

A Redemption of My Self-Worth

Grade Level 9-10

Throughout the entirety of my life, I have attempted to keep my spirits high with an air of confidence. Regardless of whether this confidence was legitimate, my sense of self-preservation has pushed me through many difficult chapters. As I have grown older, however, I have come to find that said confidence is quite difficult to maintain. Time and time again, I have been made to feel as if I am not worthy enough because of one singular thing; my size. Constant taunts, harsh words, and laughs at the thought that anyone would love me because I was larger than the people around me plagued my daily life. Often enough, I ignored these taunts, or even laughed alongside them. I have been so complacent with the fact that these things are said to me that I don't even pay them mind anymore. In reality, words like those begin to work at you and your self-esteem, until there is nothing left. A flamboyant and over-confident child has been turned to a silent and overly complacent woman, and I have no one else to blame for that other than myself. For too long I have let the words of those who wish to insult me harm me, and only when I begin to realize that they are no better than flies buzzing around my head will I see that child that I once knew. Those who have belittled me must learn that it is in no way acceptable to speak such harsh words to anyone, regardless of their circumstances.

I can account my loss of confidence to certain instances in the past. These instances include things such as taunting me with food, offhanded comments about my weight, and blatant rejection because of the fact that I was fat. All of my life I have been viewed as lesser than because of the fact that the number on my scale was higher than what others saw on theirs. One particular instance has stuck with me through the years, which occurred in seventh grade. I was sitting in the auditorium, minding my own business, when two boys beside me decided that I was

their best choice for entertainment. They had picked up food off the auditorium floor and began waving it in my face, continuously asking if I wanted it. After several attempts to decline their offer, I figured it was hopeless and turned my face away. One seemingly meaningless instance drastically affected how I viewed myself in public. Just because I was larger and eating food, those boys had decided that it was acceptable to taunt me like I was an animal in Barnum and Bailey's circus. Some other minor incidents include people telling me that no one would see me as loveable because I was fat, and even a person I consider my friend making offhanded jokes about my weight. Slowly over time, these instances began to build up in my head. Suddenly, I was not a happy, flamboyant, carefree child. I became overly self-conscious, even to the point that I refused to eat around my closest friends. Jokes that people had made without a second thought, affected me in a way that I cannot begin to express.

On a surface level, I cannot blame people for thinking and joking about me in such ways. I am overweight and not conventionally attractive, and I cannot deny those facts. However, to make such offensive and crude observations about my surface level appearance would simply be unjust. People are so much more than what we can view with the human eye, and to assume that all people are is just a sum of their physical appearance would be incorrect. You cannot determine someone's self-worth, and no one can determine yours. I absolutely refuse to spend my life bent over someone's perception of my physical appearance. I am a living, breathing, human being, not someone you can point out and laugh at with your friends. I am worthy of love, and I am worthy of respect. I have every right to love, and to be loved. I have every right to eat food without the judgmental eyes of those who have deemed me lesser than them because of the way my jawline is not razor-sharp, or the way my body is not completely firm when I move. The words of those who wish to belittle me and tear me down will no longer have any effect on my

self-worth. My worth is not measured by a number on a scale, rather it is measured by the quality of my character. I am unapologetically in complete and total control of my self-worth, those who wish to damage me can no longer hold that power over me.

It is imperative for those who have said such harmful things in the past, not specifically to me, rather than to those who are in situations similar to mine, to make appropriate adjustments to their very own quality of character. Words are a man's mightiest weapon, and we all must be mindful of how we wield it. I must take the criticisms I have received throughout my lifetime and move onward, looking to a future in which I will no longer allow mean spirited words to rule my life. My worth absolutely has never, is never, and will never be determined by my weight or what people perceive on the outside. Although it has taken me quite some time, I have come to realize that I cannot live for other's vain love or admiration, rather I would wish to live for the love of those who will cherish me based on their perception of my character. Words of those who wish to insult me fall on deaf ears, as I will no longer allow the likes of such to control my life. I live for those I love, and for fulfillment of myself. My worth will be determined by the love I provide and life that I live, and absolutely nothing else.