**Tips On Writing A Personal Statement**

When writing a personal statement for graduate school or job application, ask yourself the following questions and include the information in your answers:

* What is special, unique, distinctive and or impressive about you or your life story? What details of your life might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants (i.e. personal or family history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals)?
* When did you originally become interested in this field? What have you learned about it and about yourself that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
* How have you learned about this field (i.e. classes, readings, seminars, work experiences, or conversations with people already in the field)?
* If work experiences have consumed significant periods of time during your college years, what have you learned (i.e. leadership or managerial skills) and how has the work contributed to your personal growth?
* What are your career goals?
* Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain (I.e. low grades but high GRE scores)?
* Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (economic, physical, family) in your life?
* What personal characteristics do you possess that would enhance your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?
* What skills do you possess?
* Why might you be a stronger candidate for graduate school and more successful and effective in the profession than other applicants?
* What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the admissions or selection committee to be interested in you?

**Format**

The personal statement is a sort of story. Make it fresh, lively, different, not to mention articulate. Make your statement memorable, not boring. It should be catchy, and it does not hurt if you add some drama (related to the questions). If your life lacks drama, find an angle that emphasizes your strengths.

The opening paragraph should grab the reader’s attention. It should include the relevant elements of your statement which will hold the greatest interest for the reader.

The middle selection of your essay might detail your interest and experience in your particular field, as well as some of your knowledge of the field. Refer to what you know about your field, which introduces the reality factor into your statement. Be specific as you can in relating what you know about the field and use language which professionals use in conveying this information. Refer to experiences, classes, conversations with people in the field, or books you’ve read about the career you want and why you are suited to it.

The statement should be no more than two pages, double spaced and typed. If you are sending a resume along as well, be sure to put both the resume and the personal statement on the same paper.