Emma Katz

Personal Statement

My enthusiasm for medicine and dream of becoming a doctor originated at a young age because of my personal experience with my ill grandmother’s physicians, and has only grown with my experiences since. I plan to use this statement to explain how my passion and academic credentials display my potential to be a great doctor.

One of the most extraordinary people I have ever known, my Nana battled diabetes, legal blindness, a heart condition, and Alzheimer’s for years before finally succumbing in 2008. Because my mother was her primary caretaker, I spent many of my adolescent afternoons in waiting rooms, doctors’ offices, and hospitals with my Nana. My sister and brother complained constantly, but those days never bored me. Doctors fascinated me. I observed how they interacted with my Nana, my mom, and me. I saw how they treated patients and their families on a personal level, what made one a “good” doctor versus a “bad” doctor. Most importantly, I saw how their words and actions kept my Nana alive even with the odds stacked against her. I knew I wanted to be a physician and have that effect on someone else’s life.

Just before my Nana finally died, she told my aunt that her only regret would be not being alive to see what I would make of my life. Out of her nine children and twenty-two grandchildren, I was the one she believed could make the biggest difference. Maybe it was because she knew I wanted to be a doctor and help people like her. I think it was because she saw in me the same fight that had inspired her to survive all those years despite the odds, the same fight I plan to use to achieve my dream of becoming a doctor.

I know I could be a great doctor someday, because in addition to the heart I also believe I am intelligent enough. Thus far at Penn State, I have earned a 3.88 cumulative GPA in the rigorous Biology major with an option in Vertebrate Physiology, making Dean’s List every semester. I do not think it is any coincidence that academically my three biggest interests are the cardiac, nervous, and endocrine systems, the three that affected my Nana. I hope to someday specialize in one of those fields. It is fitting that my academic and career goals intertwine with my desire to make my Nana proud of me, and is all the more reason for me to stay committed throughout the long and laborious process of becoming a doctor.

I am confident that it is the right career choice for me, because as a volunteer I have observed doctors from their perspective, and with my Nana I have interacted with them from the patient side. Volunteering in the Faulkner Hospital Pathology Department for over four years was my most valuable experience working with doctors so far. I volunteered under some brilliant doctors and got to know them personally. I saw their day-to-day activities, and realized that the lack of doctor-patient contact for pathologists was not for me. However, I was often tasked with delivering papers and packages all around the hospital, and sometimes assigned to different departments when it was a slow day in Pathology. On those days I got to observe cardiologists, neurologists, and surgeons, and discovered that those specialties greatly interested me. Regrettably, my escalated obligations at my paid summer job eventually prevented me from being able to volunteer the required number of hours at the Faulkner, so I had to stop. Nevertheless, that experience gave me invaluable insight into what doctors are like, how they make decisions, and why I definitely want to be one. On the other hand, with my Nana during all those childhood afternoons in doctors’ offices, I witnessed the distinction between a smart doctor with all the answers and a great doctor with whom patients are comfortable. Combined, my experiences taught me that a doctor’s workload never ceases, and perhaps the most important qualities of great doctors are passion and motivation. To become a doctor requires motivation, and to care about patients as people takes passion. I know I possess that drive.

This statement has provided some insight to my personal inspiration, academic ability, and enthusiasm for helping people. I want to be a doctor, and I know if I am admitted to medical school I could thrive. My experiences have shown me that not only am I motivated to be a doctor, but also that I have the heart to be a great one.