



Stanford Essays 2015

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why?

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

(Suggested Word Count - essay 1: 750; essay 2: 350; total = 1100 words)

<http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/programs/mba/admission/application-materials/essays>

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Important

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Every essay opening must indicate: School name; the essay question; the word-limit for that essay; the word count of the current version.

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Thomas

Essay 1. What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

"I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be curiosity."
Eleanor Roosevelt

There was a time when curiosity was condemned. To be curious was to delve into matters that didn't concern you - after all, the original sin stemmed from a desire for forbidden knowledge. Today we spend vast sums trying to recreate the first instants of creation in particle accelerators, out of pure desire to know. There seems now to be no question too vast or too trivial to be ruled out of bounds: Why can fleas jump so high? What is gravity? What shape are clouds? Today curiosity is no longer reviled, but celebrated. Curiosity has changed the history of mankind. Curiosity has changed mine.

My dad helped me explore my natural curiosity as a child. In the backyard, he kept a small study where he did some carpentry. At age 12, I had already made a few stools and a bedside table. I was fascinated by the large collection of tools that my father treasured. I think one thing of the things that really separates us from the high primates is that we're tool builders. I bring a vivid memory: I was 14 when I read a study that measured the efficiency of locomotion for various species on the planet. The condor used the least energy to move a kilometer. And, humans came in with a rather unimpressive showing, about a third of the way down the list. It was not too proud a showing for the crown of creation. So, that didn't look so good. But, then somebody at Scientific American had the insight to test the efficiency of locomotion for a man on a bicycle. And, a man on a bicycle, a human on a bicycle, blew the condor away, completely off the top of the charts.

My curiosity made me a boy thirsty for Knowledge. In Astronomy I found an endless source of discoveries. I still remember seeing the first episode of Carl Sagan's series Cosmos. At age 10, I was fascinated with the sky and the world above. My heroes in childhood were always scientists who used their intellectual prestige to change the world. Ten years later, I would further explore the theme when I signed in to the astronomy club in the college I was attending as an exchange student in XXX, Europe. Through this community, members could share their knowledge with the general public. I was so excited that I sought a similar club to join as soon as I went back home. However, I found nothing similar in Brazil, so I searched the Internet and found like-minded people who welcomed my idea of setting up a club. Working as their catalyst, I founded the Cosmos Astronomy Club. I enticed my new friends to let strangers use our telescopes and be stunned by the wonders of the sky. We also delivered presentations in parks and public schools. But we could do more, I thought. The public deserved broader knowledge. I would have to convince others to welcome my idea of teaching lessons on my favorite subject. Despite my slim chance of success, I spoke to the management of XXX, my university. We would provide the community with free scientific education, I explained in order to earn support. They lent us a small classroom on Saturday mornings. As a teacher for the last four years, I have drawn valuable lessons from my classes and learned from my students. Today our more than 60 students per semester can enjoy astronomy and astrophysics courses. To ensure the sustainability of our project, I trained more teachers. Involving, motivating, and educating people, I have helped transform the way they think their world.

I want to lead a life in which I can satisfy my curiosity.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

When I have doubts about which steps to follow in my career, I always resort to my personal values: "will I be able to feed my intellectual curiosity?" I intend to set up a financial institution whose step stone lies on the rigor of analysis that only Knowledge can provide. I need Stanford to support me. As an investment management guy in a specific situation, I acted as an enabler of effective knowledge creation. At that moment, I felt that I had made the right career choice for my life.

In this Knowledge Era, every institution should sponsor the sharing of Knowledge. The probability of increasing the assets under management of XXX, my current firm, reminded of what my previous employer experienced. I had studied the trade-off between liquidity and pricing, so I could predict serious consequences from such unsettling move. Naturally, productivity should soar and demand that we have scalability. No one asked me for it, but for two months, I put aside two daily hours in order to analyze my employer through the eyes of an investor. Hours of extra work enabled me to create a new model to measure productivity. "We have always done that way. Let's stick to it, ok?" - My boss and co-workers' view confirmed that it is just easier to follow what is established. They could not see the



David

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

You can categorize human abilities in two classes: the instrumental and the expressive ones. Instrumental skills are the ones we learn so that we can cope with environment's demands - they are survival tools - they are imposed from the "outside." On the other hand, expressive skills refer to actions that externalize our subjective experiences. Singing a song that reflects how we feel or translating our moods into a dance is a form of expression. When involved in an expressive activity I feel in touch with my real self. I want to lead a life in which I can express my creativity.

