



could someone be so heartless?” deliver an intense, almost raw honesty, revealing a glimpse of this pivotal scene in Sarah’s life.

Had she ended her writing here, this essay may not have felt very relevant to admissions officers. However, in the final paragraph, Sarah shows how she has internalized important lessons from the hurt she has experienced. The sense of self-worth and validation she conveys—“I know my great worth, I have nothing to prove to anyone”—is particularly effective after the painful story she has shared, an important lesson in the power of contrasts.

“No Longer Invisible”

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I WISH I WAS INVISIBLE. I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible. One of my biggest fears has always been going to an unfamiliar place, but each time I have had the satisfaction of knowing that at the end of the day I can go home. I am a shy person, and it has always been difficult for me to adjust to a new environment. Transitioning from eighth grade to high school was especially difficult for me because my high school was, in fact, a boarding school, which meant that that feeling of satisfaction was no longer present at the end of the day but postponed to the end of the week. Living at LFA was a completely new world for me and nothing I had experienced could have prepared me for it.

With confused eyes and nothing less than a nauseous sensation in my stomach I entered my first day of high school. Growing up, I had always gone to school with people who looked like me, sounded like me, and dressed like me, but here I quickly learned that I was the minority. I was not alone in this. Two of my friends came to LFA with me and, with this in mind, my shyness and I did not think it necessary to make new friends. Besides being one of the only schools with its own ice rink and providing only the latest technology for its students, it suddenly hit me that my new home had countless possibilities, but, before those possibilities could be realized, I had to take initiative. I learned a very important lesson at LFA: you will only get out of life as much as you put into it. Stepping out of my comfort zone allowed me to discover an interest and skill for volleyball and hidden leadership as the captain of the JV team. I became a tutor and friend for young Hispanic students



at the Nuestro Center, and they reminded me how important it is to give back to the community. After numerous all nighters, I developed a system where I could get all of my homework done and still be able to get involved with sports and extracurriculars without having to sacrifice any sleep time.

Towards the end of my sophomore year a family member's sickness unfortunately forced me to leave my school and return home. I left LFA and joined my new family, Mirta Ramirez Computer Science Charter High School. Containing a student body that was 99 percent Hispanic, I was no longer the minority. I had unconsciously become accustomed to the LFA way of life because, in my mind, this tiny mustard yellow building with no more than four windows could not possibly compare to my old home. I was right. No, my new home was not as big nor as fancy, but I discovered that was not a setback. Although the resources were not directly visible nor as easily accessible, I learned that obstacles did not exist for students there. Most, if not all, of the students had the same hunger for knowledge as I had.

This summer my school announced that the building which we had been using had fire code violations and we could not return to our building in the fall. Throughout the summer my school did not have a building and did not find one until a few weeks after school started. By that time I had already taken a decision to, once again, leave my home and join yet another family. What I realized on my first day at Josephinum Academy, was that my shyness had not tagged along and I was eager to go to school. The nauseous feeling had left my stomach and enthusiasm had entered. I had already gained and learned so much from the people I had met in my two previous schools that I could not wait to continue my journey and embark on yet another discovery.

The knowledge that I have gained from these three schools is something I will take with me far beyond college. My roommate, across-the-hall mates, and classmates have influenced my life as much as I hope to have impacted theirs. It is evident to me that they have helped me develop into the very much visible person I am today. I have learned to step outside of my comfort zone, and I have learned that diversity is so much more than the tint of our skin. My small mustard colored school taught me that opportunity and success only requires desire.

I would be an asset to your college because as I continue on my journey to success, I will take advantage of every opportunity that is



available to me and make sure to contribute as much as I can too. Now I am visible. Now I am visible. Now I am visible, and I want to be seen.

ANALYSIS

Angelica's essay is reminiscent of Jason's "Hurricane Transformations" (Chapter 15) in that it relates a story of self-transformation as she changes schools. The first paragraph opens with a memorable repetition: "I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible." This mantra demonstrates the fear Angelica has of going to an unfamiliar place. She honestly confesses a shortcoming she has: "I am a shy person, and it has always been difficult for me to adjust to a new environment." In these admissions essays, it is appropriate to share perceived weaknesses. However, it is best not to dwell on these weaknesses excessively. In Angelica's case, she describes her shyness in order to help us trace her progress as she slowly becomes less introverted.

At the beginning of the second paragraph, we get a palpable sense of the distress Angelica's shyness causes her through her description of her "confused eyes" and nauseous stomach. She humorously describes the insular attitude she takes at her new school, LFA: "... my shyness and I did not think it necessary to make new friends." The transition to the next sentence is somewhat abrupt; Angelica might have considered using a paragraph break or adding another sentence so readers can see *how* she came to realize she "had to take initiative." However, she does a wonderful job of illustrating several ways in which she stepped out of her comfort zone by describing her leadership on the volleyball team and her community service as a tutor. Angelica wisely uses two concrete examples rather than writing a long list. Her ability to juggle extracurriculars and schoolwork without sacrificing sleep suggests that she will continue to manage her time wisely and pursue a well-balanced lifestyle in college.

This second paragraph also hints at the importance of Angelica's Hispanic ethnicity. She writes, "I was the minority" at LFA, and describes her work at the Nuestro Center. This is a creative way to write about one's heritage without exaggerating its importance. Race/ethnicity play different roles in people's lives, so there can hardly be a rule for how much or how little to factor this into one's essays. Perhaps the best rule of thumb is to write about this to the extent that you feel necessary in order to genuinely convey your most important point.

In Angelica's case, the fact that she comes from a Hispanic family is a backdrop to the more important point: she has a "hunger for knowledge" that refuses to be set back even in her predominantly Hispanic