**Prompt #5**

***Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.***

I had never really liked bracelets and thought that that’ll never change. The constant rubbing and movement of it as I swung my hand left a very unpleasant feeling on my wrist. I thought I'd never wear one again until earlier this year. A slim black thread with black bead strung along it like a rosary was wrapped around my wrist. It was a gift from Jocelyn. ~~But~~ despite the kindness, I was itching to take it off. Minutes felt like hours with the bracelet.

“I’ll take it off afterschool when she's not around”

I said to myself. There was this mental barrier I had from wearing bracelets and sticking to them. This same phenomenon seemed to pervade some parts of my life. I was often hesitant to take leaps into new things or foreign environments, afraid I wasn’t up for it, afraid it just wasn’t for me. During my first year of highschool, I was appointed as the Student Council’s head of welfare. With this position usually reserved for seniors, I felt the pressure to perform well and the thought that I lack experience really got into my head. I found myself procrastinating over my duties and afraid of adding more responsibilities to my plate. When wanting to try new programming languages, fearing the difficulty of the foreign elements I'll need to learn in the future, I end up not starting at all.

As the last class of my day drew closer. I was sitting at my desk when I was approached by Jocelyn.

“Are you liking it?”

She asked. I suddenly remembered the gift she gave me and looked over to my left wrist.

“Huh”

To my surprise, the bracelet was resting comfortably on my wrist. I’d completely forgotten about it. It was at this point I realized that maybe my initial thought that bracelets not being my thing wasn’t true at all. I made baseless assumptions in my head and overthink it. It was my mind that was hindering me.

From that moment on, I knew that overthinking and assuming too much is not going to help and that I should just take action, no matter how scary or challenging it may seem. Over the summer, I did not hesitate to indulge myself in studying new, foreign material outside my school’s curriculum for my internship and took part in hackathons with my friends despite having zero prior experience. And, as the school year approached, Instead of spending evenings cooped up in my room binge watching netflix, I’d try to go out of my comfort zone and try new hobbies. When presented with the task in my student council, I said yes to it despite being unsure if I’m capable of it, I can always learn to do it later.

Just these seemingly small changes in my head changed how I approach my opportunities and perceive my circumstances.

I know now how one’s mind can play a huge role in achieving anything. Humans truly are limited in a lot of aspects but to think and imagine freely is not one of them. Sometimes what’s hindering you from achieving your goal may not be your lack of ability or skill but rather your own thinking and mental state.

As I’m writing this, it's only a few months left till the end of the year. I’m at my desk with my hands typing away on my keyboard as I stare at the google document on my monitor. The bracelet on my left wrist still seen in my peripheral vision. Throughout my time in college and beyond, there's no doubt that I’ll be faced with opportunities and experiences from adjusting my life in college to partaking in club activities, and then from pulling all-nighters before a particularly difficult exam to getting to work on my own start-up. Instead of worrying if I'm up for these activities, I'll do it anyway. I’ll face them all head on. I’ll wear the bracelet.

Word count: 659 words

Hi, Joe! Your essay is quite compelling and interesting since you use bracelets as a metaphor. To make it even better, I feel that you could include how staying inside your comfort zone has hindered you from multiple opportunities. By including this “challenge”, your personal growth will shine brighter. Additionally, after your epiphany, you can include the positive experiences you’ve gained by taking on those new opportunities so that us readers can also revel in your success :)