

Prompt: Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

First, let's analyze the prompt. The prompt asks for three things. First, it asks you to describe a "quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you". This should be your foundation, the base by which you answer the next two questions. The second question asks "what about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud". You must pick a **specific aspect** ("what about") of your experience that makes you proud and tell them why. Third, "how does it relate to the person you are". Here, you must draw a connection from your experience to your person, who you are. How has the experience you described shaped your personality or character?

Starting in high school, I volunteered once a week at a homeless shelter ~~near my home~~. I was forced to do this because of a requirement at my high school. They said we had to do a certain number of hours volunteering each year to help us "care about others". I didn't want to do this because it seemed to me like a waste of my time and also very boring. The first day I went there, I didn't like the sight of the place. There were a lot of dirty and smelly people at the front entrance and when I got inside, the place looked like a mess. There were people hanging out everywhere and clothes and bags around. I was assigned to help with preparing the meals but I didn't know how to cook or even liked cooking. However, there were some nice people there who helped me and at the end, I enjoyed working in the kitchen a lot. After that first time, I didn't really want to go back to volunteer, but since I signed up to go in every week, I had to. One experience I had really changed my outlook on volunteering. One man who I had been serving food to every week suddenly started crying during the dinnertime. At first, I didn't know what to do, because I wasn't sure if I should go talk to him. Eventually, I felt sorry for him, and came and asked him what was wrong. He told me that his mother was sick and probably dying, and he had no way to see her. At this point, I felt very bad for this gentleman, and tried to say things that would make him feel better. He then told me about his life, starting from how he was raised by his mother growing up, and then how alcohol problems tore him and his mother apart. Now, he just heard that his mom was dying and he had no way to reach her. I listened very carefully to his story and tried to say something to comfort him. After that night, I really began to put a human face to my volunteering. I realized that I was not just there to do a job, but to help real human beings who have a life and feelings. I began to change my view from this being a requirement to volunteering because I cared about people who are less fortunate than I am. From that day on, I strove to be more aware of the people I was serving, and try to care for their personal and emotional needs. Eventually, that man was able to find his mother and be with her before she died. He later thanked me for being there to listen to him, and I just felt so happy that I could help someone in such a way's life so much. This experience showed me how much I could affect someone's life by just being there for him or her. If we stop and pay attention to the people around us, we can really make a big impact on someone else's life.

Comment [D1]: Maybe consolidate these two sentences into one sentence.

Comment [D2]: Maybe you could anticipate your future change of heart by saying "At first, I didn't want to do this, but then..."

Comment [D3]: This is too colloquial. Choose another phrase.

Comment [D4]: You can shorten these sentences. Also, some of the word choices are negative-try to avoid that.

Comment [D5]: This sentence may not be necessary-doesn't add much to the flow of the essay.

Comment [D6]: Good description

Comment [D7]: Good. You can elaborate more on this point. How does this relate to the person you are now? Do you care more about other people? You can really build upon this sentence.

Comment [D8]: Talk about how this made you proud. How did helping this man make you proud of your experience?

General comments

The good: I thought your essay was very good. The choice of topic is very compelling-how your experience with a homeless man changed your attitude and outlook on people. You went into

appropriate detail about the experience, but didn't spend too much time describing the event. You spent a good amount of time reflecting on how the experience affected you and changed you, which is the most important part of the essay.

To be improved:

1. In the introduction, you set up the scenario of the homeless shelter. I think this section is too long. Remember, you have a strict word limit on the essay and it is imperative that you express your points in the most concise way possible. Some of the sentences in the beginning can be shortened or taken out because they are not essential to the thesis of your essay. In addition, your description of the place("dirty and smelly people", "a mess", "hanging out everywhere") can be taken as too negative, so you may want to choose new words.
2. How well did you answer all the parts of the prompt? I think you answered the first part very well, providing a detailed description of your experience with the homeless man. The second part, "what aspect made you proud", you hinted at but did not make explicit enough. It's better if you make it clear in your essay that you are addressing didn't parts of the question, because the essay readers will be looking for that. Thus, you should mention the word "proud" in your essay and say more directly how this experience made you proud. Also, strive to describe a specific aspect of your experience(for example, how this experience made you realize the humanity in these individuals) made you proud. For the third question, it asks you to relate the experience to your person(who you are). You touched upon this in your essay, but I think your essay could benefit from making this more clear. How has this experience shaped your current personality or character? You mentioned how it has made you more aware of people who are less fortunate than you. Do you find this attitude carrying over to other aspects of your life? Because of this experience, are you now a more caring and considerate person? How? You should really spend a lot of time reflecting on this specific experience. The meat of your essay should be how this experience has affected you personally. A thoughtful and genuine reflection is what college admission directors are looking for.
- 4-3. In summary, I would make your introduction more concise by consolidating some of your descriptions. I think your description of the particular experience is solid-you could maybe go into a little more detail if you want. You really want to expand on your reflection of the experience, especially addressing more directly how the experience made you proud and made you who you are. You are say this without being overly obvious("this experience made me proud because...), but do make a compelling case for how this experience has affected you in a deep way. You should also make a stronger conclusion, maybe by summarizing what you learned or tying together some points in your essay.