**An Example of A Reasonably Good Essay and Its Critique**

**The Essay**

My most important experience sought me out. It happened to me; I didn't cause it.

My preferred companions are books or music or pen and paper. I have only a small circle of close friends, few of whom get along together. They could easily be counted "misfits." To be plain, I found it quite easy to doubt my ability to have any sort of "close relationship."

After the closing festivities of Andover Summer School this past summer, on the night before we were scheduled to leave, a girl I had met during the program's course approached me. She came to my room and sat down on my bed and announced that she was debating with herself whether she wanted me to become her boyfriend. She wanted my reaction, my opinion.

I was startled, to say the least, and frightened. I instantly said, "No." I told her I on no account wanted this and that I would reject any gestures she made towards starting a relationship. I would ignore her entirely, if need be. I explained that I was a coward. I wanted nothing whatsoever to do with a relationship. I talked a lot and very fast.

To my surprise, she did not leave instantly. Instead, she hugged her knees and rocked back and forth on my bed. I watched her from across the room. She rocked, and I watched. Doubts crept up on me. Opportunity had knocked and the door was still locked. It might soon depart.

"I lied," I said. "I was afraid of what might happen if we became involved. But it's better to take the chance than to be afraid."

She told me she knew I had lied. I had made her realize, though, how much she actually wanted me to be her boyfriend. We decided to keep up a relationship after Andover.

Even then, I was not sure which had been the lie. Now I think that everything I said may have been true when I said it. But I'm still not sure.

I learned, that night, that I could be close to someone. I also realize, now, that it doesn't matter whether or not that person is a misfit; the only important thing is the feeling, the closeness, the connection. As long as there is something between two people — friendship, love, shared interests, whatever else — it is a sign that there can be some reconciliation with fear, some "fit" for misfits. And it shows that fear need not always win, that we can grow and change, and even have second chances.

I am still seeing her.

**Why It is Good… The Critique**

Admission officials consider **how** you write your essay, not just **what** you write about. Try to critique your own essays in the same way this sample essay is critiqued below.

The Introduction

The introduction is brief and memorable. The reader is drawn into the rest of the essay.

The Body

The second paragraph shows that the essay has a clear focus: his anxiety about relationships. The next two paragraphs use a style that is simple and direct. They employ short sentences and simple words to tell a simple story.

We see that he is thoughtful by the way he narrates the next several paragraphs. The story of his conversation with a girl is a way for the writer to show us about himself — that he's conservative and shy but willing to take a risk.

The Conclusion

He concludes with a strong summary paragraph and end sentence. Like his introduction, his ending is simple yet memorable.