Growing up, I was the short chubby girl in school who was always conscious of her body and feared the perception others had of me. Whenever my peers would look my way, I can remember feeling like I wanted to hide, and would constantly over-analyze every inch of my body. This left me feeling like I was confined in a box with no way out, and every day I would wake up and dislike what I saw in the mirror. Was I fat, or were people thinking negatively about my appearance? These were the types of insecurities I couldn’t help but have throughout most of my life in elementary school. Often times, I would drift away in thought about wanting to be a skinny perfect twelve year old like I believed so many of my friends were. I was envious of their thin frames, longer legs, and ability to eat junk food whenever they wanted without ever looking chubby. The picture in my head of the way I wanted to look, and the reality of what my body was, I thought could never be one and the same. No matter how many skinny friends I had at the time, I convinced myself I was always going to be different.

Through the realization that I couldn’t have the perfect body automatically, I decided to get involved with sports. From the age of four, I was actively participating in both soccer and gymnastics. I noticed even at a young age that being an athlete made me feel a lot more confident about myself. When I entered high school, my body issues were still apparent but not as troubling. However, after taking a nutrition course my junior year, a light bulb went off in my mind as I realized this was the subject I wanted to study for the rest of my academic career. I knew then and there that the concept of being able to eat healthy and control one’s weight though proper nutrition was the most fascinating subject I had ever learned about. By implementing what I learned in my high school course to my everyday life, I began to see results. Staying active in soccer, and eating a healthy diet helped me realize it was possible to love my body after all. For the first time, I saw myself as not just the skinny girl I wanted to be when I was twelve, but a healthy and beautiful one who could move mountains with her exuberant level of confidence.

For these same reasons, I believe that everyone, both young and old, should be properly educated on nutrition. There are so many people that struggle with the same weight insecurities that I used to. No one should have to battle with detesting the way they look. After all, no one is perfect and every single person has qualities about themselves they wish they
could change. I only hope that when I become a registered dietitian, I can help people overcome their battle with weight, and teach them to love the way they look as much as I have learned to myself.

By Brittany Kelley