The "If You Really, Really Knew Me..." Exercise

How to use: Make a copy for yourself by clicking "File" in the menu above, then "Make a copy."

Instructions:

1. Finish the sentence "If you really, really knew me..." for each category below.
2. Answer "so what?" for each answer, saying why it's important to you.
3. Aim for at least 3-5 answers per category. See examples below.

1. FAMILY

Consider: Genetics, home life, parenting, siblings, extended family, responsibilities

"If you really, really knew **me and my family**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I'm the middle child of three children.*	*I've learned how to be a peacemaker.*
I'm a twin and my sister is autistic.	*I see "normal" differently from most people.*

2. CULTURE

Consider: Heritage, language(s), religion, basic cultural and family truths/values

"If you really, really knew **me and my culture**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...	How this might be useful on a college campus...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I come from a military family...*	*...growing up I was often "the new kid" and had to learn to adapt to new environments quickly, and often.*	
My connection to my culture is a little complicated, as I wasn't born in this country, and neither were my parents.	*I feel very connected to my Peruvian roots in some ways, but in other ways I feel really disconnected from it.*	



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3. IDENTITIES

Tip: Spend 3 minutes looking at this chart and 3 minutes looking at this one and list as many identities as you can here:

Some of my identities include...

- *List yours here*

Then pick 3-5 identities to expand on below.

"If you really, really knew **me and my identities**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I'm a visual artist...*	*...I see everything around me as a canvas.*
I identify as non-binary...	...I'm okay with all pronouns (he/she/they).

4. SCHOOL HISTORY

What types of schools, classmates, teachers, and teaching styles have influenced who you are?

"If you really, really knew **me and my school history**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I was admitted to a highly competitive magnet school...*	*...but decided to leave and go to a school where I could love school again. It worked.*
My school doesn't receive the funding that some other schools receive, so our class selection is sometimes limited and we don't have a dedicated college counselor.	*...I've had to self-study for two AP classes, and have had to learn about the college process on my own.*

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5. OPPORTUNITIES & EXPERIENCES

What have I done, experienced, or been a part of that influenced who I am?

"If you really, really knew **me and the opportunities and experiences** I've had, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I attended a selective research program last summer where I realized that neuroscience is what I want to study.*	*...I love that neuroscience brings together so many different fields (psychology, biology, chemistry, etc.)*
I had to drop out of sports and activities at school so we could keep my elderly grandparents at home with us...	*...I was disappointed, but our family has grown a lot closer since then.*

6. TALENTS & SUPERPOWERS

What do I believe are my gifts? What am I great at?

Tip: Take a look at this Values List for ideas.	
"If you really, really knew **me and my talents and superpowers** I've had, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I know how to make amazing yogurt...*	*...it's so good that I've sold it at local farmers markets and earned enough money to pay for my school clothes this year.*
I can make pretty much anyone laugh...	*...some of my teachers appreciate this, but some really don't.* :-P

7. INTERESTS

What attracts my attention? What do I choose to learn on my own?



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"If you really, really knew **me and my interests**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I've been studying ants for the past two years...*	*...I can connect pretty much anything in the world to an interesting fact from the ant world. (Try me.)*
I am a huge baseball nerd...	*...I started to write a blog about the San Diego Padres (then quit, tbh, to focus more on school).*

8. INVOLVEMENT

What kinds of things have I gotten involved with? What roles do I play?

Tip: Spend 3 minutes looking at this Communities chart and list as many identities as you can below.

Some of my communities include...

- *List yours here.*

Then pick 3-5 examples of involvement to expand on below.

"If you really, really knew **me and my involvement**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I joined my school's robotics team to learn how to code.*	*...I ended up learning how to resolve conflict.*
I attend my local library's speaker series every week.	*...I've learned about chess, using Microsoft Excel, Bollywood, and birdsong.*

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9. INITIATIVE

Where have I taken initiative on my own? How have I been a creator, design thinker, entrepreneur, spark plug, risk-taker?

"If you really, really knew **me and my initiative**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I started a nondenominational morning prayer group for students who arrived at school on the early busses*	*...It started out just 3 of us but has grown to 21 students that meet each morning.*
I crochet tiny animals for fun.	*...Last year I decided to sell them on Etsy and so far have made more than $1,000.*

10. IMPACT

Where have others been influenced by me? Where has my involvement made a difference (on individuals, community, and beyond)?

"If you really, really knew **me and my impact**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I started my school's ultimate frisbee team with my best friend when I was in 9th grade.*	*... Now we're repeat state champions and have a B-team too.*
I worked with the Best Buddies program for all four years of high school.	*... We've grown participation to 34 members and even inspired another high school to start a program.*

11. AMBITION

What next? What am I hoping to do once I leave high school? How do I hope to influence my college, community, and the larger world?

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"If you really, really knew **me and my ambition**, you would know..."	So what/that's important to me because...
Examples (delete and replace with your own): *I want to become an entrepreneur that starts a fashion business that brings attention to climate change.*	*...I'm hoping the school I go to has business classes, but is also pretty eco-conscious.*
I have no idea what I want to study in the future, but I'm interested in artificial intelligence and its impact on society.	*...Maybe I'll explore the Ethics of AI (if that's even a thing)? I'm also interested in researching the positive impacts of video games.*

