

Make the Personal Statement *Personal* Exerciseⁱ

Introduction: Remember that in most cases the personal statement is critically important in determining whether you will get invited to an interview (e.g., Marshall). In both instances, the reviewers want to get a sense of *who* you are, not just *what* you have done. Are you the *type of person* they want to support? You should use your personal statement to convey who you are as a living, breathing, three-dimensional person. Now, that you have written a working draft of your personal essay, test out whether you are accomplishing this objective with the following exercise.

Exercise: Read through your draft and each time your writing conveys a personal trait, underline that phrase and note in the margin what the personality trait is (e.g., hard-working, compassionate, visionary, service-oriented, ambitious, funny, humble, etc.).

- How many traits show up?
- What are those traits?
- Have you written different traits in the margins or the same trait multiple times?
- Is it an accurate representation of who they are?
- Is it the right balance of traits?

ⁱ Adapted from Cindy Stocks, Bowdoin College

