddenly my long reach and strong legs became assets. Blocking at the net and spiking the ball came naturally, and I began to appreciate how my body could do things others couldn't. Volleyball taught me teamwork, resilience, and how to carry myself with pride. I realized that the same height that once made me self-conscious could also make me powerful.

Swimming gave me another perspective on what it means to be tall. Competing on both my high school and club swims teams for four years has taught me how to channel my length into speed and strength in the water. My long arms gave me an advantage on my strokes, and endurance grew with every lap. But swimming wasn't just about competition-it was also about discipline, consistency, and mental toughness. Early morning practices and late-night meets taught me how to push through fatigue and self doubt. I found peace in the water, where my height didn't define me-it simply became a part of who I was as an athlete.

Still, being tall means more than just how it affects sports or finding the right pair of jeans. It has shaped the way I carry myself-literally and metaphorically. I've learned that standing tall isn't just about posture; it's about presence. It means owning who I am, walking into a room with confidence. For quite some time, I slouched in photos and tried to make myself look the same height as my friends, but now I've learned that my height resents more than just inches-it represents growth. It is a constant reminder that I have come to accept and love what makes me, me.

Being tall has also taught me empathy. Everyone has something about themselves that makes them feel different, whether it's their appearance, background, or personality. Because I've felt that difference so personally, I try to make others feel comfortable and seen, no matter what makes them stand out. Confidence isn't about being perfect, but about accepting ourselves for who we are.

Today, when I look in the mirror, I see more than just a tall girl. I see a girl who has learned to embrace her height, her strength, and her individuality. I have come to love being tall because it reminds me to stand proud- both for who I am and what I've accomplished. It's taught me that just because your appearance is different does not mean you need to blend in.

In the end, being tall means more than a number on a measuring tape or a number they get when they measure you at the doctor. It means learning to rise about insecurities, embrace

your differences, and carry yourself with the kind of quiet strength that no one can measure in inches.