UCLA Alumni Scholarship Essays

**Select any quote about leadership, and share how it relates to your core principles. (500 words max)**

*“Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance.” Donald Walters*

*“Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers.”*

*―* [***Harry S. Truman***](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/203941.Harry_S_Truman)

*Understanding my current level of cognitive and social/emotional development using the CDF was key to moving beyond my existing leadership, operational and technical capability. That led to a personalised programme supporting development of the whole person, based on the 'hidden' part of the human dimension -- beyond the 'déjà vu' way of thinking / working."*

*Self-reflection and acceptance of the current state is the first milestone. In our leadership role, we are barely ever exposed to this intense level of feedback. From that acknowledgement, the process starts. It is hard work; it is about self-knowledge and committing to learn and move into another thinking dimension.- Veronique Cremades-Mathis, Nestlé New Zealand country manager and CEO*

“Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance.”- Donald Walters.

As my volleyball coach likes to remind us, the team thrives only when we have servant leadership among us. When each member of the team makes an effort to serve, and lift up the other team members, instead of focusing solely on themselves, we are a happier and more united team.

I’ve encountered many people who think that acting a certain way, or giving commands in a specific tone of voice, is the only way to be a good leader. However, the most effective and best-liked leaders are those who adapt based on their team. They lead by example, and understand how to support their teammates and allow those around them to succeed. It is when we are thinking the most selflessly that we are best able to reach success. When we think only of ourselves, we have no perspective and are unable to even contribute our part to the team. We need to see the big picture to help everyone and achieve great things together.

Selflessness and empathy are vitally important values. I often find myself in situations where I get to help others, and I invariably feel better myself. I love to be happy, and I find that I’m at my happiest when I am helping others.

One day in my AP Physics class, we were getting our tests back from the previous unit. The other girl at the table and I had both gotten bad scores on the test. I was upset at first, thinking of myself and worrying about the score. However, when I recognized that my friend was really sad and having a hard time, I set about comforting her and cheering her up. We worked together to figure out what problems we got wrong and why. By the end of it, we were both feeling much better, and I actually left class that day feeling quite happy. Helping my friend caused me to put the test in perspective for myself, so I could do it for her. It forced me to cheer myself up so I would be able to make her feel better. In thinking of her and doing actions that would be to her benefit, I vastly improved my own mental state.

Leadership is not about status, or the advantages you might gain from the position of power. Leadership is, at its core, completely about helping other people. It should be a selfless position that involves making decisions for the good of each individual, and the group as a whole. No matter what size group you lead, you have an opportunity to be a positive influence on your fellow humans, and help guide them as you’d want to be guided. I want to help others in my life, and I can start that by being a good servant leader.

**You've just written a 200 page autobiography. Send us page 165. (Please use your own discretion to choose the timeframe of your autobiography; it can be about your current or future self.) (500 words max)**

*and that concluded one of the most exciting nights of my life. Entrepreneurial night was the first big challenge that I got to show to the world, and it helped to define me as a businesswoman.*

*The halls of Homestead High School seemed gargantuan and foreign to me. I walked throw crowds of strangers, clutching to my one constant familiar in the land of the unknown.*

*I rushed anxiously across the sticky gym floor, clutching the letter to my chest. I struggled to prepare myself for the worst as I peeled open the innocuous white envelope.*

Unable to stop myself from smiling, I pushed my way through the rows of legs in shorts along the table and claimed my plaque. I heard the cheers of the girls and saw the gratified smile of my coach.

No one was surprised that I won Most Improved that year. I had come in with the least volleyball experience, having never played club or even on a team that had cuts.

But I was surprised. While hard work was in my nature, something that I had tended toward since elementary school or before, this was the first official recognition that I received. High school is all about that. I went on to receive extensive validation for my work ethic, and it became a true source of pride. Every teacher that gave me an A, or sent me home with a Green and White Award for being a pleasure in class, and a hard worker, added to my sense of satisfaction.

I continued to work hard for the sake of learning, growing and being the best that I could be. However, I saw then the distinction between that mindset, and that of the other students. My peers who worked at an assignment exactly to the extent that they needed to receive an A puzzled me. I began to see that the recognition that we received was a motivator to work only as hard as we needed to, not as hard as we could.

Unable to stop myself from smiling, I pushed my way through the rows of legs in shorts along the table and claimed my plaque. I heard the cheers of the girls and saw the gratified smile of my coach.

Staring in wonder at the shiny, gold lettering, I rejoiced. This was the first official recognition I had received for my hard work. The mindset had been there from the start, elementary school or earlier, and I had enjoyed a challenge even then.

Staring at the options before me, I selected the pink starburst wrappers as my nerdiest earrings. I thought back to when I bought them at my 7th grade Entrepreneurial night from another young company presenting to venture capitalists. As a high school freshman, I felt removed from the girl I was when I attended the Girls' Middle School. However, it felt right to bring the earrings back to their birthplace, returning to the Computer History Museum for the She's Geeky unconference with my mom.

I breezed through the beginning of the day in sessions like "Geek Chic" fashions, and Balloon Animals taught by a professional fairy. I even mustered the confidence to lead my own session about books, which resulted in a great turnout and plenty of fantastic book discussions and suggestions.

Later in the day, my mom and I arrived at the specialized coding session she wanted to attend. I had some programming experience, so I thought the session would be interesting. However, I rapidly discovered that the material was far beyond my knowledge. I was lost. For a few minutes, I perched hopefully on the chair with my notebook and pen at the ready. Eventually, I gave up, and tentatively pulled my book out of my bag. As I was about to open it, I caught a glimpse of the sign on the wall, and remembered one of the only rules of She's Geeky. The Law of Two Feet states that if you are not learning or contributing, it is your responsibility to respectfully find someplace that you are. This rule simmered in my head, and I realized in frustration that I was breaking it. In a gesture of strength, I slipped my book into my bag. I breathed through the apprehension collecting in my stomach and separated myself from comfortable predictability. I wandered conspicuously across the empty space over to the social media session.

I sat down and immersed myself in the advice of a savvy woman about how to use social media to your advantage. I listened raptly to the examples she gave of people sharing only the best or worst things about their lives, rather than the whole story. My pencil began to fly across my notebook page as I soaked in fascinating information.

Escaping from my comfort zone wasn't easy, but it felt great to take charge of my own experience. I gain nothing from wallowing in the comfortable. I have the responsibility to take action on my own behalf in order to grow, learn and enjoy.

After Entrepreneurial Night, I was proud of being nerdy, which is still true. However, now I have a better sense of what that means to me. I understand the experience of learning deeply: the responsibility, the reward, the fun. Now I have a new outlook to go with my nerdy starburst earrings.