College Application Essay Sample 1

The ‘Way Back’ Yard

Grandma and Grandpa’s backyard had been our playground since each of us learned to crawl. Every Sunday the entire family gathered for dinner, games and adventure. A family of dreamers by our genetic code, our brains were filled with ideas that might never see the light of day. We dared to dream, but only as children had anyone in my family taken a risk.

The five of us stood frozen in the knee-deep grass; it was actually shoulder-deep for the littlest ones. My sisters, cousins and I were wide-eyed, chins pointed up as we gaped at the darkened forest beyond. Each of us occasionally looking back, seeking comfort in the backyard we all knew and loved. This scenario could easily be replaced by a group of college freshman entering their dorms.

There I was, lined up for an adventure with an ill-prepared group of small children, ranging in ages from three to ten. Everyone turned to me, the nervous one, hoping I would agree to move forward. It sounded fun, and I didn’t want to stop them from going. However, the what-ifs popped into my head faster than I could count them.

“We’ll make sure to hold hands the whole time. We’ll each carry a stick for protection and leave a trail of string to mark the path,” said the five-year-old. There was no arguing with that kind of planning. We gathered our supplies and strength before announcing to the grown-ups we were headed to the ‘way back’ yard. I was terrified of what might lie ahead, what might happen, and whether we could handle whatever was out there. Faith in my family and this bit of preparation swept over me. I took the first step, and hand-in-hand we forged a path.

We discovered an old rope swing, the cab from a truck, and a makeshift tent. Each step felt more exhilarating and less nerve-racking. As the comfort of the familiar faded, we eventually ran out of string and inadvertently stopped holding hands so we could explore our new discoveries. I became an explorer, not alone, but adventuring independently among a group of like-minded companions.

Before we had the chance to use our stick weapons, my little sister needed to use the bathroom, my four-year-old cousin was starving, and I was getting cold. It became clear this adventure was over; but it set the standard for what we as a group and individuals could do, someday.

Today, I view college as my personal ‘way back’ yard. It towers before me, begging me to join while caution flags rise into view. With a little faith, planning, and teamwork I know this mysterious and terrifying adventure will turn into an exciting journey. I understand this truth now because I’ve experienced it before.