Creativity takes courage. In elementary school, drawing, painting, and everything related to colors on paper were my favorite activities. A bit older, I longed for my weekly Arts class. Later, as I attended one semester of high school as an exchange student in England, I could devote more to arts as an elective course. I felt motivated to find out that I could submit one piece of work to an arts competition. I chose to mix pastel and watercolor techniques in my work, but unfortunately, in the middle of the job I made a mistake. I accidentally spilled paint and part of my ocean was really blotted. I would not be able to fix the mistake in time for submission, so I decided to finish it freely and without worrying about the competition. In the end, it was awarded second prize among almost 200 works. This was not the most significant competition I enrolled and that was not my best painting, either, but I saw that award as a symbol of my self-discovery. At age 14 and all alone on foreign grounds, I kept faith in my own opinion of aesthetics. I believe in the value of unique experiences that a person can have in life.

Creativity is an act of defiance. "Why not?" - the power of those two words defined the way I see the world. I learned those words from two people who think quite differently from most people. My parents were not fond of tradition. Searching for answers, they were open to trying different beliefs. Ignoring their families' objection, my parents moved in together when they were very young. Soon after graduating from college, my father, an only child, chose not to join his father's successful company and instead, took my mother to the countryside. I grew up surrounded by nature. My parents encouraged me to question the status quo to better understand how things worked. I was never satisfied with the way things were and would thus always suggest a change for better. Every "why not" I ask will help me consider possibilities before I take action or make decisions. George Bernard Shaw has my favorite quote: "Some men and women see things as they are and say why; I dream things that never were and say why not?" I identify myself with people who leave their signature on everything they do in life.

Creativity and Curiosity are twin brothers. Living far from big cities, we were not, nevertheless, away from Knowledge. I was eight when I finally went to a rural school, the only one in the area. Before that, my father was my tutor. Until today he is fond of homeschooling. I studied quantitative subjects with dad, an agricultural engineer aficionado for physics. I discovered art and music with mom. They stimulated my curiosity so that I could often learn further about any subject. I still cherish my now worn out "Big Book of Why: 1,001 Facts Kids Want to Know." Every evening, my father, my brother and I selected one fact and discussed it enthusiastically. I understand that curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a creative mind.

A person who lives only by instrumental actions without experiencing the spontaneous flow of expressivity eventually becomes indistinguishable from a robot who has been programmed by aliens to mimic human behavior. I want to lead a life full of expressive actions.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

Upon graduating, I intend to grow as an innovative leader inside XXX Education Practice, my MBA sponsor, and, in the long term, create my own organization focused on the intertwined frontiers, Education and Technology. The love for connecting multiple fields of knowledge is something I have inherited from my upbringing (essay 1). I feel creative when I have to navigate smoothly and coherently across disciplinary frontiers. At Stanford, I will explore my creativity.

The need to understand complexity encouraged me to follow a career in the Academia. Discussing my plans with my supervisor, I learned about his old wish: create an interface to identify emotions and act upon them with verbal reactions. The main hardship in this endeavor was to insert "emotions" in the platform. In plain English: "how could we make synthesized voices sound neutral, sad or happy?" I embraced that challenge wholeheartedly. Our goal was to build unit selection voice that could portray emotions. Among many challenges was the fact that no one had ever successfully synthesized emotional. Another challenge was the language - no attempt whatsoever had been made in Portuguese. My professor proposed giving up this aspect and just let the machine release robotized sounds. I convinced

I want to fully leverage this capability to attack what I consider the biggest challenge of Brazil: our precarious educational landscape. Before I can do so, I need a learning environment that feeds my desire to explore my creativity.

