**Scholarship essays**

**Example:**

My experiences overcoming adversity in order to access high-quality education and professional opportunities while living in one of America’s most impoverished and segregated cities has equipped me with a skill that enables achievement in unlikely circumstances, mental tenacity. This tenacity has empowered me to exceed the mediocre expectations that society has set for people raised in communities like mine, places plagued by high crime and poverty rates and low levels of education and hope. As one of the few people in my community with access to academic and career opportunities in communities of wealth, I feel obligated to push for equity in such spaces. This sense of obligation motivates me to leverage my platforms of privilege to provide members of under-served communities with resources they need to excel in academia and the workforce.

My position as a minority in terms of age, race, gender, or geographic origin in the classroom and workplace has often made me the target of discriminatory behaviors. While in college, I depended on the mental toughness I acquired growing up to handle persistent encounters with racism, sexism, and classism I faced as the only African –American student in the college’s combined master of accountancy program. Instead of allowing the discrimination to decimate my academic success, I employed strategies that I learned from mentors and inclusion training such as focusing on my strengths and seeking professional help to cope.

In 2017, after graduating and becoming one of less than 35% of people in Cleveland, Ohio, with a college degree, I amplified my commitment to helping other students of color excel academically and professionally. I relied on what I learned about pipeline development while completing seven internships and studying abroad to found Journey to the Board (JTTB), an organization providing underrepresented students with critical career skills. To date, JTTB has sponsored more than 25 student memberships in professional organizations and three passport applications to encourage study abroad. While serving as the International Second Vice President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., I spearheaded efforts that raised more than $75,000 for minority student scholarships. In 2018, after becoming a member of the nation’s relatively small percentage of Black homeowners, I began educating millennials of color about saving for home ownership and avoiding predatory lending. Last year, while serving as the board development chairman for the local Boys & Girls Club Young Professionals Board, I created the inaugural board diversity assessment that is now being used to ensure board representation is reflective of the Club’s population. Now, I am preparing to attend law school this fall to disrupt the pervasive racial and gender biases in the legal industry and learn how to harness the law for social change.

My story is a testament that the power of the mind is not a joke. I hope that my work inspires individuals from similar backgrounds as me to believe that they too can defy stereotypes and optimize opportunities. More importantly, I hope my story influences others to reach back while climbing forward.