**Ravi UC Essay Draft**

**Prompt #5**

***Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?***

A challenge could be personal, or something you have faced in your community or school. Why was the challenge significant to you? This is a good opportunity to talk about any obstacles you’ve faced and what you’ve learned from the experience.

Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone? If you’re currently working your way through a challenge, what are you doing now, and does that affect different aspects of your life? For example, ask yourself, “How has my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends or with my family?”

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**“The way we habitually think of our surroundings and ourselves create the worlds that each of us inhabit.” ~ Charles Duhigg**

**This is a story of how I found my safe haven**

**In middle school, I was THAT guy who goes with the flow. I had no outstanding records. No credibility to my name.**

**Entering high school, determined to change, I immersed myself in Debate Club: it gave me broader perspectives and opportunities for achievements. I felt accomplished. All is good for a time. Until it doesn’t.**

**I’ve switched from going-with-the-flow to overachiever. I started to overanalyze things and became a worrywart: constantly wondering what people think of me. It was all too overwhelming. Afraid of losing everything, my anxiety SKYROCKETED!!**

**Pondering, I went in circles trying to resolve my anxiety until this one epiphany: my anxiety stemmed from my inability to prioritize, which sucker-punched my grades. Instead of school coming first, my personal image came first. A flick to my ego would compromise a week’s worth of productivity, which had me stranded on no man’s land.**

**As I self-reflect, I realized that it’s not a matter of accomplishments or personal image. It’s about understanding myself. I started focusing on improving and embracing my true self. This brought me back to the things I love: debate, photography, and soccer. I even picked up reading, which remodeled my thoughts to better support my priorities.**

**Reaching for emotional safe haven has become my goal. One step at a time, I slowly but surely purged out the procrastinator in me and learned about “How to Think Big,” which materialized into a better balance between anxiety and responsibilities.**

**Nothing is new. The solution to my personal struggle is simple: Believe and Act, which embodies the strength to positively change how I view my surroundings, control the life I desire, and create the world I want to inhabit – just like what Duhigg taught me.**

**This ordinary yet priceless personal lesson has given me a glimpse of what I can become: someone with endless possibilities. Now, I’m hungrier than ever to take on new challenges.**

*Hi Ravi!*

***I can definitely concur with the style of writing in the telling of your story – how you overcame your biggest challenge. The problem here is that you haven’t even told us what your ‘biggest challenge’ was. Be it external pressure, internal emotional conflict or a combination of the two, I want you to tell your story with confidence and pride.***

***Now, I know that the prompt evokes of sensitive information that may be really personal to you. All I want is for you to be comfortable in telling us readers whatever you choose to disclose. At the end of the day, you’ll want your response to come off as authentic instead of just merely trying to impress the admissions committee – they can tell.***

***So take a sip of your favorite drink, relax, and enjoy the thought process. Looking forward to your next draft!***

* ***Matthew***