

“What Soaring Means to Me”

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As long as I can remember, fear has been a big emotion for me and was something that controlled my life. Fear of failure; fear of judgment, fear of dying; anything that I wanted to do was always accompanied by my feelings of fear. I continue to battle these feelings as I strive to become a master of my emotions and my future.

One tradition my family always had during the summer was to travel by airplane to visit our extended family in California. For me, the excitement of this trip was always overshadowed by fear, and not unlike many other things, I developed a fear of flying. As I thought about the trip, my thoughts would focus on what could go wrong and my heart would begin to beat faster. The sounds, the cramped, almost claustrophobic seating, the strangers, and the turbulence all provided separate things for me to dread. The night before these trips I would hardly be able to sleep as I imagined myself trapped inside a metal tube fearing what could go wrong. As the time to depart would grow near, my inner voice would beg, whine and cry for me not to go through with the trip. I would get irritable with my sister and my parents, and although they did not understand my moodiness, it was all due to my irrational fears. Needless to say, I always got on the plane and once aboard, things were not as bad as I had imagined, I would relax and be my normal self. Nothing bad ever happened and we always arrived safely, and I would regret having worked myself up for no reason.

As I have gotten older, I began to realize I did not have a fear of flying, or anything else for that matter. It was really about doubt that I had in myself. I was afraid of failure, afraid of what others might think of me, afraid I would make a scene and embarrass myself. All my life I have dreamed about developing confidence in myself and thus, have tried to seek out challenges to accomplish this goal. This is what I believe soaring means to me. Soaring is an opportunity to prove to myself I can face challenges and overcome them. I no longer worry as much what other people think because I know that whatever I try and deeply commit to, I can do. Drafting this essay, with every letter I type, and every distraction I ignore, I demonstrate to myself that I am capable and that I can be proud of myself, and I do it not instead of my fears, but despite them.

Currently, I have done little more than volunteering at our glider club on some minor maintenance projects on the gliders. Although I have only spent a few hours in the gliding simulator, I am excited by the prospect of learning this complex skill! I am excited to learn and grow and to prove my skills to others and more importantly, myself.

I am applying for this scholarship because, while my family supports me, they also believe that I should be able to accomplish my goals independently. If I get this scholarship, I will be able to fund a notable portion of my glider training, and, with the earnings from the job I am working this summer, I have the potential to become a glider pilot entirely on my own. However, I have not ignored the perseverance and responsibility that such a goal requires. In fact, I have been pursuing the rank of Eagle Scout for six years and understand that once you commit yourself to something, you cannot quit. All you accomplish when you quit is an affirmation to yourself that you are not good enough. I know that each time you persevere through failure, you give yourself a greater reason to succeed, and that is why I am committed to learning to soar.