**DRAFT 1: Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design. (650 words)**

**First, let me start off by thanking you for not only sharing your story in such a genuine, poignant, and candid way, but also for allowing me to read and help you with this essay. As someone whose mental health is such a big part of their identity, I know how intimidating it can be to speak your truth in such a vulnerable capacity, especially to strangers and in a high stress situation like college admissions. I really appreciate how much time, love, and thought you put into this essay because all of those things really show. It takes a lot of courage to be able to share something like this and you do it with such grace and honesty.**

**You are a strong writer and your voice really shines in this response. It makes it easy for the reader to connect with you quickly because you are able to unapologetically be yourself.**

**In terms of my main edits, I really want to honor your boundaries and what you feel comfortable in sharing. Personally, I think the second half of the essay can be expanded upon - where we can see how you have not only come to accept yourself but to also recognize how your sensitivity has helped you connect in deeper and more meaningful ways. I don’t necessarily think you need to go into great detail about what exposure therapy was like (I, myself, know how traumatizing and painful this experience can be so please only share what you feel comfortable with) but I want us to make sure we are capturing your growth and the work you put in to get to where you are today. None of this is easy and I don’t want you to skip over or quickly breeze over the many ways you have grown and learned from this experience.**

**For the ending, I’m thinking that you can pull from a specific memory with someone, or something, or an experience where you felt that your sensitivity helped you either connect or appreciate something in a different way. With this example, it will be a concrete memory to ground the reader and to conclude your essay in a way that shows your journey.**

**I think the main thing we want to remember is to make sure this response is showcasing who YOU are NOW and not just who you used to be. This story is part of your history and who you have become AND how you are someone different. So, let’s make sure we are giving space for all sides of you. What do we want readers to remember about you from this response? (just a guiding question)**

**Happy to chat about my comments and meet with you soon. Thank you SO much for this response! Oh, and don’t worry about word count. I’d rather you write as much as possible and I can take care of getting things into the limit when the time comes :)**

It’s simple, really—grabbing a two-sided index card, writing a fear on the front, and a fact on the back— but to me, it opened up endless possibilities. Now, it might sound silly, but I mean it with every fibre of my body—fear fact cards saved my life. They deflected the little voice in my head that told me that I could never leave my room because I could possibly get sick, the same voice that told me I could never greet a family member, including my mom, dad, or sister, ever again.

My fear fact cards are the small pieces of paper that help me manage my thoughts, products of my “touched” soul. Some may call “it” being highly emotional or empathetic, but I refer to “it” as my sensitivity. As a child, I would cry at movies that no one else would find as sad. I wouldn’t laugh at light jokes or teasing. I would develop fears easily. And I hated it. I would react to things differently than others, and I hated it. I was often hurt by being sensitive, and I *hated* it.

When I was eight years old, I developed emetophobia, the extreme fear of vomiting. I washed my hands every few minutes (no, that is not an exaggeration). I refused to go to “dirty” places. I avoided all things that sick people have touched. And the list goes on.At the time, both my parents and I viewed my behavior as a silly childhood fear that would perish with time. But the situation became more serious within months. I would refuse to go out of the house. My hands began to turn blue and purple from overwashing. The skin on my hands would peel similarly to a snake shedding its skin. The fear had consumed me.

The nine months following the development of my emetophobia were both the worst and best parts of my life. I began to attend exposure therapy as a treatment for the overwhelming fear. I was forced to listen to the sounds of people vomiting, watch videos of it, view people throwing up right in front of my eyes, even being forced to step in vomit—it was dreadful. However, during this period of my life, I learned one of the most important things that I have ever learned.

Now, fears never go away completely. To this day, I continue to deal with slight emetophobia. But I have learned how to cope with this fear and to tackle similar obstacles. When I was in middle school, fear fact cards helped me get over my year-long stagefright. In the beginning of high school, it helped me cope with my social anxiety. Now, it continues to help me to cope with my body dysmorphia.

While my sensitivity to the world around me may have caused my emetophobia, it has led me to the life that I am at today. It has shown me that I am capable of persevering through challenges that I would have never known. It has helped me understand how strong of a woman I am.

As a young adult, I can safely say that my feelings about being a sensitive person have changed. I don’t love or hate it—rather I have come to peace with it. Being a sensitive person has allowed me to see the world in a much different point of view than others. I have realized now that being sensitive has not only given me more strength, but it has also allowed me to be able to connect to other humans and animals on a deeper level, leading to closer, genuine relationships with them. Rather than a flaw, I now view being sensitive as a strength.