

All my life I've had a learning disability, however I didn't realize it until I was in 3rd grade. A girl in my class told me that I was in the stupid class. In first and second grades, I thought I was getting pulled out to the back of the room to work with the teacher because the teacher could not teach that big of group. Then in 3rd grade, when that girl told me that I was in the slow class, I became more self conscious. I began to notice people making fun of me and other students that were in resource. Thankfully, when I went to middle school, everyone change classes, so really no one knew I was in resource. I still attend resource classes, but I study very hard in school and I've been on the honor roll every year since 6th grade.

Another part of my learning disability is with speech and language. When I was younger people couldn't understand what I was saying. In fact, when I was in sixth grade a girl thought I had a foreign accent and asked me if I came from France! I could not pronounce the letter R correctly and frequently left out the ending of words. One time when I was playing soccer, a boy got kicked in the face. I asked him if he was alright, but came out "All you all white?". He looked at me funny and said, "All white what?". I told him never mind. O worked really hard and got released from Speech/language services in 8th grade.

The last aspect of my learning disability has to do with my handwriting. I have Dysgraphia. This means that it is hard for me to form letters correctly and so other people have time hard reading my handwriting. I still feel embarrassed when I see first graders with handwriting better than me. I love to write stories. When I was 7th grade, I was heading down to the State PTA convention. My mom was driving me and 3 other girls to the Student convention. I pulled out one of my stories and started to write. One of the girls looked at it and was wondering what I was writing and was trying to read it. I was afraid they would make fun of me. My mom explained that I had a different way of writing that only I could read and it was like a code. They thought that was cool and asked me to write more. I continue to write, however, I know I need assistive technology like an Alpha Smart or computer for others to read my writing.

I confess that it sometimes is discouraging when other people can learn things faster and takes it takes me so long. For instance, I play the violin. I started in the 4th grade. I've had to practice hours and hours and some students that started violin in 6th grade are know ahead me. I have to tell myself to stop comparing. All that matters I try my hardest.

Everybody has their own set of challenges and one of mine happen to be learning disabilities. If you have problems with learning in school, I just want to say never give up! You have so much ahead of you. We are all smart in our own way. Be the best you can. Try not to let your learning struggles drag you down. There many people- even famous people, that live with learning disabilities. You are like any other person and you **ARE NOT DUMB! YOU ARE SMART!** What ever challenges you have, whether they are emotional like depression or OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), physical like asthma or diabetes, or academic, don't let them stop you.

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