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

At very early I “discovered” was that happiness is not something that happens. It is not the result of random chance. It is not something that money can buy. It does not depend on outside events, but, rather, on how I interpret them. Happiness is a condition that must be prepared for, cultivated, and defended privately by each person. Happiness happens when energy is invested in realistic goals, and when skills match the opportunities for action. The pursuit of a goal brings order in awareness because I must concentrate attention on the task at hand and momentarily forget everything else. These periods of struggling to overcome challenges are what I find to be the most enjoyable times of my life. By stretching skills, by reaching toward higher challenges, I become an increasingly happy individual.

[illegible]

I am confident that I can make a difference in a Brazilian company and reduce the gap to compete in the global market. My professional experience, complemented by an MBA from GSB, will allow me to become a well-rounded and qualified leader, inspired in my role model Carlos Brito (GSB MBA '89). To attract, develop, and retain exceptional talents into my team, I will foster a work environment where employees are encouraged to grow, rewarded for their commitment and empowered to promote change.



Sophia

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

Two distinct life events defined my comprehension of what is important to me. With my dad, I learned that I must be the agent of change in my life; with my mother, I understood that my actions upon the world are only meaningful if they cause impact on the people around me.

I am proud to have a father who changed his family's social conditions. As the older son of a big family, he took upon himself the responsibility as the agent of change in the social conditions that the world had apparently reserved for them. Unlike his family and friends, he chose to leave his small village and turn his life around by attending high school in a neighbor, bigger city. Later, going back and forth, he spent four years traveling every day to the capital to continue to study. Through this sacrifice, he became the first in the entire family and the only among seven children to have a college degree. Instantly, he became the positive reference in the family. My father's history taught me that courage and resilience lead you to change the status quo, apparently unchangeable, of what you go through in life. Since I was a little girl, I have heard constantly "all you need is a very clear plan showing where you are and where you want to be." By then I promised myself I would never accommodate: "I will never be mediocre."

My mother taught me in the most possible realistic way to leave our selfish nature aside so that we could see what others needed. One day, all of a sudden, by my mother's influence, my parents shared their idea of adopting a child. I was barely 11 when I was told that I could have a new "sister." Not fully aware of what would happen, I shared their enthusiasm. Without any doubt, that seven-year-old orphan moved in and changed my life forever. Soon I would be sharing all I had, everything, with a stranger. But I was also able to show Maria a world of possibilities. At the time I was not aware of my action, but looking back I know I helped her question her future. Her mother did not care about sending any of the nine children to school. All of them, Maria included, should "work" to bring money some change. Maria sold candy at the traffic light or simply begged for money and food outside restaurants. My parents and I could show Maria the meaning of family. In our house, she benefited from a caring family and enjoyed the opportunity to learn. Sometimes my parents took us to Maria's former house and I could observe the harsh reality of her biological family. Maria grew up into a different person from all her siblings. A social assistant, she is fully aware of her role of transforming the lives of many children. My mother also allowed me to rethink my little world. She helped me place more value on my relationship with them. It is not easy to change when you feel comfortable - I had everything I wanted as a happy child, but I was somewhat alienated in a safe environment. It is difficult to see your position within a group.

Since I remember I have dreamed of doing something transformational. More recently I learned that I can only feel fulfilled when I can influence positively people around me.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

I've nurtured a career path that values professionals who know how to articulate individual actions with collective efforts. I am good at defining, establishing, identifying, and translating a direction for collective action by followers. My story explains why I feel the need for a Stanford MBA.

When I entered college, I strongly believed that my professional success would depend exclusively on my effort, interest, and analytical capacity. Everything happened in France when I did my research on Institute of Robotics at the French Aerospace Center. Science and technology thrilled me with intellectual challenges. Research demanded sophisticated analyses, but did not allow me to synthesize impactful end-product solutions. Since I stood out among the researchers, I was invited to do my Ph.D. there. In a discussion with a professor on a technical detail, I suddenly had a breakthrough moment: "I could not spend my life in that lab discussing what only two or three technicians in the entire country could understand. I need to insert the people factor in my professional life." I noticed that I needed those elements on a daily basis to achieve the balance I was looking for. I came back to Brazil and joined a Big-4 management consulting firm.

