**UW’s prompt: Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it: (650 words max)**

***We also want to also use this for CommonApp essay. we're still contemplating between two prompts. Perhaps the editors can help with deciding which prompt best reflect the current essay:***

***- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?***

***- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.***

***Thank you***

Monkeys and Chris Evans’ physique… These are why I got into calisthenics.

This combination may sound weird, but who wouldn’t want to look like a super-soldier while having the agility of a monkey? I know I would: an intimidating look and agile movements would definitely help my game in boxing.

Searching for a method to achieve both, I landed on a YouTube video of a person propping himself up perpendicular to the pole: a literal human flag. It was as if he had defied the laws of gravity, and all I could think of was how much it reminded me of a monkey’s complete control of its body. I went bananas over it. Ever since, calisthenics has easily become my way of working out for the last three years.

A year into calisthenics, I felt phenomenal. It felt like I was improving at an unbelievable rate. I truly believed I was good enough to become a personal trainer, or so I thought until I tried coaching my cousin. He was always an observant one and quick to point out any flaws. With confidence soaring through the sky, I walked him through my usual calisthenics routine hoping for admiration. However, instead of praises, he criticized me for how random my workout was.

“*This must be why I haven’t seen as much of a change in your physique*,” he said.

Fuming at first, I looked at my reflection in the mirror.

“Hmm… he might actually be right.”

I realized that, this whole time, I was delusionally amplifying my progress to something it never was - dragging me back to the harsh reality.

Looking back, my workouts were basically a sloppy mix of exercises from 5 different videos, all by different YouTubers. Just blindly cramming the exercises that I thought looked cool into a single workout and working the muscle groups that didn’t even work together, it was a whole different mess every day. I was too spontaneous and unorganized in planning my workout.

Disappointed, I knew I had to change.

Determined to prove my cousin wrong, I overclocked my brain for days looking for better ways to improve my workout plan. Alas, not a single good idea popped in my head. As I felt my brain overheating, I decided to take a break and watched a K-drama called *Startup*, which had been a big hype at the time. When a particular scene came up showing the characters brainstorming and taking down notes on the whiteboard, I knew it was my ticket out of this mess.

Since then, I started taking notes whenever I watch calisthenics videos: the different movements, the proper forms, and the number of sets and reps to name a few. It was not apparent at first, but I gradually realized patterns starting to emerge from all my notes. I began to see the connections between the movements and the focus of their corresponding muscle groups. My new note-taking habit guided me through the process of planning an efficient workout and made my workout routines more structured - something I thought was once impossible. It made me start thinking systematically.

Six months later, I still retained my new habit. I kept track of all my progress: body measurements, fat percentage, muscle mass, etc. Now, I’m seeing more progress than I ever did last year. My shirts are getting tighter on the shoulder, I dropped 3% body fat, and I have been comfortably speed running through many calisthenics skills like handstands, L-sits, and muscle-ups.

To my surprise, my more systematic thinking has also positively affected my school grades and other aspects of my life, such as grocery shopping and avoiding the Jakarta traffic. Although I am still far from looking like Chris Evans or moving like monkeys, my new habit and skills have propelled me into taking the first steps of this long journey, which seems more attainable now than ever.