

My perception of being tall has changed a lot over the course of my life. My opinions have swayed, my relationship with it has flipped, and what I considered the most impactful factors of it have altered. The one aspect that always remained in consideration was community. I used to think that being tall ruined my chances of having a true group to rely on. As I've grown into the young woman that I am today, I've realized that my height actually provided me with the greatest community I could have ever asked for.

Being a girl, I've always tended to stick with other girls. I love being surrounded by my girlfriends, and it's one of my favorite aspects of life. However, I used to believe that my height made it more difficult for me to enter friend groups of girls. In middle school, I struggled a lot to make friends. For a long time, I blamed this mostly on the looming height I was cursed with. I always towered over everyone; I felt like I stuck out. In my desperation for a group of my own, I sought out two girls. We became friends, but not true ones. I didn't realize for a long time how little they actually liked me. I could feel it, and I could see it, but I didn't understand it. Again, I blamed it on my height. They were both short, and I was very tall. I thought it was simply the aesthetic of everything. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't cram myself into their level. I began to walk more slowly so that my longer stride wouldn't push me ahead of them; I ended up being left behind. I slouched so that I could see everything alongside them; I ended up missing what was on the board during class. I overcorrected so much about my height just for some friends who didn't even care for me.

Eventually, this fickle group fell apart. It wasn't unexpected, but I was terrified for the day it would happen, not because I needed them in particular, but because I needed some sort of social connection. I was lonely for a while, and it took a toll on my mental health. I began to seclude myself, not spending time out with friends like everyone I saw online. I felt like I was missing

something. Instead of going to the mall with kids my age like I felt like I was supposed to, I stayed at home. I didn't realize for a while the blessing of my family. We tend to focus a lot on what we're missing, and it leads us to forget what we have. As I struggled with my loneliness, my family was always there. My godmother was perhaps my most comforting figure. Her and I have always had a special relationship; I can tell her anything, even without saying a word. She just understands, like some sort of telepathic communication. I think a major part of what brought me to be so comfortable with her was her height. She's very tall, around 6 feet and 2 inches. Being around her and my cousins made me feel normal. I didn't stick out when I was with them. When we stood in a line, there wasn't one jump from me. It was smooth and consistent. The unconscious comfort that I got out of being near her contributed greatly to forming our relationship.

The sense of normalcy brought me closer to my godmother, and I am eternally grateful. She has been my most reliable figure in life, and it has everything to do with the levelled embrace her tall height offers. With everything that she has helped me through, I'll never underestimate the power of having a tall community around me again.