
Perseverance And Adaptability Through Hardship

I heard the blender turn on for the 6th morning in a row: I look at the clock: 5:15 A.M. My parents have always been early risers along with my grandparents, and, from what I assume, their parents as well. As a young child, I thought waking early was just part of being a parent. Taking the kids to school, the long hours at work, the nightly dinner preparation, and finally tucking us into bed were the primary responsibilities of a parent that resonated with me growing up. As I entered high school, I realized that parenting was far more complicated than what is seen at face value. I began to scratch the surface of understanding. For example, waking up at 5 A.M. six days a week, year in and year out seemed near impossible to a high schooler—especially with no spring or summer breaks to look forward to. Only when I entered college at the University of Miami and began to reflect on my childhood did I begin to truly understand the perseverance and adaptability my parents possessed in order to face the challenges of raising a family.

College life, as many realize quite quickly, is much different than high school especially for me. I went to a small high school whose student population was very similar to me; my graduating class was 60 people in total. Now, I found myself with nearly 3,000 other freshman students from all over the world. Adjusting to this new life took some time, but I eventually found my niche. I found my biomedical ethics class particularly interesting and useful. We discussed major issues plaguing healthcare workers and ethical principles that affect how and when a physician can treat their patients. The principles learned in this class are particularly useful during this ongoing pandemic and have only become evident to me through the numerous case studies covered and first person accounts I now hear on a daily basis.

The distribution of resources such as masks, ventilators, and staff provide physicians with a dilemma that requires a healthy amount of perseverance and adaptability in order to overcome such shortages. I am thoroughly aware that this ongoing pandemic is only the latest installment in the unusual and chaotic schedule a physician encounters, but that is precisely the reason why I am choosing the field of medicine. As I reflect on my chosen career path, I cannot help but see the similarities between it and my experiences growing up in my household. During the 2008 recession, as with millions of other Americans, my father, who was the sole breadwinner at the time because my mother was in school, was laid off from work. It was an exceedingly difficult time for my parents. My mother was in the middle of her master's degree and was contractually obligated not to work, was raising three young children, and supporting who father who was recently diagnosed with dementia. Likewise, my father embarked on a desperate job search in order to support the rest of us. Although I was 10, I understood that the situation was not good. However, the part that stuck with me the most was that I do not remember one instance of my parents complaining or admitting defeat. They persevered and adapted.

I also saw adaptability and perseverance through my research at The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis: Dr. Damien Pierce's neurology lab. Through over 2 years of experience collaborating with Jaime Said analyzing animal behavior and data collection with respect to mesenchymal stem cell progression following mechanical trauma, I experienced the stress of satisfying impending timelines, collecting necessary data, and analyzing an immense number of results. Through this experience, I have come to realize how difficult and meticulous collection of even

minor results can be. Even though the hours were long and the work demanding, Jaime persevered and saw the work through to the end- much like what I have seen in my parents growing up.

Through countless late nights and early mornings in my pursuit of knowledge in biomedical engineering, I am only beginning to experience the stress, challenges, and obstacles that face physicians daily. Similar to the goal of Dr. Pearse's lab, I also have an end goal of helping people through my work in medicine. Similar to my parents who worked daily to provide me with the best life they could, I, too, aim to help my patients daily through whatever obstacles they may encounter in their own lives. Now, as I reflect on my childhood, my experiences throughout school, and my experiences outside the classroom, I finally understand what drives many people in my life. I understand what drives my parents to persevere through hardship; what drives Jaime to attain the best research results he can. I understand that adapting to unforeseen circumstances and persevering through hardship in order to help those around me is a primary tool in a physician's toolbox and two characteristics of me that I truly treasure.