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

When my teacher offered me to interview Edgar Xavier Marvelo, a three-time wushu world champion as well as a medalist at the Asian Games and Southeast Asian Games, I was over the moon. As this was my first official interview, I went through numerous articles online to learn proper techniques to conduct an interview from my tone, hand gestures and even facial expressions. Practising my lines in front of the mirror, it seemed that I looked at my face more than I ever did in my whole life.

When the interview day came, it was this moment I felt reality actually hit me. As an introvert, I really couldn’t find any topic to indulge myself in for awkward-free conversations with others, especially one that I’ve never met my whole life.

I thought of every possible worst-case scenario. I was a nervous wreck – terrified that I’ll keep on mumbling, stumbling my words or even messing up this interview and embarrassing myself.

But despite all of my growing uncertainties, I knew that this interview was a chance for me to push myself outside of my comfort zone.

*Ding.* Edgar has entered the meeting.

I told myself, "Okay, just calm down, act normal and be confident. There’s no backing out now." Firstly, I initiated small talks in order to ease the tension before starting the interview. I was actually surprised by how easy-going the conversation appeared to be. It was to the point that I felt confident enough to go out of script and improvised some questions on the spot based on his answer . For example, when he said “wushu is more than just a sport, it's a way of life”, I followed it by asking if there were any quotes that helped him set up this mindset. The interview was a success as everything went by smoothly and I even received a ‘well-done’ message from a couple of my teachers afterwards.

This experience opened my eyes and made me realise that you won’t know your real capabilities unless you put it into action. This has allowed me to lose my security blanket and be more confident. More significantly, I won't be hesitant to accept bigger and riskier challenges in life.