



# Princeton University

- Accepted College Essay -

## UNSHAKABLE WORTH

Part of me is missing. It's an identifiable, yet indescribable absence. It is odd how I can find more information about the initial supposed creators, Adam and Eve, than I can about my own. I don't know my father, and I doubt that I ever will. He left two weeks after I was born because I lacked a certain male member. Fidelity to personal convictions was more important to him than a life that he had just shepherded into this world. Because of his definitive choice, I will only be able to associate with him as a support check number until I am eighteen years of age. After that, who knows?

When I was eleven, my mother decided to call this long-gone man in search of owed child support. After eleven years of nothingness, financial distress caused my mother call this absolute last resource. In my house, we had an early 90s telephone that had a speaker/mute function. I can still see that outdated piece of technology in the corner of my mind. That speaker/mute function granted me the only contact with my father that I have ever known.

I was a mischievous child; I knew that day that my mother was physically on the phone with my birthfather. I was naïve. I thought that hearing my father's voice would fill the void created by years of absence. I thought that hearing his voice would allow me to place my father on the same grand plateau as other fathers who had always been there for their children, loved their children. I snuck into the room with the technical phone and silently listened in on the conversation. I felt smart and sly as I pressed the button that put the stranger's voice on the speakerphone. "Hah," I thought, "he can't hear me, but I can hear him." Maybe if he would have known the simple fact that his daughter was listening, maybe then some shred of human decency would have shined through.

Those few moments provided me with the only ounce of a man that comprises half of my biology that I will ever know. Unfortunately, the stranger didn't know I was listening. Like my life before, he never knew that I was there. As he yelled at my mother, I could hear the fear in her voice as he responded to her pleas with such malice. My mother tried to convey to my father that I was not just his incarnation to be provided for, but rather, a spectacular human being. As I sat there, listening intently to the conversation, I felt validated as a daughter by my mother's words, but shattered as a human being by my "father's" insolence.

In the moments that followed, that little girl, initially so excited at the prospect of finally being able to physically hear her creator, was eternally crushed. "Just because she exists doesn't mean I have to love her; it doesn't mean I have to know her. I don't love her, and I never will." Crash. Is it possible for the strongest muscle in your body to simply break in half? One of my genetic halves had declared that he loathed my very existence. Those words succeeded to shatter my heart into a million pieces. I didn't know how to react. I turned off the phone and slithered back to my room. How could someone be so heartless? How could someone that heartless be a part of me? no words.

I have been sobered by pain in a way that no psychological study ever could attempt. I may never know my father because of his decision, and in turn, he will never know me. In the end, his loss will be the greater one. My "father's" shining example of misconduct ironically guides me as a moral, ethical person. rather than searching for any fault within myself, I use my father's failure as a tool. I take an earnest and honest stance in life. I know my great worth. I have nothing to prove to anyone, including myself.

## DEAR SANTA

Every year, my Christmas wish list would read, "Dear Santa, all I want for Christmas is a baby brother." At age nine, I knew Santa had to be real because, one day, my mom announced that she was pregnant. After ten years of being an only child, I could not have anticipated how much my life would change because of a little brother. I received the honor of naming him, and I chose Jason. In retrospect, I should have named my brother "Ivan the Terrible."

Jason followed me everywhere like an irritating shadow. My grievances to my mom were countless, especially after Jason drew all over my bedroom walls and murdered my pet fish, Goldie. My mom's typical response was, "Well, isn't this what you've always wished for?" Jason's mischief reached a new height one morning when I became the victim of a five-year-old with scissors. I stared into the bathroom mirror and dunked my head under cold water to make sure I was not dreaming. What I saw enraged me! In the middle of the night, Michael had cut off five inches of my long, black hair from one side of my head. I stood in horror, and stormed to the kitchen where I found the rest of my family calmly eating breakfast. I flashed a menacing stare at my brother, who snickered across the table. "You're going to pay for this!" I screamed. Furious beyond words, I could not even begin to describe my rage. Instead, I ran back to the bathroom and huddled on the floor.

