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?

“We’ll be back in a month,” my Mom said. Hearing that my sister had been diagnosed with cancer, my family immediately raced to Singapore for treatment. Since we figured it would be over in a month, we hugged goodbyes as I had to stay in Indonesia for school.

At home, I ensured both schoolwork and household duties were completed. But I quickly learned that cancer was complex: every few small steps forward often come accompanied by one or two setbacks. A month's stay became two years and counting, as though there was no finishing line. My optimism started to diminish and I was losing hope, shattering my independent front.

After a while, juggling school and household chores alone drained me. I couldn’t focus. I missed deadlines and my grades started slipping. It didn’t take long for me to notice that no matter how hard I tried to do two tasks at once, there was only one Shelby.

Unwilling to let this continue, I decided to reach out for help.

I started to ask my aunt if she could help me with the household, my classmates for a study group, and my teachers for extensions. I admit I was scared. Asking for help was new to me and I feared getting rejected. To my surprise, people around me were very welcoming and it increased my confidence. I slowly started to catch up with deadlines, took care of the house, and continued my club activities.

This sparked a big change, I began to understand the importance of collaboration. Instead of preparing alone for math competitions, now I would study with friends, sharing new concepts, to eventually winning medals! Even my organisation, love.achelois, which started out as a personal blog, grew to become an international community of youths helping one another thanks to the power of collaboration.

With my sister’s diagnosis, I handled it all myself thinking it was the best way. Clearly, I was wrong. I realised the combined potential of working together can create such a monumental outcome, that it outweighs what one can do alone.

Hi Shelby,

Very sorry to hear about your sister. I hope her condition has improved since, and that she’s making progress towards complete remission, no matter how slowly.

Your essay is ready for submission! These are a few changes I suggest you make to improve the accuracy and clarity of your sentences.

All the best with your UCs application!

Paul

ALL-in Essay Editor