

*I was born as the middle child in a family with seven kids. As the middle child, I often found myself forgotten and neglected. It did not help that most of my siblings were very opinionated, loud, and confident, which was the exact opposite of my character. I often found myself left out of plans and not being considered for a lot of things.*

*I remember the summer of fourth grade. Our last-born twins had just reached an age where they could travel with the family on an international vacation. I found out that my parents had asked the kids to vote for the vacation location and I had no idea. Then the day of the vacation came and the plot of "Home Alone" was my reality. My family forgot about me as I prepared to leave with them. I was always the last one to take a shower because my siblings would fight over who went first and so on and I never wanted to be part of the bathroom wars. So, as I showered last, they got ready and left. It took 36 hours for them to notice I was missing. This was not an isolated incident. Similar things had happened before, I was always forgotten.*

*However, for the first time, I spoke out and expressed my pain and disappointment. I used to keep quiet about everything and just take it while lying down. So, my parents and family would refer to me as the "understanding and unproblematic" child. However, this incident forced me to speak out for myself and I saw a change for a while. This conditioned me to be more outspoken especially when I felt mistreated.*

*This is a lesson that has come in handy in many aspects of my life. I have learned to be outspoken and confident for myself and others.*