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

I stared at the 7-meter pool, imagining what would happen if I actually drowned as I have a fear of water. I hadn’t finished my thought when my audacious uncle pushed me with no time to scream as I tried to reach the surface frantically. My uncles and aunts were all scuba divers, and they asked my 13-year-old self to join them. “You haven’t lived until you see nature below the ocean,” they teased. Didn’t they know what happened to Steve Irwin?

Agreeing to learn scuba diving is one thing but committing to do it is an entirely another challenge. I started learning different skills from my instructor. I familiarized myself underwater, my hands and feet started dancing around, from one technique to another, and I mastered the finning – one of the hardest techniques even for adults – in just a few weeks and surprised everyone. I quickly realized that I managed to conquer my fear.

Few weeks later, I passed the diving license test — and my journey has just begun. Not only did I enjoy the colors under the sea, I challenged myself further and dove 22 meters deep 2 years later – something that only adults could usually do.

Through diving, I learned how to get out of my comfort zone and be comfortable with it at the same time. Since then, I have brought such a mindset everywhere. I moved to a new school after staying in the same school for more than 10 years. Partaking in a public speaking competition, which scared me before, was something I decided to go for – knowing that it would build my confidence. At USC, I will continue to challenge myself and invite my peers to do the same. From throwing my shy self to act in Adventure Gurus to Active Minds, I will push all of us to break boundaries and open doors to new opportunities.