

*Notice that this student takes a few risks in the opening—the dramatic setup turns out to describe fixing machines in a laundromat. The connection between fixing washing machines and fixing people seems a bit strained, but the writer does a very nice job developing the connection. It’s also unlikely this personal statement was forgotten or lost in the shuffle of other statements. Finally, this statement is specific and offers a compelling narrative of development.*

“We have another one. Let’s go.”

It has become routine now. I open the steel door and saunter into the room. Everything has already been prepared for my arrival, the distinct, recognizable label and a sea of white sheets. I quickly wipe the sweat off my brow and wash my calloused hands in the sink. The gloves slip smoothly onto my hands, their touch intimidating yet familiar; I have done this a hundred times. The eerie cold of the metal tools spills through the latex as I approach my assignment. Steadily, I begin, inserting the Phillips’ head of the drill into one of the screws of the washer. And so commences another diagnosis of a broken device at my family’s coin laundromat. The maintenance of these intricate machines is a continuous challenge; parts are constantly improved, regulations are frequently changed, and new glitches are the norm. It is the similar prospect of intellectual exploration that has led me to the medical profession.

I have certainly had my share of experiences in the world of medicine. I have waded through Indian monsoon floodwaters that passed above my chest, fearfully gripping my grandfather’s hand, to reach a clinic when malaria had overwhelmed my body. Several years later, I found myself at the same clinic, this time shadowing the doctor who had once quelled my 103-degree fever. I have felt my body go weak when my grandfather’s neurologist diagnosed him with ALS, and later became paralyzed when I conveyed the grim news to my mother. However, these incidents have simply been markers on my journey to become a doctor. It is quite simplistic to say that a desire to help people has led me to devote my life to medicine; all people give to society in their own manner. But medicine is the only career that combines the pleasure of intellectual discovery with the passion of helping others.

Serving as a Big Brother to B. has been one of the most fulfilling and challenging experiences in my life. “He has been through four mentors in one year,” I remember the director telling me in January. Yet through the struggles, B. and I learned a lot from each other. On the last day, he said I taught him how to do math. He taught me how to believe in someone, to persist no matter what the odds, and that helping someone comes in many forms. I know I have not changed the course of his life or led him to an epiphany. But I have given him two hours of

fun, two hours of being a kid every week, away from the unimaginable hardships he confronts everyday. During the past few years, I also tutored several high school students for the SATs, science, and math. In addition to the personal satisfaction in seeing them succeed, I improved my communication and teaching skills. My experiences have shown me that the ability to help is dependent on the ability to gain someone's trust. I recall a day in the Norwalk Hospital ER when I saw a physician kneel down to speak at eye level with a frightened six-year old. This child ultimately revealed that she had a fractured tibia not because she had fallen off a table but because her father had struck her.

It was not until the second year of high school that I first appreciated academic exploration. In advanced placement biology, my brush with college-level coursework left me humbled but intrigued. Twelve AP exams later, many taken through self-study, my curiosity had led me to tackle topics that I would have never imagined learning. At the University of Connecticut, I spurned the concept of graduating early to take advantage of my scholastic opportunities. A science major was not a necessity, so I contemplated economics and the classics early in college. When molecular biology interested me, I used the University Scholar program to further my understanding. My academic experiences have instilled in me a desire to pursue medicine, where exploration and life-long learning are embraced.

My transcript and awards demonstrate my academic ability, but research has certainly been the most satisfying component of my education. It is a refreshing feeling to piece seemingly disparate observations into a logical picture, to look for answers without a key, to not only receive knowledge but to create it. I have developed a true appreciation for the scientific method, especially for the power of asking questions; asking questions has kept the lights on at 2 A.M. and the centrifuge spinning during the weekend. With every answer comes the realization that there are now three times as many questions. I thrive on this reality. Indeed, the ability to solve some of healthcare's biggest issues, scientific and social, will rely on the curiosity, persistence and critical thinking that engaging in research implants in tomorrow's generation.

The challenges inherent in medicine are plentiful: the grim prospect of dying patients, the rapid changes triggered by improving technology, and the frequent test of maintaining professionalism in the face of emotional patients. My experiences have not given me a proven formula to overcome these challenges, but they have provided me with the confidence to attack

them. With an understanding of science and humanism, and the continual exploration that is inherent in both, I am prepared to move from fixing washers to fixing people.