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Medical School Admission Essay

The words “dreams” and “goals” are often used interchangeably. While some may believe they are synonymous, there’s a definite contrast between the two. Dreams are easy – they’re simple, they’re free. They don’t require any real sacrifice, but they can inspire you. Goals will stretch you beyond your limitations to accomplish more than you ever believed possible. Goals are what turn dreams into reality.

My dream was to become a doctor, because I love people and I know that I have a heart for service. Even more, I grew up with a fascination with how the human body worked. When visiting the pediatrician I was intrigued by the entire experience. I wondered what the doctor could hear when auscultating my chest and more importantly why it seemed like I had to get shots during every visit. [I loved being able to observe the role a physician played in making a sick person well – making important decisions that can actively change a person’s fate.] Physicians are able to do so much more than examine, diagnose, and treat. They give hope to the hopeless and turn frightening situations into unexpected victories. I want to be a part of that. I was created to be a part of that.

Since graduating from college, I have reflected on my years there. [I see now that I had not truly dedicated myself to accomplishing my lifelong goal.] I went to class, applied minimal effort, and accepted the mediocre outcome. I focused on short-term goals – “pass this class and you’ll be one step closer to graduation.” For a brief moment I considered the idea that I was not cut out for it. I brainstormed alternative career options, but none of them satisfied my passion for medicine. I needed to turn my dream into a goal.

During that time of self-realization I matured tremendously. I realized that I hadn’t underperformed because I wasn’t able, but because I had not actively made the decision to turn my dream into my goal. I was not making the necessary sacrifices to make my dream come true. I had wanted the product without paying for it. /// [I spent semesters volunteering at the emergency room of one of the local hospitals, and it was always the highlight of my week.] Triaging patients and playing an active role in the medical field was far more exciting than organic chemistry or physics lab. [As painful as it was for me to come to terms with my reality,] it was exactly what I needed to reignite the fire within me.

At that point I made a life-changing decision, I decided that I was going to do whatever it took to become a doctor. I resolved to go back to school and dedicate myself to pursuing that goal. It was a definite sacrifice – many sleepless nights and tuition payments with limited resources, but it was worth it. It allowed me to prove to myself that I was able and that somehow this dream could actually be a goal – it was achievable.

[After my first semester back in school I began working as a scribe.] This experience also convinced me that I am meant to be a physician. Every day at work is an exciting opportunity to learn. I’ve learned how to read MRI images – something I never had an interest in or even believed I’d be able to do. I actually know what spinal disc herniations and canal stenosis look like on film. [I can tell you so much about the anatomy of the spine, nerve segments, muscle groups, and the conditions that affect them. I even understand which physical exam findings are indicative of certain conditions, and what the best treatment options are. This is what I’ve always wanted – it’s my calling. What now separates me from being a clinician is years of hard work and total dedication to this goal, and from my experience I am certain that it will absolutely be worth it.]

[This journey hasn’t been simple, and it certainly won’t get any easier from here. However, I have resolved that I am willing to commit all that I have to it.] Turning my dream into a goal has equipped me with the tenacity and persistence required to make it a reality. Dreaming does not require any movement. We dream while we sleep; we can daydream while staring blankly into space. But dreams don’t get us anywhere. At some point a dream has to transform, and that transformation is messy. I’ve had to accept my past mistakes and forgive myself for them. I’ve had to learn that my mistakes do not define who I am or what I am capable of. I now have the confidence and most importantly the commitment to succeed in medical school. The dream is the light at the end of the tunnel, but the goal requires you to make a concrete plan to get there. I am fully and wholeheartedly committed to making my goal a reality.

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