Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it. (650 Words) (UDUBB)

I breathed a sigh of relief as I put my camera down and waited for the pictures to download. Laying down on my bed, briefly closing my eyes, the strain on my neck from the weight of the camera reminding me that I was far from done with my responsibilities. When the footage of my recent school trip to the University of Cambridge finished downloading, I gulped down my coffee and got ready for work.

Editing a video for the nth time was nothing big, just another video to be shown to the school. But this time it was different. As I looked at the videos I had, my friends running around the huge fields, our first reaction of London, even the games we played in the airport, I could vividly remember every single moment. But as I continued looking at the photos, I became disappointed that I was in none of them.

Was this a consequence of being a photographer? I asked myself. Out of instinct, I opened files filled with videos and photos of past events, then again feeling slightly hurt that I was in none of the videos. It was like I was never there, watching my friends like a movie from my computer screen.

My career in photography started out as a hobby, but I was grateful to blossom into one of the best videographers at school. Being the meticulous person that I am, valuing perfection, I planned out my videos beforehand, my mind racing with thoughts about how the videos will turn out as I made every shot. I put myself back in those moments where I was taking videos of my friends, the thoughts that ran through my mind paralleling almost all the events where I was assigned a major task. While my friends were running around, having the time of their lives, I was busy thinking if I had enough footage, if I got the best angles, if I had enough transitions.

These “if”s, worries, and concerns that constantly flooded my thoughts were not foreign to me. In group projects or in planning events, these ifs also invaded my mind. I thought about what every person had to do by the end of the day, what, when and how they should do it, when I should check up on them, these constant thoughts of worry, I know now, is what held me back from experiencing the moment. It is never bad to think ahead, but like the saying goes, “Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans”. The pictures I was never in, was a reminder of my absence – not physical, but emotional absence. The instances where I was always thinking ahead, thinking a few steps further, was the factor in holding me behind, and it was the reason why I could not experience things to the fullest. I was living in the future.

The present is a gift that we should not ignore. Ironically, it was by evaluating my past of overthinking the future that I learned to value the present. No matter how much we try to make our future perfect, it was the memories we make with others in the present that counts. While people are impressed by videographers who can create amazing videos, the videos become personally meaningful when it shows the connections we make with people in those moments and become priceless memories. From being invisible in pictures, I have undergone a change in attitude which reflects a growth in my understanding of others and ability to connect with various people of different context. In a way, being able to focus on the moments when capturing them has made me a better photographer and I am able to better project personalities into my works.

Now, I am able to smile at the pictures absent of myself with fond memories of how they have taught me to live my life in the present.