**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 as I walked along the school corridors early in the morning heading to my class. It was a gift from Jocelyn. Despite the kindness, I was still itching to take it off. Minutes felt like hours with the bracelet.

“I’ll take it off after school when she's not around”, I said to myself.

I’ve always had this mental barrier from wearing bracelets and sticking to them ever since I was a kid. This same phenomenon seemed to pervade other 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. I’d sometimes miss deadlines for competitions because I ponder too much on whether it was even worth a shot. During my first year of high school, when appointed as the Student Council’s head of welfare, I found myself procrastinating over my duties and afraid of adding more responsibilities to my plate due to fear of failing and pressure. 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. 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 promised myself that I will not back down from my future endeavors no matter how challenging or scary they may seem.

Being true to my promise, I participated with a team of 4 in a hackathon for the very first time during this year. The hackathon required its participants to develop an application that provided a solution to a global problem of your choice and a business plan for pitching, all in just a day. Despite knowing I had close to zero experience in app development, let alone in pitching, I registered anyways. I didn’t want to succumb to my fear of failing and embarrassment and let this opportunity go away. With only a few days till D-Day, I studied as much as I possibly can and, to my surprise, placed second.

Just these seemingly small changes in my head changed how I approach my difficulties and opportunities. I was able to try out lots of new activities, take on new responsibilities in my student council and even did an internship. I stopped merely thinking about doing things and instead, learned not to be afraid, to take the first step, to seize the day.

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 my monitor. The bracelet on my left wrist still seen in my peripheral vision. The bracelet, which felt like a shackle initially both physically and mentally, had now become proof and a constant reminder to me that my limitation – it’s only my imagination. Throughout my time in college and beyond, there's no doubt that I’ll be faced with various challenges and opportunities, from participating in lab research, to hosting community events, taking on difficult assignments and courses, to working on my own start-up. Instead of worrying, I’ll face them all head on and keep moving forward. I’ll wear the bracelet.

Dear Joe:

Great second draft! I love how you’ve given a real example on how the bracelet inspired you to take action.

Overall I think the draft is nearly polished. To cut down on the word count, I gave some indications on the parts where you might be able to edit in the above comments. I did not directly delete specific parts because I think the delivery is good as it is. It’s better for you to decide which parts you want to retain (which you consider significant). Additional tips from me include: reading through your whole essay again to see where you might use more concise wording, avoid using too many prepositions, and combine sentences with similar meanings to reduce redundancy.

All the best!

Thalia