"What am I going to do?" I was irate and panicked at the same time. As a freshman in high school, I was very sensitive about my appearance. I had been hesitant to cut my hair past the "tips to take away the split-ends" trim, because my hair had been the same length for seven years. I agonized over the situation and concocted my swift counter-attack. Instead of chopping off his hair, I found inspiration to appease my anger in the pages of Teen magazine and considered trendy hairstyles. My brother was stunned because I did not retaliate. Victory was mine.

Because of experiences such as this, I have learned to adapt, to keep my focus, and to solve problems with little or no resources. I approach tough situations with objectivity and determination. Like many other experiences with my brother and at school, I have dealt with difficult situations and turned them into positive opportunities for change. I am flexible with the circumstances given to me, and I strive for the best outcome. Despite the craziness Santa's gift brings, Jason's continuous surprises provide laughter to my life. As for my hair, I did cut off the five inches from the other side, and I actually cherished the new look better. Thanks, Santa.

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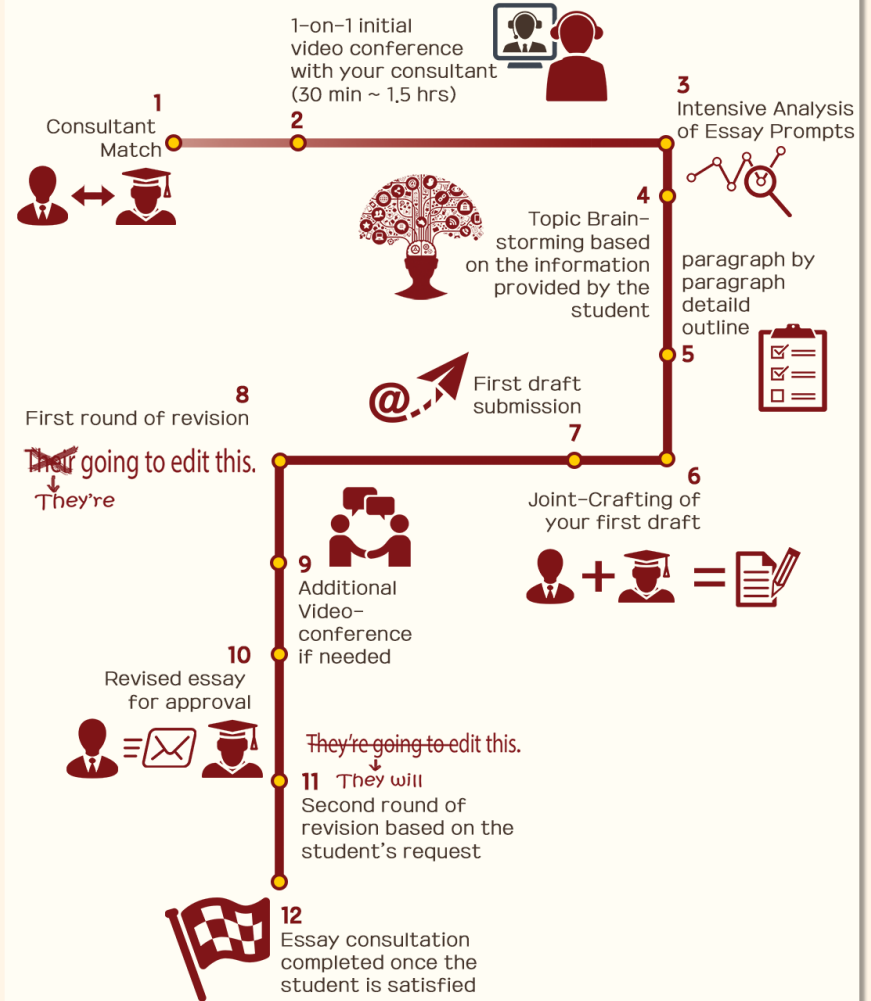
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