Our families and communities often define us and our individual worlds. Community might refer to your cultural group, extended family, religious group, neighborhood or school, sports team or club, co-workers, etc. Describe the world you come from and how you, as a product of it, might add to the diversity of the UW. (300 words)

I became interested in basketball since the sixth grade. Not long after, I joined a basketball club called “Sahabat” – Indonesian for “friends” – wanting to improve my skills. It was comprised of peers from different schools with a two-hours daily dose of drills and scrimmages five days a week. From a loner to a team player, from shy to sociable, from timid to confident: I owed these all to my “Friends.”

Initially, I was just a self-conscious kid playing solely for self-improvement, and so does everyone. After a few games, “Sahabat” kept suffering losses. I asked myself, “Why do we keep losing?” Basketball is a team sport, so improving one’s skill is important, but growing as a team is even more so. Thus, I put more efforts into interacting with my “Sahabat” peers: getting to know them through chit-chats, making jokes together, sharing our day-to-day lives, and, eventually, going out for team dinners.

These so-called “strangers” started to feel like family. This was when I learned about their different backgrounds. It was gratifying to see how all of those don’t matter. Our chemistry had bridged our differences into one cohesive unit: a team. Next thing we knew, “Sahabat’s” wins gradually improved as our chemistry and teamwork got stronger. As a side product, I see myself as not a loner, but someone with lots of friends.

I owe my personal growth to “Sahabat.” It changed me from a reclusive to a more sociable person, allowed me to develop empathy towards people different from me, and made me more confident! The current me has made an impact on my team as the motivator that incites friendly competitiveness: skills plus bonds equal teamwork plus wins. I’m confident that I can also contribute to UW and make an impact to your student body as I will make sure to build awareness of diverse cultural backgrounds, embrace every shy, self-conscious person I meet, and encourage them to step outside of their comfort zone and explore.

Hi Octavio,

I like how I can imagine your impact clearer now, as well as how you will contribute to the diversity of the UW.

I think this prompt is great! We would just have to cut a few words to make the word count. I suggest cutting the ones I highlighted yellow. ☺

All the best!