**USC believes that one learns best when interacting with people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Tell us about a time you were exposed to a new idea or when your beliefs were challenged by another point of view. Please discuss the significance of the experience and its effect on you. (250 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 and daily doses of drills and scrimmages. 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 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: 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, having 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. Next thing we knew, “Sahabat’s” wins gradually improved as our chemistry and teamwork got stronger. As bonus, I now have lots of friends.

I owe my personal growth to “Sahabat.” It changed me from a reclusive to a 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 inciting friendly competitiveness: skills plus bonds equal teamwork plus wins. I’m confident that I can also contribute to the University of California and make an impact as I‘m driven 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.