

I was born with Holt-Oram syndrome. This syndrome had cause my left had to be much smaller than my right hand. Both of my hands only have four fingers, just like my father. We also have heart problems for which we have both had surgery. To this day, I have always been ashamed by how my hand looks and it feels uncomfortable. In my school, I usually dislike going in front of everyone and presenting for the way they might look at me. It's a feeling I have always had making me shy and nervous of ever getting in front of an audience. However, looking at my past self, I can say I changed a lot during my years of being in school. Previously, I would never want to raise my hand due to my hands. Nor would I would want to speak for the fear of being stared at when I talk. All my life, I hid when I was asked questions and usually get looks from people when I pass them. There hasn't been a time where I would stop myself from hiding my arm or just avoiding people in general.

Through time I learned how to change and became much better than my previous self. I was helped by the connections I made with teachers, the administrators, and my own friends who have been there for me. My constant participation has been something I have never done and it's all new to me. However, it really serves me great purpose that I know am able to ask for help. the small things that people don't complain about are the big things for me. Since I wasn't able to raise my hand without even feeling shame. This has made a big impact on me and I try not to hide it from time to times. I try breaking my habit since it is a little hard because it became a bit when I was in elementary. Where ever I go I always have that sense in me that I can't express myself freely for it, I can't say what I want to say.

However, over time, I have made changes for the better, changes I would never have imagined in my life. I ran the Los Angeles Marathon in front of hundreds of people. I ran not caring the way people looked at me. I have also joined the local 24th Street Theater, where I not only take acting classes, but I mentor children as well. Another way I have changed is by being more confident in the classroom. I raise my hand, ask questions, and participate as much as possible. Since then, my academics have improved. I am in honors English now, and next year, I am hoping to take three Advanced Placement classes.

No matter what challenges I've faced, I continue to overcome and take advantage of the opportunities presented to me. From a self-conscious person who never wanted to draw attention to myself to an outgoing student in theater, the classroom, and the world, I have grown a lot. I am still changing, but I am finally proud of who I am.