



Georgetown University

- Accepted College Essay -

After deciding it would be fun to play a sport in high school, I joined my school's water polo team as a freshman. Although I had never been particularly athletically inclined, I threw myself into the sport with total energy and enthusiasm, hoping to be a starting player. I worked incredibly hard, arriving at practice early to swim extra laps, and staying after everyone else had left to work on my technique. But no matter what I did, I was still only an average player. Why couldn't I score more goals? In school, I knew that when I completely immersed myself in the material and devoted extra effort to my classes, good grades usually followed. I had become accustomed to my hard work and dedication being rewarded. So I was naturally disappointed when devoting the same tremendous amount of effort to water polo did not yield similar results.

I began to ask myself, why was I doing this? It was embarrassing and even somewhat humiliating for me to participate in an activity that I couldn't do as well as others could. I could not help but be I realized that if I really wanted to participate in an activity I loved, I could not let my embarrassment or false pride stand in the way frustrated when my coach yelled at me during practices, benched me during games, or when I saw the weekly sheet of statistics being tacked up by the pool for all of the players to see. I even began to wonder whether participating in water polo was worthwhile if it were something at which I could not excel.

However, I would never allow myself to quit. For even though I was not the best player on the team, I am not a quitter and the truth was I love playing water polo. I enjoyed the physical challenge it gave me, swimming as hard as I could until every muscle in my body ached. When I didn't get to play, I took pleasure in analyzing our game strategies, sometimes discussing ideas with my coach, even going so far as to very subtly suggest his strategy was wrong. I was amazed to learn I could actually enjoy the time I spent on the bench, often inventing cheers to support other players. I realized that if I really wanted to participate in an activity I loved, I could not let my embarrassment or false pride stand in the way. And because I refused to give up, participating in water polo has been simultaneously one of the most frustrating and yet rewarding experiences of my life. I found the determination not to walk away from something that was especially difficult for me. And although I was raised with the notion that every goal was within my reach if I simply worked hard enough, I now understand that I don't have to do something better than everyone else in order to be successful.

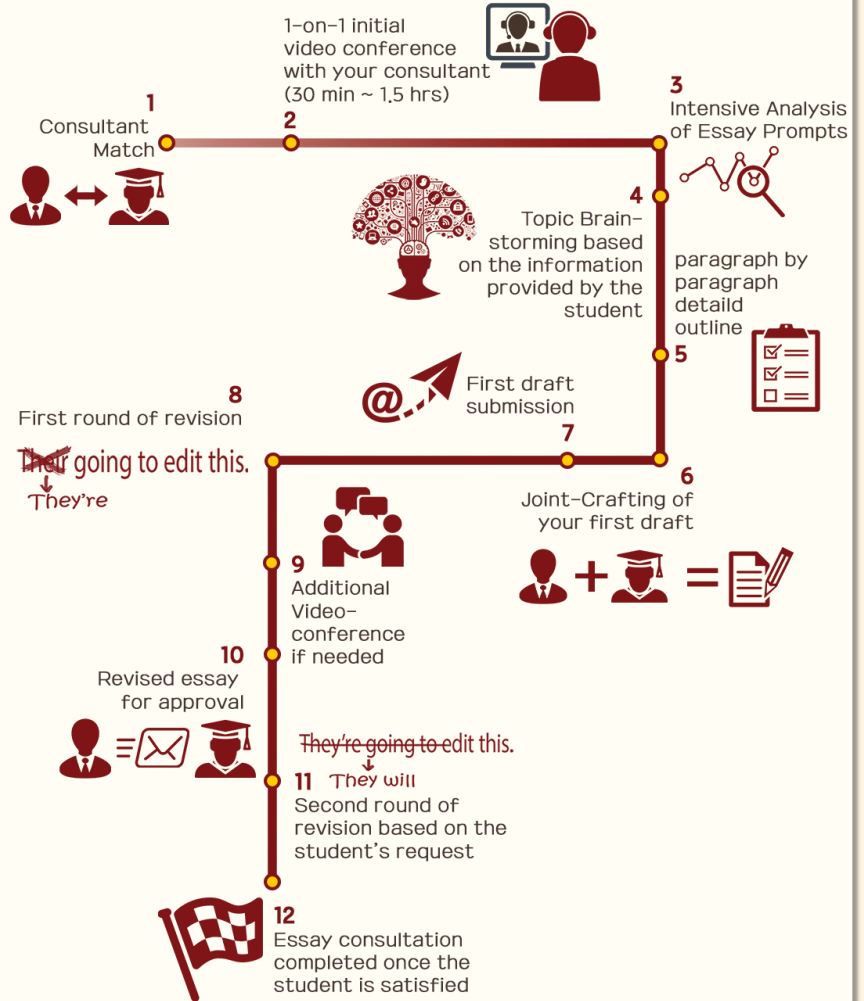
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