

SELFISHNESS

Intended Audience: college admissions committee

Education is the guiding principle by which many live. Indeed, education performs many functions out of necessity, but among them is not simply to teach theoretical principles or mundane facts. It is much more than we suppose, it would seem, as it must compel us to think if nothing more—for ourselves. Education is not merely preparation for the world of industry and commerce. It is an enlightening of the common mind, introducing one to questions and tools of inquiry that serve a far more valuable purpose.

Query then, how the enlightened mind thinks. For self or others? If for others, then is it not also for self? Selfishness, it would seem, appears to be a guiding principle for many. Even if one endeavors to improve the lives of those in need, it is with seemingly selfish longing for satisfaction or social appraisal that so often motivates such activity. Quite simply, much thought is dedicated to the implementation of appeasing one's intrinsic desire to feel good. I may rightfully be categorized as such a person.

My motivations are dictated by a simple desire—to leave a meaningful legacy. While my rationale varies and morphs over time, the common denominator is to feel good about myself—to make the most of my gifts and talents within the context of their varying stages of development. But to allege I awake each morning motivated by a prevailing sense of social justice—as a primary concern—would be misleading. Perhaps my current perspective will lead to social justice initiatives, but such is not my present motivation. Such tools of inquiry will serve me well going forward, as they shall pave the way for my organic transition through each phase of life, and overall maturation. So, I must learn to trust my fate. To do that, I must first trust myself—not from greed or materialistic ambition, but aspiration.

Perhaps this essay is a death warrant to any possibility of my getting into your school. Still, I would rather receive acceptance as the real me versus the idealized conception of the student I think you want. I am acutely aware of the potential consequences my candor may incite. However, I am no less mindful that such genuine transparency is often conspicuously absent from admissions essays.

But in the end, I am just a kid who is conscientiously working towards his goals—the essence of which is a pursuit of fulfillment. For that matter, mine is a quest for happiness and well-being. Perhaps it is not so attainable—yet I am inclined to think so. Nevertheless, such preconceptions remind me of my vulnerabilities, frailties, and subjectivity to error. Indeed, I may

be wrong in many respects. I have failed at more than I care to admit. Nevertheless, such an elusive desire remains.

Whether selfish desires are good or bad is undoubtedly subject to lively debate. One's motivations, I would argue, formulate the path of one's personal and professional trajectory. I am not a genius, a world-class athlete, nor an artist. Still, I compare myself to others—those who are even smarter and more accomplished. Unlike my naturally talented peers, whose accomplishments were seemingly effortless, mine are the resultant of seemingly blind devotion to perseverance.

I have been able to rely on my patience and perseverance to exceed expectations, my heart and mind to overcome adversity and solitude, and my candor and trust to build resolve and meaningful relationships. Such perspectives have been learned over time. I hope this profoundly personal essay will begin to shed light on the young man I once was, the young man I am now, and the person and leader I have yet to become. The genesis of my selfishness is not to seek fortune or fame, but to ensure my failures become opportunities for growth and enlightenment—for the greater good.

[End]