If you feel that your personal or community background can provide additional insight to your application that we have not already seen elsewhere, please take this opportunity to share that information with us (300 words)

I became interested in basketball since the sixth grade. Not long after, I joined a basketball club called *Sahabat* – Indonesian for *friends*. Comprised of competitive peers from different schools and daily doses of drills and scrimmages, I initially played solely for self-improvement through field time exposure. However, a few games were in and we never scored even one. I asked myself, “how is it that five, highly talented individuals lose to other teams?”

“Exactly,” my coach chimed in, “notice the keywords *individual* versus *team*.” I learned that day that five makes for six, seven, eight when in synergy. Honing one’s individual skill was the challenge for me on the avenues of grit, diligence and consistency. I could even go to the extent to say that I live and breathe the spirit of excellence in goal setting. However, I have never really ventured into the notion of “team training.” I perspicuously couldn’t replicate the same formula I have perfected and used for my personal training; I knew deep down that I had to overcome my fear.

Initiating small chats, making jokes together, having team nights out to eventually letting people into my personal life? These were what it took. For so long I’d put on a filtered personality who was a high achiever yet had no problems in life. The latter was clearly not true – in fact I had numerous internal conflicts that I had to conceal them. As I slowly lowered my ego, these so-called “strangers” started to feel like family. What I thought was enrolment to a high pressure, rewarding environment turned out to be a free, non-judgmental space. From timid to confident, reclusive to sociable, a loner to a team player: I owed all these to all my *sahabat*, a community I hope to embody at Georgia Tech.

*Hi Octavio!*

*This was clearly a challenging essay to work on: how to make basketball sound more than just like a “team-building” experience but rather a life-changing one, let alone fitting a so-called “life-changing” experience in just 300 words!*

*Over all things, I applaud you for wanting to share your personal journey through this piece. I hope you can keep on inspiring wherever you go!*

*- Matthew*