

Medical School Personal Statement (PDF)

In response to popular demand we are including a sample dental school essay. Note how the author reveals a lot about herself without overtly saying "I am this and I am that." She is obviously hard working and disciplined, probably compassionate and kind. Interested in dentistry for a long time, she has clearly considered other options. And she tells a good story.

I could hardly keep myself from staring at the girl: the right side of her face was misshapen and bigger than the left. Only later did I notice that Cheryl, about nine at the time, had light brown hair, lively brown eyes, and a captivating smile. When she walked into the candy shop where I worked six years ago, Cheryl told me she was a student of my former fourth grade teacher with whom I had kept in contact. We talked then and spent time talking each time she visited. She became a very special friend of mine, one whom I admire greatly. At the time we met, I was taking honors and AP classes, working about twenty hours a week, and feeling sorry for myself. Cheryl's outgoing confidence and good cheer put my situation in perspective. Cheryl was strong, kind, and surprisingly hopeful. She never focused on her facial deformities, but always on the anticipated improvement in her appearance. Her ability to find strength within herself inspired me to become a stronger person. It motivated me to pursue a career where I could help those like Cheryl attain the strength that she possesses.

At the time, my initial interest turned toward psychology. Impressed with Cheryl's outlook, I overlooked the source of her strength: she knew that treatment will improve her appearance. Focusing on the emotional aspects of her illness, I volunteered at the Neuropsychiatric Institute. There, I supervised the daily activities of pre-adolescents, played with them, and assisted them in getting dressed. I worked with crack babies, autistic children, and children who had severe behavioral problems. I enjoyed interacting with the children, but I often became frustrated that I was not able to help them. For instance, a young autistic boy frequently hit himself. No one was permitted to stop this child. We had to turn away and allow him to continually strike and hurt himself until he tired.

I was increasingly disappointed with the lack of progress I saw in my volunteer work at NPI, but my job again pushed me in the right direction. During the fall quarter of my junior year in college, I left the candy shop where I had worked for nearly five and a half years, and I began working as a senior clerk in the Anesthesiology Residency Program. Ironically work, which frequently made study difficult, helped me find the right path. There I learned about the oral and maxillo-facial specialty, which will allow me to help people like Cheryl.

To explore my interest in dentistry, I volunteered as a dental assistant in Dr. Miller's dental office. Dr. Miller introduced me to various dental techniques. Although I was mainly an observer, I had the opportunity to interact with the patients. I came in contact with a diverse patient population with different problems and dental needs. I observed as Dr. Miller dealt with each patient individually and treated each one to the best of his ability. He familiarized me with strategies for oral health promotion and disease prevention. I learned a great deal from him, and as a result, my interest in dentistry grew.

I choose to pursue a career in dentistry after following a circuitous path. My friendship with Cheryl motivated me to enter a field where I can help the severely disfigured cope with their condition. Although I initially turned to psychology, I found my work at the Neuropsychiatric Institute to be frustrating and was searching for a different way to achieve my goal. Ironically, Cheryl had told me all along the source of her strength: the knowledge that her condition was treatable and improving. Through maxillo-facial dentistry I will help others with serious facial deformities have the same knowledge and source of strength.