Acting temporarily as a post-MBA associate in one specific assignment, I realized that there is so much regarding leadership that I must still learn. As a consultant, I have to learn about balancing the work and life pressures. In this specific engagement, I realized that I got completely lost as I attempted to balance my personal life with a scenario that was testing my skills and resistance. In my three years of consulting, I have seen many directors get divorced; partners that miss their children's birthday celebrations; I even witnessed one of my mentors having a crisis of identity. These are not inspiring leaders. Since I was responsible for one analyst, I felt frustrated to perceive that I

My intention is to grow into a leader who can transform and apply social behaviors in order to foster a more sustainable work environment. One project for a consumer goods company had me question the direct influence that these goods can have on people's routine and, in that way, change people's social behavior. Not many managers thoroughly understand social and environmental issues that are necessary to break conventional approaches of value creation, nor do they seek to explore and improve this field. Through the MBA, I can prepare myself to accomplish my goal after 3-4 years at XXX: lead a consumer goods company with a strong sense of purpose. The peculiarity of the business challenges, which often comprise human behavioral aspects, and the speed at which transformation takes place, typical of this industry, is seducing. On top of all that, I will extract satisfaction from producing long-lasting benefits to society while serving this exciting industry.

William

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

“Life belongs to the living, and he who lives must be prepared for changes.”
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Every night before bedtime, I follow a ritual. I write two short paragraphs in my notebook. The first is about something I learned on that day. The other is about what I will do with my new learning. In a way, my life is a search for the connection of those two paragraphs.

As the son of a professor who quit his job in a college in order to set up a small biotech company, I was taught to value the combination of complementary skills: the ability to do the tough analytical work, but then step back and pull the trigger and execute. My father often says that a professor from USP will only leave the university in a hearse, straight to the funeral parlor. He was a pioneer. Despite the abyss in Brazil between scholar research and society, he identified an opportunity and was brave enough to leave the academic environment and build his first company in the biotechnology industry. In his fondness of challenges, he quit a safe and promising career. I witnessed his restless dedication to each of his ventures. Although he really enjoyed the Academia, he believed that as a professor in his lab, he could easily become alienated from reality. Always observing his adventures as an entrepreneur, I learned that in the business world there is a gap between theory and practice. It is the role of a leader to fill out this empty space and he has to rely on people surrounding him to do so. According to my father, there are many leadership opportunities in the business world and in the gap that exists between “having a good idea” and “having the attitude to take that idea off the paper.”

Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Since I was a boy, I learned the hard way about the power of change. Later, unlike other children, I learned to see that situation as something quite natural. Because of my father's academic career, we kept moving around. When I was adapting to the neighborhood, to the new region and school, my father would get home with the news: "we're moving next month." In the beginning, it was very difficult to leave my friends behind. My father, however, was always there for me. He always reminds me that the *modus operandi* of most people is reaction: "change? Oh god, what will I lose with that?" only few think: "change, wow, opportunities ahead." But it was not easy at all. I was the "troubled person" who could not fit with the kids. My pride told me I did not need the others, but deep inside I'd give anything to feel part of a group. My father observed as I felt rejected as a stranger in every new group: "In the beginning, you have to play their game; then, you invite them to play yours."

My curiosity about life helps me write the first paragraph, "What have I learned today?" and my passion for giving shape to my ideas helps me write the second paragraph. "Concretely, what am I going to do with this new lesson?" I fall asleep enthusiastic about the new possibilities that the following day will bring me.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

My focus on change as a means of improvement naturally influenced my choice of joining the private equity (PE) fund that works with the management of portfolio companies. I am a knowledgeable advisor and investor, but now I need exposure that CEO face daily. I need the Stanford MBA to meet the combination of two complementary skills: the ability to do the tough analytical work, but then step back and pull the trigger and execute.

[illegible]

After the MBA, I want to return to XXX, my PE fund, in order to lead the firm's VC activities in Latin America.



