

Application Essay Solving a Problem

When I was a child, I was on the junior basketball team at my middle school. I was a good player, not a great player, but I loved the sport and it meant everything to me. I'd play at school, before school, during practices, and then at home after I finished my homework. As I stated, as a good player on the team, there were many others better than me, taller than me, faster than me, more talented and more consistent than me. But still, I was good and I worked hard, and I had a place on the team, doing my part and making my good, but not great, contributions. It wasn't a perfect situation, but I was very happy.

When it was time for me to enter high school, I tried out for the high school team, expecting to make the cut, and I didn't. The coach took me aside and explained that he liked my work ethic and my love of the game, but that he needed to assemble a team of players who were all close to 6-feet tall or higher. I was 5-foot eight. I was crushed. I then began a very futile chapter in my life where I was determined to grow four inches or die trying. I took supplements several times a day: L-Arginine, L-Ornithine, Calcium as Carbonate, Vitamin D as Cholecalciferol, Vitamin B12, DL-alpha tocopheryl acetate, Pyridoxine, and Zinc. I started eating only super foods—wild blueberries, wild yams, organic steaks, kale, spinach—I swore that these foods, eaten at their peak freshness, would be exactly what I needed to take my body to the next level of growth and development.

I started sleeping ten hours or more per night in order to make sure that my growth hormone was working to its highest level of excellence. I started taking yoga classes, hoping that this would help to stretch out my spine and my joints. I visited an acupuncturist, hoping there would be a solution in re-regulating my body's flow of energy. When that didn't work, I visited a practitioner of hoodoo magic and asked this priestess to put a spell on me to make me taller. She agreed and charged me \$175, saying the spell would take effect in seven days. Seven days later, I

was still the same height. During this time, I was awful to be around: I berated my parents for giving me bad genes, I yelled at my younger siblings for eating my wild blueberries, and I stopped playing basketball.

At the end of this charade, which went on for four months, I had grown $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch and had spent close to \$1000 dollars on supplements, treatments, etc. When I measured myself that day, it was a crushing realization, but also a peaceful one. I realized that I could always play basketball, but the era of me playing basketball five hours a day, was now over. I felt inexplicably at peace with it—perhaps because I realized I had no other choice. A week later a friend of mine took me to watch the debate team practice. In my new mindset of openness, I agreed to go and became hooked immediately on the mental challenges, the swiftness of the arguments and mental dexterity one needed to develop. All these years, I had tried to become more articulate with a basketball, and now I try to be more articulate with words, opinions and persuasions. My new way of interacting with the world is thrilling and the future looks bright—and I still find time to shoot hoops on the weekends, but just for an hour or two.