

Do you ever have to bend down or stand high just to see yourself in the mirror? As you desperately want nothing more than to be taller or shorter? I have, and it made me realize I would never see myself truly reflected in the mirror. As a Black 5'1" woman, it made me feel that everyone was always above me. Looking down upon my successes; a speck on their wall of trophies. I desperately wanted nothing more but to be reflected in my true state both to myself and others.

Although those things may still be true, I have come to view this trait not as a shortcoming but rather as a strength reflecting characteristics given to me by my parents and many more important Black figures. My mother gave me her height: which in turn taught me to grow my voice. She always speaks her mind; unafraid of the outcome. She taught me to stand up for myself and others, no matter the height difference while striving for greatness.

By embracing those traits, I see who I am. I'm an individual who thrives both in their commitment to academics and unwavering responsibility to show kindness. I'm the dream that Dr. King saw fifty years ago. I'm that little Black girl who defied the stereotypes set upon her by society. I'm the student in class who is known not by the color of my skin but by the content of my character. I'm the little Black girl who has grown up with [the] traits of my parents. I'm the little Black girl who lifts people up when others only seek to put them down. I am Anaya Arnold and I will continue to draw on the inspiration of my ancestors and many [Black] figures who came before me to persevere.