***3. What is something about yourself that is essential to understanding you? 250 words***

I stared at the 7-meter-deep pool, blood rushing to my head as my fear for water crawled up. I was just about to step away from the thought of drowning when my audacious uncle pushed me as my silent shriek prompted my feet to frantically pedal to reach the surface. My uncles and aunts were all scuba divers, hoping that my 13-year-old self would join them. “You haven’t lived until you see nature below the ocean,” they teased. “Steve Irwin!” my reflex tried to justify my fear.

Trying scuba diving for the first time is already a wild experience; committing to it full-time is a whole other conversation. Thus I began my hydrophilic journey, hands and feet dancing around from one technique to the other. In a few weeks’ time, I made my uncles and aunts proud by passing the diving license test – having mastered the advanced art of finning.

Through diving, I learn how to get out of my comfort zone and conquer it at the same time. That mindset ended up following suit in all aspects of my life. From socially adapting to a new school environment in my last two years of high school to almost immediately be their face in public speaking competitions, I continue to nurture my sanguine rhythm as I confidently stride past every fear. At USC, I plan to throw my shy self to act in Adventure Gurus to Active Minds as I show the community that “hey, you can do it too!”

*Hi Kelly,*

*I think this piece is inspirational! I guess diving skills do run in your family, huh?*

*Overall I enjoy your creative approach to the prompt... good job!*

*- Matthew*