**USC believes that one learns best when interacting with people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Tell us about a time you were exposed to a new idea or when your beliefs were challenged by another point of view. Please discuss the significance of the experience and its effect on you. (250 words)**

I became interested in basketball since the sixth grade. Not long after, I joined a basketball club called “Sahabat” – Indonesian for “friends” – wanting to improve my skills. It comprised of peers from different schools and daily doses of drills and scrimmages. From a loner to a team player, from shy to sociable, from timid to confident: I owed these all to my “Friends.”

Initially, I was a self-conscious kid playing solely for self-improvement, and so does everyone. After a few games, “Sahabat” kept suffering losses. I asked myself, “Why do we keep losing?” Basketball is a team sport: improving one’s skill is important, but growing as a team is even more so. Thus, I put more effort into interacting with my “Sahabat” peers: getting to know them through chit-chats, making jokes together, sharing our day-to-day lives, and, eventually, having team dinners.

These so-called “strangers” started to feel like family. This was when I learned about their different backgrounds. It was gratifying to see how all of those don’t matter. Our chemistry had bridged our differences into one cohesive unit. Next thing we knew, “Sahabat’s” wins gradually improved as our chemistry and teamwork got stronger. As bonus, I now have lots of friends.

I owe my personal growth to “Sahabat.” It changed me from a reclusive to a sociable person, allowed me to develop empathy towards people different from me, and made me more confident! The current me has made an impact on my team as the motivator inciting friendly competitiveness: skills plus bonds equal teamwork plus wins. I’m confident that I can also contribute to the **University of California** and make an impact as I‘m driven to build awareness of diverse cultural backgrounds, embrace every shy, self-conscious person I meet, and encourage them to step outside of their comfort zone and explore.

Hi! So I see you’re trying to include the diversity part and the realization of an idea together, but keep in mind this is a 250 word essay. Unless the realization had something to do with diversity in backgrounds, I don’t suggest you include the third paragraph.

Also, I’m still confused with your “exposed to a new idea part.” If I’m correct, you’re talking about how you used to focus on self-improvement but suddenly thought of teamwork (by making friends)? It’s an idea, but the way it’s mentioned above doesn’t seem to flow well. How did you suddenly thought of teamwork? Why didn’t anyone else realize it? If you started to put more effort into knowing them, did the others put effort too?

A great way to show your achievement is to provide names or numbers. How did you improve? We went from losing in preliminaries to becoming a finalist? Or we got top 3 in the entire city? How big is the basketball club? How is this experience relevant as a soft skill for entering college? Also biggest problem- I see you mentioned the wrong school. Take care not to let it happen again.