

## “What Being Tall Means to Me”

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I used to hate my height. Growing up, I was always the tallest girl in my class. I had to stand among the boys in the back when taking pictures, in school plays, and when separating sports teams. I was embarrassed towering over all of my peers, especially when by a young age I was taller than some of their parents. My mom, a tall woman herself, once gave me advice she was once given, “Always be proud of your height.” Even so, it took me a very long time to be confident in my tall and lanky body.

In middle school, when I began to grow into my tall body, I developed a love and passion for volleyball. Being the tallest on the team, I was placed in the position of middle blocker. My competitive edge encouraged me to practice and play hard to continually improve my skills. I was a middle on every single team I played for due to my height. Without being tall, I would not have been able to play the game I learned to love. I cannot explain the pure energy and excitement that is felt during a close varsity volleyball match when the stands are packed, and I get an incredible block due to my height and long arms. Volleyball has given me the opportunity to meet some of my best friends. Through tight knit volleyball teams, I have gained girls that stand beside me in every season of life and cheer me on. In addition, volleyball has given me the incredible opportunity to travel all over the United States. Additionally, as a freshman in high school, I played in a volleyball tournament in the Lucas Oil Stadium. Through volleyball, I have gained a competitive edge, lifelong friendships, and incredible opportunities. My height has not only offered physical benefits, but has also taught me many life lessons.

Being tall means being confident. It means using my height and natural abilities well as a selfless team member. It means walking around with my head held high. It means being caring and empathetic, and not letting my height be intimidating. It means walking around gracefully, honest, and true. It means being the perfect height for hugs. I have babysat for over eight years, and every single time a young child wants to hug me, they must jump, and allow me to pick them up because they can't reach me on their own. Being tall allows for sweeter embraces, and gives my friends an accessible shoulder to cry on. I can be a dependent and reliable friend, and my height reminds me that nobody can do anything alone. Little children need to be picked up, my shorter coworkers need to reach the top

shelf, my volleyball team needs someone tall in the front row, we are all dependent on each other. As a tall woman, it is imperative to be an inspiration to other tall people to use their height for good.

I would not trade my height for anything. It has increased my confidence, given me countless friends and memories, allowed me to reach new heights as an athlete, and pushed me to accomplish things I never could have imagined. As I have matured, being tall has taught me the importance of being dependable and dependent on others. Being tall is never something to be embarrassed about. It gives one a mission and a passion to use their height as a catalyst for something greater. We are all created with unique gifts and talents, and every single human has a distinct purpose for the body they have been given.