Igor

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are tepid, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."
Apocalypse

The psychologist Gary Klein invented my favorite method for making decisions. He calls it the "premortem". It is pathetically simple: you imagine yourself in the future, after the project you're considering has ended in complete failure, total fiasco. Unlike a standard assessment session, which asks you what might go wrong, the "premortem" operates on the assumption that everything went as badly as you could have feared. It's already over. You're totally screwed. Now: what? Knowing that you are dead provides a miraculous power. Impotence? Not at all. I leave each "premortem session" reinvigorated about my belief that I want to be the owner of my fate in the world. Perhaps Klein's technique works with me, for I have already empirically tested it.

Days before my 10th birthday, I was diagnosed with encephalitis. Although I was not fully conscious of that fact at the time, the illness made me resilient. It also made me confident to face challenges that life would present. Of course, I could also rely on my parents, who were always there for me. We never spoke about the high risk of death that I was running. Instead, we would pray together, faithfully. They never lost hope even when I entered a coma that lasted a couple of days. When I opened my eyes slowly and smiled, I made my father cry. I was born again, according to the doctors. As a family, we felt victorious. Another, even more difficult, challenge would come later. Raised by a housewife and a mason in the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, I had little chance of succeeding in life. My parents would hardly read and their writing was limited to signing their names. Like the vast majority of the population in my neighborhood, my friends did not go past elementary school. Today they keep jobs that require little intellectual ability. Unfortunately, their kids are following the same path. My future, according to my mother, depended on how much I studied. I needed a plan, an obviously bold plan. I promised her that I would break that poverty cycle, so I did all I could to win a scholarship in a private school. While many friends arrived in comfortable cars after a short ride, I used dad's old bike to cover the almost 7 km to the school downtown. The bus was a luxury reserved for very rainy days. After high school, I studied even harder to attend a preparatory course for college tests. Meanwhile my dad would start working in a construction 150 km away from the capital. I was so focused on my goal that I found the strength to travel 6 hours every day to school (3 hours to go and another 3 to return). I did not know this back then, but I was preparing myself for social mobility. Eventually I would be part of the 1% of people in Brazil who go to college. I took the time on the bus to review the subject and to do homework. Eventually, I was accepted to the country's best Engineering School (rate of admission is 0.7%). I paid my promise. My main inspiration was my grandmother. After she lost her fifth child to lack of resources/conditions in the countryside of Bahia, she arrived in Belo Horizonte with four children and, without knowing anyone, made herself a promise: "Never again will I let another kid of mine die in such conditions." Initially homeless, she eventually found a room in the back of a restaurant where she worked for forty years before retiring.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. There is no reason not to follow my, not tepid, but hot heart.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

Brazil, my home country, has lived dramatic transformation in the past three or four decades. It has grown into a democratic nation, learned to eliminate soaring inflation, gone through privatization, and seen per capita income rise significantly. Nevertheless, much has to happen in my country's economic scenario. Private investments must increase, capital markets need to mature, and entrepreneurs have to be better prepared. I want to apply my courage to my career ambition - grow into a Venture Capitalist.

With Brazil enjoying a more stable situation in the recent years, both our government and foreign investors have had the nation under their spotlight. However, there is still a huge distance between investors and entrepreneurs. My business knowledge, technical expertise, and familiarity with differences, obtained by living through different social classes, I feel eager to help reduce that gap. My support to entrepreneurs shall enable them to structure their businesses while we seek investors for funding.



As someone interested in influencing other lives, I regard entrepreneurship as a way to nurture such interest. My plans sound plausible, mainly now that my country is more connected with developed economies - domestic companies are prospering abroad while international entrepreneurs are exploring our fertile ground. Relying on my experience, I will enjoy Brazil's momentum to create my company.

While running my own company, I can continue to help others succeed. I took great satisfaction from supporting entrepreneurs with pro-bono consulting services during college and I plan to develop the growth of high-potential ventures. I am certain that in California I can adequately prepare myself to reach my objective. Stanford is surrounded by VC funds, so I can build valuable network and explore the industry. Finally, the school's focus on entrepreneurship is vital for me to shape the beginning of my new career.

