

To whom it may concern,

My dad often retells a story from my childhood in which I jumped into a pool, emulating my older brother, before he even had time to put on my floaties. By the time the lifeguards got there, I was already swimming. The lesson I learned from that story is that you don't always have to test the waters before you dive into the adventures of life.

Just like a well-written book, life is an unpredictable story waiting to unfold. My eyes flicker across the pages. I am Alice in Wonderland venturing through life with a curious eye, the ugly duckling slowly turning my insecurities into a swan of grace and confidence, Gomer being sold into slavery and Hosea saving me once again.

Countless hours at the library and bookstores marked my summer days as a child – riveting accounts of lengthy adventures and allusions. The fresh smell of a new book; the crisp crease of the binding while I turned to the first page as a journey to walk a mile in their shoes; as I saw the realities of our soldiers fighting in the war, grateful just to serve our nation; the pain that people like Holden felt locked inside the autistic spectrum, struggling to break free; and the trials that people like Joseph faced before God showed him how he would use his trials for good.

I see Shakespeare's thoughts laid out on the pages, Virginia Woolf taking in and breathing out every little thing she hears and sees. A picture forms in my mind: Poe sits quietly by the windowsill watching the raven fly by the neighbors' house, noticing its unique wings and feathered flight. C.S. Lewis is positioned quietly near the fireplace; the lion's roar of thoughts and revelations spilling forth into his journal nestled close to his heart. Lewis Carroll softly reads a fable to the children gathered near and Mary Shelley notices the one child with the cap on his head hiding his bald scalp and parts of his emaciated face as he sits slightly removed from the circle. I stand back and watch it all, noting every little detail and working it into a collection of stories that applies to my life and the relationships that I form.

My eyes flicker across the pages. I carry with me the strength of Melba putting on a brave face when the opposition is strong, the persistence of Atticus Finch in fighting for justice, the captivation with literature and the kindred spirit of Anne of Green Gables, and the heart to encourage like Barnabas of the Bible. Through books, I have learned the beauty of brokenness, which helps to pave the way for greater goods. Books, and specifically the characters' experiences and lessons they have learned, have taught me that, in the words of psychologist Dr. John Leddo, "Pain is temporary, but growth is permanent." Through every trial there might be great pain, but the progress that comes from this pain produces lasting growth. Books

have taught me to jump into every situation and put aside the fear of drowning in order to experience the thrills of swimming in the deep end.

I grew up with these books and the perspective and knowledge they provided me. However, I have never been a book worm who doesn't take much interest in physical activities. I was on the school's swim team during my sophomore and senior year at [name of high school]. I admit I wasn't the best there was but I managed to receive the Husky Award for showing great sportsmanship and dedication as a team member. I was also a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club in my high school.

Religion has been a major player in my moral and social upbringing. It has played a significant role in promoting a sense of community and greater good in me. I have volunteered for many religious and non-religious community services such as being a part of the Kitchen Crew at Summer's Best Two Weeks summer camp, an experience that taught me a lot about the importance of gratitude and serving others. During high school, I also ventured a club called Sweet Compassion where my friend and I did a monthly bake sale to raise money for different research programs.

Religion, the [name of state] school system, and countless authors have molded me into who I am today. I hope that [name of university] will also play an instrumental role in helping me realize my true potential. There are a great deal of things I have yet to experience and learn. I am confident that [name of university] has the platform where I would be able to learn through new academic and social challenges.

I appreciate you taking to read through my application. Please feel free to contact me if there's anything else I can provide to aid the application process. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[name of applicant]