

1). When I was in elementary school, I went to the school nurse a lot. When I say “a lot”, I mean that I hold the record for most visits in a single school year (89). Now if you think like me, your mind must have immediately applauded my brilliant ability to reinvent the phrase, “I need to go to the nurse’s office”. Years later, I am still friends with Nurse Kathy, and she recently sent me the entire printed list of symptoms associated with my frequent visits. My personal favorite is when I claimed that the mosquito bite on my ear was a venomous spider bite. I promise I make less excuses now, but I haven’t lost my crafty ability to think of ideas to help me get out of tough situations.

2). I was a whopping 62 inches for most of my teenage life. My situation was dreadful. I seemed to be stuck at this height without any chance of growing taller and finally being able to fit into the “cool looking” tennis clothes I had dreamed of wearing, while wowing my opponents. Instead, I was left to make do with my large selection of black-and-white shorts and t-shirts. I must have been an incredible nuisance to my parents, because I complained to my mom incessantly. Finally, at the age of 13, I was granted with the opportunity to do something about my predicament. Instead of getting the typical big-ticket holiday gift, like an X-box or an iPod, my parents decided to give me a large box of colorful fabrics, a set of colored pencils, and the opportunity to design 3 of my own tennis outfits. I designed my own logo, and utilized a multitude of colors that I now find over the top. I live for color. My designs took shape with crazy stripes on the sleeves and different colored collars. If I wasn’t the persistent complainer that I was, I would have never had the amazing opportunity to design and eventually create/wear my own brand of tennis clothes, and express not only my creativity, but my voice through color.

3). Being a picky eater has its ups and downs, but being a picky eater who has extraordinarily talented taste buds is a blessing. I think it is important to announce my exceptional sense of gustation. I have the God-given talent of having extra sensitive taste buds that have been known to wreak havoc on people such as my grandpa, the designated family pastry chef. For example, he often changes the brand of chocolate he uses in his croissants without expecting

me to notice. My eyes may lack the ability to discern the imposter chocolate sticking out of the buttery pastry, but my taste buds sure have a field-day sensing the new flavor. Long-story short, I'm a real-life Goldilocks. When it comes to making sure the taste is just right you'll be happy to have me on your team.

4). The summer before my Junior year of high school, I suffered a fracture in my lumbar spine while preparing to play an international tennis tournament series across South America. This was particularly bad timing not only because the injury pulled me off the court for 6 months but because it required me to wear a restrictive back brace for 23 hours of the day, which made it impossible to maintain or improve my ranking. This was extremely humiliating to me, as I had considered myself invincible up until this point. Although, I do not miss the uncomfortable time spent in the brace, without this injury I would not be where I am today. I would not have learned how to embrace defeat with such a positive spirit. Positivity has grown to be the center of my universe ever since and it has brought me more in life than the tournaments could ever have.

5). At the age of 16, my Grandpa convinced me to start my own business selling old-fashioned hard-candy suckers. I called this business "The Sucker Brothers", paying homage to his part in the creation process. These long-lasting treats were shaped like small cupcakes with thin popsicle sticks as the handle. I ended up selling them to friends at school and even had a mass order in which I made over 30 suckers for a baby naming. Even though the suckers were tasty and a small-scale success, I hung up my apron and sugar thermometer to pursue other, less sticky dreams.

6). There must be an undiscovered gene that codes for noise making, because I absolutely love to sing at the top of my lungs. As my close friends know well, there is never a boring, quiet day at the Salita household. At times, my two younger sisters and I create enough noise pollution (what my dad calls our singing when we are too loud) for the entire neighborhood. Being the oldest, I am often the one who is held responsible for these outbursts of song during stressful

transitions from one activity to the other. My parents say my “opera” singing adds stress to these situations, but I think of my heroic belting as a reminder to stay light and not take life too seriously. Even though my singing may be loud at times, I know you will love my sincerely upbeat and expressive personality.

7). The word “competitive” does not do my competitive nature justice. All throughout my childhood, I sought out competition. Whether it was getting the highest grade on a test or running the fastest at recess, I never stopped trying to be the best. Competition fuels my ambition, and helps me continue to push the limits of my imagination. Although I am extremely competitive, it does not come at other’s expense. I know you will love my ability to battle any challenges you throw my way.

8). I’ve been collecting Lake Superior agates here and there since I was five years old. After attending a gem show with my dad-roughly 5 years ago-I discovered that there are working gravel pits where registered guides lead groups of agate hunters on trips. As soon as I learned of this, I was hooked. I begged my dad to get the mine certification needed to enter these pits, and a few weeks later we were off. On a brisk spring morning, I woke up at the crack of dawn, threw on my sweats and hopped in the car with my dad, to hopefully find one of these elusive gems for myself. While I dug through a large opening in the slanted mountain of rock, a fellow hunter kicked up a pile of rocks. I turned over the pile of dirt to find the most beautiful agate in my now extensive collection. I snatched it up, like a kid in a candy store, gave it a spray with my bottle and rubbed off the dirt to see its amazing stripes and color. Triumphant, I hustled back to show the group. I felt such a great sense of satisfaction at the end of the day, knowing that my first agate trip was a success. Needless to say, I am always game for a trip to the pit.

9). It was a sunny March day (Girl Scout Cookie time of year) and the doorbell rang. I ran to answer the door and saw my two older neighbors, Michelle and Nicole, standing with cookies and their dad, whom I had never met before. I quickly realized that he was deaf and noticed the girls using their hands to communicate with him. As I grew older, so did my curiosity and when it came time to complete my high school’s foreign language requirement, I decided to take

American Sign Language. The day Michelle and Nicole stopped by my house now seems like a lifetime ago, as I am fluent in ASL and have gotten to know their parents, Karla and Ivan, on a personal level.

10). Although I am only 6 feet tall and 170 pounds, I do not stop eating. As soon as I hit puberty, my eating habits became comparable to that of a shrew, and my mom calls my continuous picking from the cabinet “grazing”. She cannot believe her eyes when we finish dinner and I go right to the fridge to consume more food, but all I can say is that I am one hungry boy. My appetite is particularly endless for blackberries. I am notorious for eating entire cartons of blackberries, in a matter of seconds, so for future reference: don’t leave blackberries in the fridge without expecting me to help them to magically disappear.