Ultimately, I identify with the school. I was told that one professor once revealed to his class that he had gone bankrupt three times. I am well acquainted with this experience. Stanford wants people who dare to fail.



Marcus

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

"I am for people. I can't help it."
Charles Chaplin

Have you observed that those who are able to dream are often happy people?

When I was twelve years old, I took a shortcut across a rather desert park one afternoon as I walked home from school. In the middle of the park three large young men from the neighboring ghetto suddenly confronted me: "don't make a move or he will shoot you," one of them said, nodding toward the third man, who had his hand in his pocket. The three took away everything I had - some change and a worn Casio. "Now keep on going. Don't run, don't even turn around." What followed after that command drastically changed my life.

I had to do something. After a few steps, I turned around and tried to catch up with them. "Listen," I called, "I want to talk to you." "Keep going," they shouted back. But I caught up with the trio, and, with a firm voice, I asked if they would reconsider giving me back the watch they had taken: "You see, my parents gave it to me on my birthday, and it is worthless to anybody except me." I walked proudly home without the money change but with my old watch.

Human relationships are malleable, and if a person has the appropriate skills, their rules can be transformed. I really believe that any social situation has the potential to be transformed by redefining its rules. I feel I have the talent to transform human relationships. By not taking on the role of the "victim" that had been imposed on me, and by not treating my assailants as "robbers," but as reasonable people, I decided to change the way I interact with people.

I was raised to love others. I love people, so I would not let an event such as that to change my perspective about how I can contribute to make the world a little better. I feel happy when I dream of improving the way people relate to one another.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

I intend to return to XXX, my MBA sponsor; later, I shall blend economic and social development as I lead teams in private-public frontiers. Stanford will inspire me to accomplish my long-term goal.

Stanford will strengthen my desire to bring new perspectives to group dynamics. I was barely 10 when I found out what inspires me in life. As I watched the news - Israeli and Palestinians negotiating the Camp David agreement, I made my mother smile when I announced my career as a diplomat. Experimenting with new cultures and dealing with interdisciplinary themes while living abroad: that's what I would like to do in life. Applying to college, I envisioned the means to follow my dream: International Relations at USP, Latin America's top university. I started publishing articles and working on research for the Brazilian government. My main legacy to USP was the creation of an exchange program. I had to establish a partnership from scratch and eventually I earned a scholarship to live in Hungary. After an amazing period in Budapest studying different subjects such as Law, Business, Journalism, Public Health, and Urban Planning, I sought some ambassadors. Evaluating the diplomatic career, I realized that with the international expansion of Brazilian companies, there would be a demand for a new kind of professional, with fluency in politics and business settings, a frontier still to be defined. That's how my desire to explore the business world began. During my Master's degree, a classmate mentioned strategic management consultants: "I'm not sure, but apparently those guys solve intricate issues in big corporations". I had never heard of BCG, Bain or McKinsey, but why not? At the same time, I had to take advantage of my intellectual courage. Until I turned 23, I had never touched an Excel spreadsheet. My world consisted of man and his complex relationship through political institutions. Consulting would allow me to mix numbers and humanities and to have an international career perspective. Two years after I became a management consultant, I had my 'magical moment' where you feel you are living for what you are meant for. Through a specific consulting assignment, my expectations were reassured: I have learned how to bring the private sector managerial expertise to the government spending capital. It was a massive, 10-month study of Brazil's railroad infrastructure and its capabilities for meeting passenger-traffic demand during the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil and 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Amidst a political and economic complex arena, I helped my team make several recommendations, including structuring rules of public concessions/privatizations, defining and monitoring clear metrics for rail-sector players, and providing ways to increase private-sector participation in the industry.

[illegible]

In sum, I must continue to get involved with professional assignments that promote change in borderless, diverse, and multicultural environments. In the short term I intend to return to management consulting. In the long term, I intend to blend economic and social development as I lead teams in private-public frontiers.



