

## Scholarship Essay Example Financial Need

“Oh well look at that one,” my uncle leans over and says about my brother-in-law in the living room wearing a dress. “I’d always had my suspicions about him,” he jokes with a disapproving sneer and leans back in his chair, a plate of Southern-style Christmas dinner in his hand.

I was hurt. Why would my own uncle say that like it’s such a terrible thing that my brother-in-law is wearing a dress? That it was the worst thing in the world if my brother-in-law were gay or effeminate.

“I think he looks beautiful,” my oldest brother Ethan chimes in. At that moment, I wish I could have hugged Ethan. No, not because he was defending my brother-in-law (who actually isn’t gay, as my uncle was suggesting), but because Ethan was defending me. My uncle has no idea that I recognized earlier this past year that heterosexuality wasn’t meeting all of my needs for intimacy with other people and that I’ve come to define myself as queer. It all started when I took a hard look at how my upbringing in Miami had taught me that the only way that boys are supposed to connect with others is by having sex with “beautiful” girls – that intimacy with other guys or “ugly” girls isn’t as meaningful.

After freeing up that block in my brain that told me that I shouldn’t look at guys in a certain way, I could embrace the fact that I’m attracted to men (and people in general) in a lot of different, new ways. My growth as a person was exponential. I rewrote so many areas of my life where I didn’t do things I wanted because of social conditioning. Within two months, my world expanded to include polyamory. I looked back on my past relationship with my girlfriend and realized that I wasn’t jealous (angry, yes. hurt, yes. But not jealous) when she cheated on me. I realized that people’s needs — whether they are for sex, someone to talk to, someone to engage intellectually — don’t necessarily all have to be met with one person. It can be easier sometimes with one person, absolutely. But that’s not the only way. As someone who is both polyamorous and queer, I feel like parts of my family and large parts of my community marginalize me for being different because society has told them to. I want to change that.

Since I will be studying for an entire year in Prague, I will have the opportunity to attend the annual Mezipatra, an international film festival in November that screens around a hundred top-ranking films on lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and queer themes. I feel really connected to going to this event because I crave being in an environment of like-minded people who strive to do that same thing I want to: balance the images of people typically portrayed through cliché and stereotype.

When I came out to my sister-in-law, she told me that people who are really set in their ways are more likely to be tolerant of different kinds of people after having relationships with these people. If my uncle can learn to love me, to learn to love one queer/poly person, he can learn to love them all. If I can be an example to my family, I can be an example to my classmates. If I can get the opportunity to travel abroad, I can be an example to the world. Not just through my relationships, but through my art. Give me a camera and a screen and I will carry the message of tolerance from the audiences of Mezipatra in Prague to my parent's living room.

Fade in: Two men with thick beards kiss – maybe for once they aren't wearing colorful flamboyant clothing. Fade in: A woman leaves her house to go to her male best friend's house and her husband honestly tells her to enjoy herself. Fade in: A college student wanting to study abroad tells his conservative parents the truth...