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The Shy One

“Why can’t she just speak up?” Unlike what some inconsiderate people may believe, it is not that easy for everyone. Even though it makes me feel alone at times being the “quiet one” it is way more common than you think. There is nothing wrong with being a little shy, but it is important to stick up for yourself when people start to take advantage of you. People who were given outgoing personalities tend to not understand what it is like to hold back on ever speaking up. In my opinion when you get older it can be harder to speak up because it feels like others hold more power and opinions. It is not healthy to care so much about what others think and that is something you should try to teach yourself to ignore. There are also times when adults are just trying to get you to branch out but instead it just leads us to be embarrassed or pressured into going out of our comfort zone. Not everyone has the same amount of quiet, but we all deserve the same level of respect and understanding.

Ever since elementary school, I have noticed how most teachers like to call on introverted kids to try and bring them out of their comfort zone. I have never agreed with this method because it has never worked for me. I find it to just be embarrassing and it makes me very anxious such as when they draw sticks or use an online random selector. It makes me feel more confident when they let me speak and answer when I feel sure about my answer. People may think that this is not a big deal, but it can genuinely affect the way you feel all day at school. This also continued into middle and high school, and I wish teachers were more considerate when it comes to calling people out. There have been multiple times in school where I could just feel my heartbeat get so fast and have my head fill up with anxiety at the thought of being called on next. I become more assured by sharing answers when I am working within a small group or with a partner. When I feel like I could be called out it just stresses me out and

all I do is worried instead of trying my best to do what they assigned. If teachers knew how uncertain we felt when they do this to us, it could hopefully stop in the future and help introverted kids feel more comfortable in the classroom throughout each school year.

In addition, everyone's personalities change as we grow up, but I have always been surrounded by the same friend groups. I prefer to surround myself with people who are respectful and who I can be myself around. I have been taken advantage of in friend groups multiple times. Once people are close to me, they can learn that there is a good chance I will not speak up if someone is disrespectful to me. My parents have always told me that I am an easy target because of this. It scares me to know that people find it okay to do this to people who are not going to speak up. Middle school was the worst for me because of the number of girls who were an issue. There were a few small groups of girls who were "friends" but did not get along that well. There was a time when one of the extroverted girls went around telling her friends that I was mean to someone when I had never actually spoken to the girl they were talking about. Those two girls were having issues of their own but decided to blame me for ruining their friendship. They brought the issue to the school staff, and the adults took their side because no one heard my side because I did not get the option to stand up for myself. This made me feel so alone and sad that I felt unable to stand up for myself. If I could go back in time I would one hundred percent handle this situation differently. It was not fair that I was even involved in this situation to begin with, and I know that I was brought into it because to them I was the "easy" option. I also cannot stand how even the adults took their side only because they were able to talk to them about it and never considered what I had to say.

Growing up I did participate in many sports, but I never found a hobby that I really loved. As time went on, I eventually discovered that I loved to dance. I finally was comfortable doing it and joined it with my best friends and I had so much fun. Right around eighth grade, everything changed. Those close friends of mine found someone else to join the friend group and they slowly just pushed me away.

I like to avoid conflict, so I never felt the need to speak up. It eventually got so bad, and I felt all alone doing the thing that I loved because I had no one to talk to during practice. I decided to quit dancing because I did not stick up for myself when they would ignore me. I like to be busy and have a schedule and that all went away because of this. I wish I had been stronger at the time and stayed in it because now it is too late to join anything else. If I had just not worried about what they were doing around me then I could still be doing it. If I was more outgoing, then I could have just made friends with other girls that were there but that just did not seem like an option at the time. After going through things like that, I always try to include people around me who do not have anyone to talk to. I think all students and people in general should be more aware of who is around them and try to include people whenever given the opportunity, so they do not ever feel urged to stop doing something.

Now that I am eighteen, I understand a lot more when it is right to speak up. There are times for me when it just feels like there is just no point to speak up. Some people just do not deserve to hear an explanation from after doing something wrong towards me. My family over time has learned to be considerate, and they understand and motivate me to stick up for myself. I think everyone should get to know someone before they try and call them quiet or treat them as if they do not have feelings. Being around the right people can help people feel the confidence to speak up and not take disrespect from people. Maybe if more people heard firsthand experiences and stories from those who are affected by being typically quiet, everyone would be more aware of how to act towards those people. It is not fair for anyone to think they need to change their personality to be more respected in school and in public. So why is it so hard to speak up? The truth is that mostly it is not about it being hard, it just depends on the situation. Everyone has room for growth, and I have gotten better at standing up for myself and speaking when the situation calls for it. I would appreciate it if people were more respectful to those who cannot always stick up for themselves.

