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

I never thought having millions of people viewing my content. I grew up in an environment where my friends doubted me as my capabilities weren’t on par with the popular kids.  I initially accepted the fact that I was never going to be noticed, let alone popular.

However a few months ago, I decided to use TikTok to post a critique. I voiced my concern about Indonesian-assembled Hondas, pointing out the flaws of the built quality, which my mom’s new car has a problem with. The trims that were attached to the doors were not attached properly, and considering how much my mom paid for this car, I was disappointed. My goal with the video was just to let people know about Honda’s awful quality control, yet it did more than that.

I woke up the next day with 100 thousand views and the numbers kept on increasing. Never have I seen that view count on any video I made, let alone a TikTok. This was unexpected as I didn’t think the video would reach out to hundreds of FYPs. At that point, I didn’t know what to do nor react. I looked at the comments, and I was amazed with the amount of people who relate to my critique. The feeling of getting more recognition from other people whom I never interacted with is exciting, but I’m also worried that there might be a negative consequence such as having hatred comments, or even worse the company I’m critiquing sends a subpoena.

It didn’t take long until I got a message from a Honda representative. Oh lord it’s happening, I said. The world stopped at that moment and my face went pale. With my heart thumping loudly I read the message.

It turns out that the factory’s representative in which my mom’s car was produced wanted to have a look at the car, and inspect what’s wrong with it. I was 16 at the time, and never talked to a corporate official before. They found out that weak adhesive is the reason for the falling trims, and later fixed it free of charge.

The people from Honda were accepting, and even though I speak badly about their cars, they are open to discussions and feedback, to improve themselves. This broke my thought of them blacklisting me from their brand, and I finally don’t have to worry about feeling guilty for critiquing. The meeting with Honda Indonesia’s representative made me realize that one’s voice matters, regardless of one’s age and status, and that people have to voice them responsibly and for a good cause.

Since then, I also started to publish different types of content in addition to critiquing. I create other content, such as reviewing air fresheners or commenting on newly launched cars. My TikTok account also aims to inform and educate people about specific car updates and products, which indirectly helps car brands to know what people expect from a product.

I learned the power of words and how it has the ability to help and heal, not only others, but ourselves too, and this is what I aspire to do with my TikTok or other social media platforms since then. I want to contribute to society through my articles and videos about my hobbies, which are about cars, and gadgets. I aim that on every work I publish, an individual must learn something from it. We all can learn from each other, and solve problems along the way. TikTok and other platforms are not only a source of entertainment, it is a platform for inspiration and advocacy. Though it is not an easy job, the enthusiasm from viewers is my driving force to keep creating, and helping others.

Hi Indra,

It was great to read your prompt and learn about your journey in being confident and in using your voice for good influence.

Overall, I think you have done a great job at answering the prompt. You also did quite well in the way you narrated your story, it kept me engaged! You successfully used some sensory details in expressing your story.

However, there are just a few points (as you can see from my comments above) that you needed to add to give your essay even more clarity and cohesion for your readers.

Also, expand more on what you’ve done after you’ve “learned your lesson.” That’s really the most important part, the heart of your essay. See, the admissions officers aren’t just looking for those serendipitous moments that become turning points in students’ lives. They’re looking for concrete examples of what those students do AFTER they’ve experienced those moments.

So, you’ve learned that your voice is powerful. Great! Show how you’ve wielded that powerful voice.

Best wishes,

Johana and Paul