***Prompt 1: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.***

Oreos are the best sandwich cookie ever: a combination of delicious white, sweet cream in between two delectable chocolate cookies. When eaten separately, they're either bland or too sweet, but when eaten together, the cookies and cream form a perfect balance. I aspire to have my personality resemble an Oreo: a perfect balance between two different components.

Growing up, the chatty and more outgoing kids were often viewed as confident and smart while the quiet and more introverted were regarded as arrogant/rude. Before high school, I was that chatty kid. I had many friends and I could talk to just about anyone comfortably.

As I got into high school, however, I started drifting away from many of my friends and became less and less of the chatty kid I once was. I was no longer comfortable starting up small conversations with strangers. One day at school, we were asked to take a Myers-Briggs personality test, which classified me as an INFJ: ​​Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Judging. While I knew what these words meant individually, I had no idea what they meant regarding my personality. So, I did a little research and came across a few articles before noticing that the INFJ description resonates almost exactly with many aspects of my everyday life. I prefer to interact with a few close friends rather than keeping up with a large group of acquaintances and, after a long day of socializing, I feel emotionally drained and I need to find time for myself to be able to think through each and every decision I made throughout the day.

For a while, I was satisfied with being an introvert and perhaps I got too into it. Most people would often connect introversion with shyness, but this is not true. Introversion has more to do with how you recharge and regain your energy. Not knowing this at the time, simply because some random online test classified me as an introvert, I felt obliged to act more reserved and keep to myself more. I would fall into a state of discomfort in almost every conversation and I would stop hanging out with friends just because I didn’t think introverts would enjoy hanging out with people. Over time, I started feeling more and more lonely and left out.

I struggled with finding the right balance for a long time. I didn’t want to be the shy kid who didn’t talk much, but I didn’t want to hang out with large groups of people either. I felt like I didn’t necessarily fit in as an extrovert, or an introvert; I just fell somewhere in between. With time, I realized that it was NOT a bad thing. Just like how the cookie and cream in Oreos balance and complement each other, I realized that I too needed to create that balance with my personality. I was misguided by the thought of forcing myself into just one label. When in fact, the best part about an Oreo is that it’s made up of more than one component, just as I am both an introvert AND an extrovert.

So, even though I did not fit into any of the given labels, just like everything else in this world, nothing is black and white. And there’s nothing wrong with being in the grey. So I chose to make my own label where I can take the best parts of being both an introvert and an extrovert and refine those qualities to define myself where I can just be ME. I’ve found my balance and although I have yet to perfect it, I look forward to the next stage in my life, where I can meet more diversified people and hopefully get closer to this perfect balance, just like an Oreo!