**University of Southern California**

**Please respond to one of (the three) the prompts below. (250 word limit)**

***3. What is something about yourself that is essential to understanding you?***

I screamed as loud as I could when one of my audacious uncles pushed me into a 7-meter pool, knowing I have a fear of deep water. “You haven’t lived until you see nature below the ocean,” they teased. What if I got bitten by a stingray? With a little push from my mom, however, my 13-year-old self fearfully went with them.

Agreeing to learn scuba dive is one thing but committing to do it is an entirely another challenge. I started learning different skills from my instructor. I familiarized myself underwater, my hands and feet started dancing around, from one technique to another, and I mastered the finning – one of the hardest techniques even for adults – in just a few weeks and surprised everyone.

When the final diving day test arrived, I passed the test with flying colors—and the journey has just begun. Throughout my diving trips, I also learned how to be disciplined; in terms of sticking with my buddy, the route, and the plan on when to finish diving. Not only did I get the chance to see the colors of the underworld, I reached another milestone and challenged myself to dive 22 meters deep, a depth that is considered a deep dive – something that only adults could usually do.

Before diving, I didn’t know the meaning of how to get out of my comfort zone and be comfortable with it at the same time. At USC, I will challenge myself and invite my peers to do the same. From throwing my shy self to act in Adventure Gurus to Active Minds, I will push all of us to break boundaries and open doors to new opportunities.

Hey! Great job incorporating your hobby as a soft skill you can leverage. I’d love to see more of how you can tweak stories of your scuba diving journey into something more unique to yourself. A lot of people learn scuba diving everyday, how exactly does your story fit into your image and personality? I added some comments on the side as a thought, kindly read them and try to pretend as if this is the first time you read your essay. How would a stranger describe you?