**Prompt 8 - Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?**

I was a very timid child. I couldn’t even strike a simple conversation with someone because of social anxiety. Without knowing the roots to this problem, my parents enrolled me in a taekwondo club to build my confidence.

I remembered feeling apprehensive and hesitant to kick when dozens of sets of eyes were on me during my first sparring session. Afterwards, Sabom - my taekwondo instructor - pulled me aside. He said, “Indomitable spirit is one of the 5 tenets of taekwondo; you should always exhibit full effort inside the training area and in real life.” He was saying that I won’t regret it as long as I put maximum effort in anything. He then continued, “Don’t think too much, just kick! Eventually, the wall limiting you will crumble,” to encourage me to not think too much.

Trying to do my best to change, I followed instructions. As I landed more kicks in my next sparring, cheers would be heard. More kicks equal to louder cheers; the vibration felt from the cheers were, somehow, converted into confidence that would strip away my timidness. It was an encouraging feeling.

Slowly but surely, I adapted to the environment of sparring and started to get more confident as time goes on. It felt like I had a confidence energy generator which turned cheers into confidence. I ended up loving the community, they are like the supporting pillars to my confident spirit. Therefore, I continued taekwondo for years on ahead.

The club not only helped me become a more confident person, it also trained me to become more disciplined in and out of the club. I train strictly without slacking off and it’s the same way with study and my daily life. The most important skill I learnt, however, is problem solving skills under pressure. I learnt to keep a cool and composed mind when getting kicked in sparring and try to control the pace to turn the tables around.

Hi David:

Great story!

I understand you want to show the reader that you have cultivated confidence and discipline in your life through taekwondo, which is captured in your story. In addition, I would consider going further to show how you applied what you learned in taekwondo outside of the club.

I suggest structuring your essay as follows:

1. Introduction – how you were timid and started taekwondo with apprehension
2. Being inspired and encouraged by your instructor and practices
3. What you learned through taekwondo – confidence and discipline
4. How you’ve applied confidence and discipline in your daily life/study and where this strength can possibly take you in the future (university and beyond)

From the above, you can show the reader that you have a strong character trait from a martial arts practice that makes you a well-rounded person in all aspects who knows where they can go in life.

All the best!