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College Admission Essay

I nervously doodled on the back of a yellow schedule sheet in the hallway trying to avoid socializing, as the November sun filtering in through the tall windows dimly lit the [MEETING] area. Other kids in crisp black suits were sitting at tables talking quietly. They all seemed pretty calm, in contrast to how I felt, the butterflies trying to perform a circus routine in my stomach.

In the second speech tournament of the season, I had broken into the finals for the first time in my career, in a speaking event I had picked up just two weeks earlier. [I HAD COME A LONG WAY.] When the break poster announcing the roster for finals had been put up an hour earlier, I did not think I would make it, and I was content to spend the rest of the tournament munching away on my chocolate chip cookie. A friend soon ran over exclaiming, “You broke!” At the time, I was sure it was a mistake. The previous season, I had come in dead last for prose reading, so I had decided to try something new this season. With impromptu speaking, I figured I had nothing to lose, [AS IT WAS WHAT—DESCRIBE WHY IT IS DIFFERENT OR WHAT IT IS.] Now, sitting outside of the classroom awaiting the final round, I was in shock.

I was [FINALLY] called into the classroom by one of the judges, and I could hear the trickles of applause from the audience for the previous speaker. [I WOULD BE GIVEN JUST TWO MINUTES TO PREPARE MY SPEECH ON WHAT TOPIC.] The room was small, with desks lined up in rows and kids’ eyes were expectantly on me as I [PREPARED SOME NOTES]. When I finally stood up to begin, my legs were shaking, and I barely avoided tripping over my heels that I was still unaccustomed to wearing.

I gave my speech [ANSWERING THE PROMPT OF WHAT.] I talked a little too quietly, stuttered, then spoke at the speed of light, and barely remembered what eye contact meant as my eyes scanned the room. When I calmed down enough to process the faces of my audience, I came to understand how amazing it was that so many people would listen to me talk for six whole minutes without interrupting me. My incoherent stuttering clearly meant something to the audience: I had a message, an argument to prove, and a lesson to be learned. My speech was the chance for my voice to be heard.

This speech was different from all the times freshman year when I would sink down in my seat whenever I was next on the roster. It was different from all the times I would open my prose book to read [ALOUD], only to be met with a yawning audience [OF STUDENTS/BORED STUDENTS] that rolled their eyes. This time, I was not telling a story my coach had forced onto me, but rather I was talking about something that mattered: [STATE BRIEFLY WHAT YOUR SPEECH WAS ABOUT MORE SPECIFICALLY IN TERMS OF WHAT YOU LOVED]. I was not just there to win a competition; I was there to talk about something I loved.

Since that day, I have since stopped letting my voice be buried under the crowd. Being able to convey my thoughts aloud has changed my outlook on life. I am no longer content with staying quiet and watching events unfold before me. [MY EXPERIENCE IN SPEECH AND DEBATE HAS BEEN] both a privilege and a gift [BECAUSE STUDENTS LISTENED.] My thoughts are wasted if I do not speak up because voicing my thoughts is how I will inspire change in the world.

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