**Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.**

In my 17 years of living, I’ve never seen a man naked.

Until last week, that is. Running through the streets of New York City. People don’t do that back home in Indonesia.

New York is nothing like I imagined it would be. In movies, New York is the Big Apple, the city that never sleeps, the city of dreams. But turn your head away from the skyscrapers and towards the streets, and it’s nothing short of a nightmare.

So when my sister was accepted to NYU, it was a moment of mixed feelings -- moving to NYC would be challenging for her. While she was happy to be accepted, she was afraid to go alone. It's even scarier with the recent increase in Asian hate crimes. I can’t imagine my sister walking down the streets of New York and getting assaulted in the middle of nowhere. Thinking about it gives me shivers. If that happened, I could never forgive myself.

It is for these reasons that she wanted to gap until I could attend college with her. I could not agree with her throwing a wrench in her academic pursuits to wait for me. She should not spend that precious year of her life in limbo. I could never accept her stunting her growth as a student. But the latter held a larger weight, and something clicked. I had to speak up about this. Under no circumstances would she go alone.

Here’s something about me: even though I’m the middle child, I’m known to be the gutsy and feisty one. I’ve always felt a responsibility to care for my siblings (and my eighteen younger cousins). Her going alone sounded terrifying because she, inexperienced in the ways of the world, was not prepared.

After attending the same school for 12 years, however, the thought of going to a new school, let alone a new country, was overwhelming. I've been following my sister around from one school to another yet again, keeping her company in new environments. I am not supposed to be responsible for this. Just when I thought I will finally get my freedom in choosing what I want to do at my own terms. Finishing my IB Diploma, going to prom with all the friends I had made. It was a tough to leaving home, seeing how much unfinished business.

After much deliberation, I chose responsibility over my desires. I did the most selfless, courageous, and perhaps stupid thing I’ve ever done. I told my parents, “I’ll go with her. I’ll go to high school in the States.”

My family was rightfully speechless. No one expected me to offer because I was the younger one, not ready to leave for college. That familiar rite of passage now had to be brought forward a year. Although my freedom of my choices would be taken away, my responsibility as a sister had to come first. Life isn't just about me; it's also about people I care about. I was willing for that to happen, and I’d choose it again in a heartbeat.

Still, I know it’ll be quite an adjustment.

Less than a year after transferring to a new school in Jakarta, I was once again in a new environment -- and country. Even though I have my sister by my side, the change was difficult and drastic. I can't imagine what it would be like for her if she was on her own.

But I will not regret it. Once it felt like it's more of a need to be responsible for someone's life other than my own. But seeing her pursue her goals brought joy to me. Mission accomplished. I love the decision I made.

Here I am. There will be more naked men and suspiciously yellow puddles. Bouts of homesickness. Waves of culture shock. But my shock will fade with time. The effects of my decision, however, will not.

So will I regret it?

Never.

Hi Emily,

Seems like you have a very interesting life. Graduating IB and instantly moving to the States to accompany your sister is quite a big jump from an average high school student in Indonesia.

**However, though you seem to have a very interesting life, this essay should always be about YOU and not your sister.** As a reader, I feel like you talk about your responsibility for your sister in a way that you focus the attention to your sister’s inexperience and your sister’s accomplishments. Always remember that you are the one applying to college, and not your sister here, so it’s so much better to focus your essay on you instead of your sister.

Moreover, pay attention to the flow of your essay. Fortunately, you do have an establish flow (beginning, body, conclusion) but it’s riddled with some details that hold no relevance to your story. In addition to that, the conclusion is still quite weak in a way that readers won’t be able to get a lesson or “moral” out of it.

Lastly, focus on the wording of some words or sentences and ALWAYS be aware of who this essay is going to be read by. Some description about a location may be close to the truth, but deglamorizing a specific something related to your dream school will only set a negative note for the rest of your application.

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