

OWEN



So a memory that I believe shaped me into who I am today, or at a minimum, I feel had some influence on me, happened when I was in elementary school. And it didn't use to be a big memory for me or anything, but I think over time I've put more significance into it than I had in the past for whatever reason. But anyway, I was probably in first grade or something like that and had a role in the school play. I can't remember what the play was, but I think it was Shakespeare maybe. And at that age, I was a bit of a performer, so I was having a great time with it. But the day of the play we were rehearsing for the show and I remember I had said a line or stumbled over a line and some kids started laughing at me, and I was overcome with this embarrassment. In reality, they may not have even been paying attention to me and were laughing about something else, but the damage was already done. So all day I was stewing on this and how I didn't want to make a fool of myself or be laughed at for forgetting a line, so when the end of the school day comes around and everyone is starting to get ready for the play, I decided I couldn't do it. I didn't want to be a part of the play and I couldn't face all these people who would laugh at me. So I decided to go hide in the tunnel on the playground until it was over. Of course, that didn't really work because my mom found me after about twenty minutes. But I still refused to be in the play.

And through this experience, I think it was one of the first instances where I began hiding myself from people and avoiding things that would maybe bring me joy but could also put me in a space to be judged. And I know my friends and family probably would kind of doubt that a bit, because I've made a bunch of goofy videos for the internet and have put myself out there quite a bit in spaces where judgment lurks, but I feel as though I've missed out on a lot in my life because of this fear of judgment. And it's something I feel as though I constantly battle. I think it's something a lot of people battle, you know, how to just be yourself and not care what other people think. I'm working on it, but it sure ain't easy.