**Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it. (650 words)**

Tie, check. Vest, check. Hair, check.

I tidied up my appearance to disguise my disheveled mind. As I headed to the meeting room, my strides got slower.

Despite my busy mind, I put on a smile and greeted each member of the student council. We were having a regular check-in meeting one week before Art, Charity, and Sports Week, a fundraiser that I had initiated.

Each department leader presented their progress, but my eyes were glued to my phone waiting for a notification. As president of the student council, I was in charge of finding tenants for the bazaar. The most highly requested tenant, who planned to open a stand in the bazaar, had been unreachable. I wanted to bring this up to the team, but I was afraid my issue would just add to their burden.

Three days before the event, the tenant still could not be contacted. It would be hard to find another tenant at this point and I was getting frustrated. Without them, the amount of money generated would not be able to cover the event’s necessities. There would not be any fundraising, charity, or donations, which was the whole point of the event.

During church fellowship, my mentor came up to check on me. At first, I was reluctant to share my story because I assumed he would not understand the situation and would think that it was just a minor issue. Sensing I was reluctant, he started by telling his journey in leading the youth ministry at church, including his struggles when a party canceled a sponsorship for the annual youth event. As soon as he finished his story, I felt understood and the story about the struggles I was dealing with just naturally came out of my mouth. After I finished telling my story, I was expecting to be given paragraphs of advice or tips and tricks. However, his response caught me off guard.

“A leader should be HOT: Humble, Open, and Transparent.”

What a frivolous abbreviation! Initially, I denied his advice since I thought it was contradictory to the image of a leader society had taught me. However, he reminded me that being open to my team members would allow them to see the bigger picture, which helps a lot in finding the middle ground of the struggle I was facing.

I immediately texted the student council to set a meeting where I decided to be open about my struggle with the tenant. Fortunately, they were all very understanding, so they immediately tried to help contact food stalls located nearby. Then, one of the head departments told me that her relative just opened a beverage franchise near our school and was looking for an opportunity to join the bazaar. Without thinking twice, I asked for her relative’s contact and as expected, they were willing to open a stand in the bazaar.

Overall, the bazaar was successful, the tenant specifically was in great demand as they sold more than 60 cups of Thai milk tea and green tea. As a result, we managed to raise a total of IDR 2 million for an orphanage and ACSW has been annually conducted ever since then.

This experience made me realize the importance for a leader to be open and transparent throughout their leadership process. Leadership is not just about highlighting the victories and trying to be the frontline when problems come. It is also about the humility to be open by letting my team members know what is going on. After all, team members are not pawns, they’re co-contributors. With this realization, I look forward to continue becoming a composed leader in university. I will take on leadership roles on projects or events with the aim to encourage supportive team cooperation by creating a safe place for the whole team as we strive together through the highs and lows.

Hi Laurent:

I think this is a more polished draft!

I noticed you wanted to make sure to elaborate your story to get your point across which is understandable. I cut down the parts that as the reader I see as unnecessary without eliminating the point of the story. You can readjust as you see fit with consideration of the word count.

I suggest 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!