***Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.***

I believe a good plot does not comprise of the ‘good’ nor the ‘bad’. A beautifully crafted narrative has characters substantiated with complex personalities, where it’s not a mere show of ‘hero vs criminal’, but more of ‘character vs character’. I also firmly believe most, if not all, aspects of life too must be thought of in a similar manner.

Treating people of every attribute with equal respect and openness has always been a part of me. To others, this may appear as “people pleasing”, however to me, befriending just about anyone, even those my mutuals disapproves of, is an essential part of getting to understand reality better. Not to mention, knowing that I can make a friend of the teacher no one got along with or the guy everyone avoids is rewarding on its own. Make no mistake, I don’t wish to become “the girl liked by all”, and as a matter of fact, being impartial is one of many things I value; an individual’s rationale or motives make sense once we get a glimpse of the other side of the story.

A chapter of my story was an event that occurred in an ordinary setting: the classroom. Regardless, it was immensely memorable, and I might even say, one so blissful; it felt like a spark of hope in pitch blackness. “Oh no… good luck with that Ash,” my friends sighed with concern as they found out the only two students I was grouped with for a film project weighing 30% of the whole grade, not to mention the fact that every other group had over four members to work on such a significant, massive project. I wasn’t disheartened, however. My heart raced not out of anxiety, but utter thrill for what was to come, especially after hearing the words of reassurance our teachers gave me. “We’re confident that you’ll drive your team successfully, but if you’d like us to reconsider the grouping, we can fulfill the request.” I refused the offer, “No thank you Miss, I think my group’s perfectly fine.” I rejected knowing that it would be no easy feat, so I constantly took initiative to become the ‘glue’ of our group, because representing myself as the ‘leader’ that time would actually dissuade the members from partaking in the project, as the label alone may appear intimidating, imposing, and repulsive to indifferent individuals such as my groupmates. Rather than allocating tasks in a forceful manner, I listen and gently ask for input, thoughts, and ideas. In addition to working on the project itself, reassuring me of whether my members are able to execute their roles, telling them that it’s alright if they need assistance from me, and facing my members with an open mind, as if I were in their shoes. While we didn’t receive a perfect mark, we thankfully earned a 94 for our grade, yet a remark made by one of my teammates was what filled my heart with warmth and satisfaction. “This group is too wholesome :),” to quote a message from one of the members in our group chat. I had faith in my team from the start, but it was beyond me that they would feel as content as I did throughout the journey.

At first glance, the seemingly apathetic character is all there is to that individual, but this mindset is completely flawed; how someone is stereotyped by others mustn’t confine people into boxes or labels they cannot escape from. Keeping an open mind and acting upon it, understanding that dealing with people is not a ‘one size fits all’ was why the project all came to fruition.

Hi Ashley,

Thank you for writing and sharing your essay! I think you have a strong introduction about realizing every individual is complex and the label “good” or “bad” is often wrong. However, I think the story that you described about taking on a challenge with only two partners does not correlate to the intro message. You can either clarify that the partners were labelled as “bad” by your classmates or change your intro into something that relates more to the story. At the end of the essay, it would also be beneficial to tie it back to the prompt – what part of the story makes you incomplete without it? Is it the fact that you never judge someone/something just as is? If so, emphasize that this curiosity and empathy is part of your identity and that you cannot see things/people any other way.

C.G.