

To be honest, I don't remember why I signed up to be a part of the newspaper in my sophomore year. Was it for the elective credit? Was it because I enjoyed writing? The reason isn't clear in my memory. When I walked into the journalism room at the start of my sophomore year, I had no idea how much of an impact this class would end up having on me. I didn't just find my passion, I found myself and the confidence to raise my voice to show everyone who I am.

At the end of my junior year, I saw the opportunity to become Editor-in-Chief, and I took it. That last month or two of school, when I was Editor-in-Chief, was such a challenge. It wasn't just because I had a lot more on my plate, such as having to design more pages, edit everyone's stories and designs and be responsible for anything that didn't get done. It was because I had to be in charge, start the class every day and give presentations. I am a shy person. Presenting and talking in front of a class was never easy for me. But when I became Editor-in-Chief, I was expected to do this every day. I would dread it. I would feel so awkward and scared up there starting class, even when it would only take a minute. My voice would shake and I would just pray no one noticed. Though I had been in the class for two full school years at this point, I had realised no one in the room really knew me since I was always so quiet. When I got up in front of the class to talk, I felt I was talking to a room full of strangers.

I took it upon myself to overcome this fear. I would practice what I was going to say to the class before school. When I spoke to the class, I would slow myself and my thinking down, so I didn't get too caught up in my own thoughts. I carried all of this with me into my senior year. But most of all, starting my senior year, I made a greater effort to maintain friendships with those in my class. By putting myself out there and making friends with those I was surrounded with, I made myself feel more comfortable with leading the class, since I knew those in the room were on my side. I also feel that it makes me less intimidating to my classmates, so that they

know I am on their side as well. One day, they will move up into a leadership position and hopefully feel comfortable using their voice, just as I had learned. This is what makes me a good leader, and this is what made me find my voice. I am no longer afraid to start class every day, and it has become so natural to me. Now that I have gotten used to speaking up in front of a room full of people, I find it easy to give presentations or speeches in other classes as well.

I use this friendly leadership quality to better our newsroom and paper. Knowing that I am someone who is shy and has had trouble making my voice heard, I do my best to highlight and include those who have the same issue in our paper. I want everyone's voice to be heard. We try to cover those who have not been previously covered or are already well-known and heard throughout the school. I try to spotlight those who don't normally get the spotlight, but deserve it just as much. In my interviews, I use the same friendliness I use in class; I make them feel welcome and as if I am on their side. I show the human side of myself, how I am not perfect, to get them to open up and feel comfortable, since I know interviews can be awkward.

Journalism has helped me to not only find my voice but also to give a voice to others. I overcame my shyness, something that has always been a part of me and applied it to something bigger. This is not something I thought I would accomplish in my time on the newspaper. I didn't even think I would be a leader in this class, let alone be the one to lead the class every single day. It really wasn't clear to me when I joined what I would get out of this class. I mean, I didn't even know what I wanted out of this class or why I joined, but I sure am glad that I did.