Melissa - UC Essay prompt #3

***What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time? (350 words)***

My father has always instilled a habit of exercise on me since I was young and I have been active ever since, but running is special in an unexpected way. I first started to run in events after my P.E. teacher said that students in the volleyball team could trade the running test requirement with a medal from a 5k-run event. My father is an avid runner; he has run in 5 out of the 6 world marathon majors, so he helped me look for events in the area. At first, I ran only to get that 100%, but as I did it more and more, I began to enjoy it. Sprinting over the finish line with people cheering me on felt like the best feeling in the world. Running made me feel fit and strong, and encouraged me to live healthier. However, developing my skill in running has not always been that easy. I had to learn from the basics at first; my father taught me how to breathe, how to pace myself, how to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth. I learned to distribute my weight evenly throughout my foot when I stepped on the ground, and to run slower at the beginning of a longer run to conserve energy. One thing that I had a lot of trouble with when I started running was the abdominal pain. After running a certain distance, a searing pain would always sting on my abdomen. It was a pain I couldn’t handle at first, but my father told me that if I ran through it, it would disappear. And so I did. It hurt really bad and I was aching every step I took, but in the end it did go away, and I felt better after that. My new passion in running led me to run more and farther; I started doing 10k runs and going for afternoon runs in my free time. Now, running is my escape from the stresses of daily life. I run to distract myself and to clear my head. More importantly, it has helped me form a strong bond with my father. My dream is to be able to run a half marathon in my early 20s, and I know it will require more preparation and practice that I will start from now on.