Laura

Essay 1: What matters most to you, and why? (750 words)

The Latin locution for “being alive” was “inter hominem esse”, which literally meant “to be among men”; whereas “to be dead” was “inter hominem esse desinere”, or “to cease to be among men.” In life, I always choose “to be alive.”

I have always felt in debt with my father, who helped shape my perception that I only feel complete when I am in the company of other people. I grew up witnessing his herculean efforts to support my sick grandparents while giving my brothers and me a comfortable life and every opportunity to enjoy education. When I was 8, I realized that my uncle Ezequiel was different. He was in his early twenties, but his behavior was similar to that of younger friends of mine. At age 10, I finally learned about Down syndrome. My father, as the oldest child, decided to take care of my grandmother right after her husband died. I was not yet born when he brought grandma and uncle Ezequiel home. I admire the sacrifices that this man has made in order to offer everyone in the family opportunities that he could not himself enjoy. I grew up determined to pay him back for all he’s done for us. My father’s behavior as a family leader inspired me to care about others and to bring everyone together, not leaving anyone behind. Sacrificing his own self, my father sought to enable people to reach what he never even dreamed of. I acknowledge his effort and devotion and I will focus on rewarding him for so much he has done for us. Following my role model, I stick to the principle that no one should be left behind and tried to go out of my way to help people around me. They, in exchange, recognize me as a committed and dependable individual.

“Inter hominem esse” is what really matters to me.

Essay 2: Why Stanford?

I believe that the most important quality in a businessperson is her ability to gather people around an ambitious project, acknowledge their contribution, and reward their efforts. I believe in my potential for doing so, but I still have a lot to learn at Stanford.

You don’t need to be the most intelligent, devoted, or strategic person, but you can put together the brightest guy, the most determined girl, the best Napoleon around, and the high-achieved jack-of-all-trades. Early on, I understood that my actions would reverberate, affecting others around me. Later, as I left home for college, my choices were clearly oriented by my need to grow within a group that shares values. The need to belong to a group filled my 4-year college experience. In my ambition to make my family proud, I would attend a top university far from home. I soon formed a new family at Unicamp, top-tier Brazilian university, as I saw professors as parents and classmates as siblings. Besides excelling academically, I committed to the community: choir, volunteer activities in asylums, student representative, and goalkeeper in handball. I became an example to others. Unlike most classmates, who could easily afford tuition, I attended Unicamp on a scholarship from Fundacao Estudar, cofounded by Jorge Paulo Lemann. I nurtured a feeling of gratitude towards that community. I also joined AIESEC to make foreign students feel a sense of belonging. As student representative, I helped elect a new Dean and created a campaign to criticize the school’s positioning on the market. I made lifelong friends while contributing to my community.

I could witness the power to create an environment where people feel comfortable enough to take measured risks and learn while propelling the team and the ideas forward. It is truly rewarding to know that you belong to a group in which people exchange inspiring experiences. Holding accountability motivated me to launch my own web company still during college. The university incubator’s approval of my rough business plan pushed me to begin a successful entrepreneurial journey. In the past three years, my focus has been on structuring and running our company through its different growth stages. An initial do-it-all-yourself approach for launching the company, defining products and services and targeting first customers has given place to a well-thought career development: I have been able to tackle each challenge timely, forge colleagues for specific business duties, hire specialists for non-core positions, and concentrate on strategic business matters. Later, a first round of investment allowed me to build a team of project managers and sales reps while concentrating on strategic issues, mostly related to marketing, products and services conception, and major account sales. I raised US\$0.5MM from VC’s to launch XXX, aimed at revolutionizing XXX in Brazil. I had the most rewarding experience: I could bring to the team three close friends from my college. We now proudly say we together created over 30 jobs. We want to be serial entrepreneurs. Luckily, I had the chance that brings me greatest joy: the possibility of gathering a team, preferably with friends who share my core values. We dream of creating a product that helps people throughout the world, a product that makes us proud. By not leaving anyone behind and by dedicating fully to everything I do, I have been an example to people who, in turn, offered commitment and loyalty.

[illegible]

At Stanford, I will also improve my self-awareness in order to build even more effective relationships.