

Let me start this off strong. Me, you, everyone; We all compare ourselves to others, it's the truth.

"Truth" is different for everyone, but I believe the definition of truth is reality. Truth is relatability, it's feeling, it's experience. Many people experience things differently, but it all comes to a common connection.

And that brings me to *my* truth.

It started when my family went on vacation. But it wasn't just a typical vacation, this vacation was due to my brother. In his gifted program, he had the opportunity to go to Virginia and conduct some compelling space experiment. He and some of his fellow group mates had to send cubes of matter into space and analyze the results. I was young; this memory barely remains in my mind. But I remember one thing. I thought he was so smart. I didn't understand any of what he was doing, but I wondered why he was so smart and I wasn't.

As time went on, my brother kept doing more and more gifted projects and competitions. My best friends and I had our classes separated because they went to a higher math class than me. Although I received good grades on my own, and I was even in an advanced English class, I still felt inferior; I felt like the worst in my class. I was in a class with smart kids but I still felt they were all smarter than me. To the present day, I try very hard to keep my grades as high as possible and I stress greatly if they are even below a 90. I stress because I know my brother, my friends, and peers all have the slightest better grade than me. At this point, I started to dislike school because of all the stress.

It wasn't exactly jealousy which struck me, it was disappointment. Trying my hardest and still having others be praised more than me became difficult overtime. How come I struggle just to get a good grade, and for others it's just a breeze? I wondered what I was doing wrong. I wanted academic intelligence to come naturally to me like it does for others, but it was merely impossible.

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What I thought it meant to be smart, was having a high IQ; Being great at math, knowing big words and having lots of general knowledge. I compared myself to others often, and I found those were the main areas that were praised the most. I thought that if I wanted to be considered smart, I had to have those devices. I had to get good grades, and ace tests. I tried and tried to be better at those criterias, but it just became more stressful and not enjoyable at all.

But what I didn't realize was that I was actually very smart in ways that were disguised.

For example: I can play an instrument. I can *read* music. Music is practically a whole separate language, and I have managed to be able to read and write it. According to the Online School Center, learning an instrument can actually improve your IQ, memory skills, cognitive abilities, and more. I find it very impressive that my own mind is as capable as to learning a new language as well as I can speak English.

I can create beautiful pieces of art. I can study an object, and create a mental picture of it in my mind; then copy and draw that image in a similar way, or in my own distinctiveness. I even am smart "socially." Easily, I can create conversation with others and talk to them in a pleasing way. I do not struggle socially, and I know many do. In those ways, I am smart in such unique methods that I believe even others would envy.

But before I came to this realization, I ignored the ways I was special in my mind and only focused on what "smarts" I thought were the most important. I almost lost the abilities I was already good at trying to be smart like how my peers were.

To this day, I still struggle with letting others who are academically smarter than me make me feel less. But now, I try to work on myself more and focus on my own abilities. I focus on the things that make me unique to myself instead of doing things just to be praised. One can be smart without being the best in school; the best in math, or the best in reading. Everyone is special, and has their own strengths and

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weaknesses. And I have learned my uncommon strengths, and I will use them to do beautiful and exciting things.