What Being Tall Means to Me

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There are things tall girls have heard their entire lives. Whether it's about sports, modeling, or snide comments meant to be funny, those remarks from total strangers can start to take their toll.

Do you play Volleyball or basketball?

Growing up, I was always told girls have one big growth spurt, then stop. Somehow I broke that rule. After fifth grade, I grew eighteen inches in eight years. Being the tallest girl in my middle school, naturally I drifted towards sports. Time after time, team after team, I failed. Not only did I not make the basketball or volleyball team, I didn't make track, tennis, or even cross country. I tried so hard, and ironically, just fell short. It seemed like the end of the world to a 13 year old girl.

Oh then you must model!

With every inch I grew, I became less and less graceful. Just a tall, awkward girl, my whole life I have been convinced I cannot model. Tripping over my feet, for years I've tried to nail my theoretical catwalk, and would end up looking like a newborn giraffe. Over and over, I have had to explain why modeling simply wouldn't work for me. While the first couple of times may have been flattering, it got old fast.

How tall are you?

The last of the three questions I have always been asked. At 6'0 even, the weather truly is great up here. With the exception of the doctor's office or getting a driver license, I have never understood what the point of that question is. What difference does it make? Even if I do answer, they never believe me. Guys assume I'm taller (always rounding up), and girls assume I'm shorter. It becomes degrading. Getting told you are a waste of height after years and years of trying to make the most of it is one of the most defeating things to hear. No I don't play basketball, no I don't play volleyball, and no I don't model. So what am I even good for?

As of recently, I have learned to take a step back and get an overhead view of things. Looking at the big picture, is it really something I should work myself up over? Everyone has that insecurity that has been pointed out to them for years. Whether its jokes about hair, weight, height or any other physical aspect, small comments take their toll on everyone, even if they are supposed to be funny. Learning to be proud of myself has taken me years. Instead of getting offended, I laugh it off, crack a stupid joke, or retort back with a witty response that ought to make them at least smile. Why should I let something bother me so much that I have no control over. If you ask my mom, she would tell you I am a "professional reacher". Nothing makes me happier than grabbing the can at the top shelf for a little old lady at the grocery store.

That is what being tall means to me. Learning to take pride in myself and knowing that I am made exactly how I am meant to be. Even if that means taking a step back to, again, get an overhead view, at least I know I can always find my mom over the aisles when we're shopping.