**Personal Statement**

The word limit is 500 words, please help shorten it.

I stood at the front of the class and a feeling of euphoria rushed through my body. It was my turn to perform my puppet show. I was confident I would awe the whole class with my imagination and ideas through extensively planned script, setting, and character – the story of a prince on a unicorn saving a princess from an evil witch. I took my puppets – mostly socks with strings as hair and decorated plastic bottles as props, and proceeded to tell the story that I had rehearsed countless times the past few weeks. Upon finishing my story, loud claps and giggles filled the classroom. Whoever thought that desire of wanting to awe people would fuel and motivate my current ambitions – Aweing people around me by turning my crazy ideas into reality, and contribute to society. I had found my goal.

Before long, I was already in year 10 and a member of Streetizens, a community service with missions to teach children from a less fortunate backgrounds, and no access to quality education. To my surprise, my first participation was greeted by eagerness and commitment to learn basic arithmetic and basic geometry. We spent hours learning under the scorching sun, before a sudden realization struck me. These kids starkly contrast my classmates and I who complained about having accounting class going overtime. For a moment, I realized these kids were better students than I despite attending a prestigious international school. I wanted to do more. That epiphany led to my next project, Raisondetre.

As a kid, I adored playing doctor. Being a family member whose relatives have passed to cancer, I used to imagine a world without patients of such a horrible disease. I knew that I won’t be the next Jonas Salk who invented polio vaccine, but I knew I could make their lives easier. I started researching and understanding cancer patient needs. Unlike some of my peers who started a venture to make it ‘big’ or make profit, I started with my passion to help others. Personally, I view profit as the means to an end – providing value to customers and society rather than the other way around. Financial struggles being one of the biggest challenge for these patients, I partnered with two of my friends and started Raisondetre, aimed to provide financial support for children cancer patients through donations. We did not want to ask for money, as I tried and realized asking for donation is not an effective fundraising method, we ended up building an apparel retail venture, donating 100% of our profit to Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia (Indonesian Children Cancer Foundation). With our limited budget, we started with an online and direct sales channel.

I thought starting a business with a noble mission would be easier, was I wrong. Finding the starting capital took months and just having a noble cause does not necessarily make it easier to sell products either. I realized to turn a business idea into reality, takes three things: 1. A good business idea, 2. The necessary capital, and 3. Commitment. Out of the three, I believe the most important is the third, and I was confident in Raisondetre because unlike my other peers who started other businesses, I had ironclad commitments. Raisondetre faced many obstacles, from product design, limited capital, setting the optimal price, and the most effective marketing channel. We decided to produce custom-designed t-shirts. Starting a business was tougher that what I had to do before. We put up banners and posters around our school and give public presentations to convince people to buy our t-shirts. Balancing school life and business management, finding high quality and reliable supplier. In a time span of 4 months, we manged to make a profit of 15 million rupiah (approximately 3 months-worth of average salary in Indonesia) and donated everything to the Foundation. If I did not have strong commitment, I would have quit in the first 5 days.

Through building a business, one day I want to capitalize my new ideas and turn them into reality. I believe joining University of Washington Seattle and learning the building blocks of a business is the first important step I need to take. I don’t currently have a good business idea and or the capital to pursue it. But with commitment, I am confident I have what it takes to have a voice, be fearless to pursue new ideas and opportunities later down the road. Raisondetre, means a reason to be, and with my commitment to aweing and helping others, I hope to find my place and reason in this world.