



## Growing

**STATUS:**

**6th Grade.**

**5'1**

**Quiet, anxious, small.**

My first year of middle school—6th grade. It feels so long ago but so recent at the same time. A year that feels like it was unreal. Some parts I can't even remember, it's like trying to watch a movie through a foggy window. The whole year was a mess, the days all felt long and cold. Waking up at 8am just to stare at my computer screen for hours—listening to teachers talk, but everything sounded muffled to me, I couldn't pay attention to anything they were saying or trying to teach. I felt so lonely and was constantly anxious and nervous over nothing. I was deathly shy, and I couldn't speak to anyone, not even my teachers. I couldn't even ask a question because I feared I was bothering them. I dreaded going to school because I had nothing to look forward to, I had no friends except one, and we only spoke over text even though she was in most of my classes. She was a pretty girl, she was blonde and always nice to me. Sometimes I felt like we were the same person in different bodies. We would text and talk during the Google Meets, we would tell each other almost everything, and she was my best friend. She was the only one who made my year in 6th grade feel like it wasn't so bad. That year would have been awful without her.

**STATUS:**

**7th Grade.**

**5'2 ½**

**Learning to socialize more, still anxious, growing.**

7th grade was a year I don't think I could forget even if I tried. It was another sudden change, almost everyone was back in school for in-person learning, and I felt so suffocated. The beginning of the year was boring and tiring. I was still quiet, I feared talking to people. That year there were so many kids coming to our school, so many new faces and names and personalities. And just like that, by the time the flowers were blooming and the sun was shining, I became friends with one girl. She was taller than me and was super pretty, she always had her hair in a bun. We first talked in health class, and we started working together on our assignments. Around the same time, this other kid came back to school. She was online all year. I recognized her from seeing her in the halls before back in intermediate school. She had the same interests as me and was super funny, but because I was shy and anxious, I had never spoken to her before. I started talking to her because her cousin who was in many of my classes with me introduced us to each other. I was finally making friends. I was looking forward to coming to school everyday to see them. At the same time though, I stopped talking to my friend from 6th grade. We had gotten into a fight over nothing. I wasn't too sad though, she had a strange personality, even though I had considered her my best friend, we were still awkward near each other in person. She would say weird things sometimes and play it off as a joke. I didn't think it was funny. That year felt like it lasted forever. 7th grade ended for me bittersweetly.

## **STATUS**

**8th Grade**

**5'3 ½**

**More social, not that anxious, still growing.**

I am now in my final year of middle school and looking back, I have changed so much. I feel like I started out as a caterpillar in 6th, and I've become a butterfly now in 8th. I have what I can call an actual friend group now, they're all super sweet and funny. Although I have changed over the past two years, from being small, anxious, and quiet in 6th, to being a little less anxious and a little more talkative in 7th, to me now in 8th. I still feel sometimes that the girl that I was in 6th and 7th grade is still in me, learning and growing. I still have times where I lay in my bed at night unable to sleep, thinking about my day and what I should have done or what I shouldn't have done. Analyzing every part of myself, my body, my face, my personality and criticizing it. But like everything else, nothing stays, those thoughts eventually will leave my mind, and I'll go back to feeling normal. I'll wake up for school and still see my friends, and by the end of the day, I'll still be the same person. There's no need for me to continue criticizing myself when I'll just wake up the next day and still be me. After all, can't change overnight, change is something that takes time, and I'm still growing and changing, both physically and mentally. By 9th grade I'll be different from how I am right now. Middle School is all about changes. It's about starting as a caterpillar and becoming a butterfly. Not everyone will become a butterfly by the time they're in 8th grade though, but like everything else, nothing stays the same. Everyone's time will come, and there's no need to rush. There's no need to be hard on yourself and over-analyze everything.

**Middle school is about growing.**