

As I sit with my peers, many whom have been adorned with a white coat, I look at their faces and watch as their eyes ~~become wide open~~ and their eyebrows ~~raise-furrowed while-as~~ I informed them of my illness. “Wilson’s disease?, ~~t~~hat is one of the staples of pathologies we learned during year 1 and 2” they ~~inform merecount~~. They proceed with further questions, inquiring whether I was taking “trientine or penicillamine” and also ~~examining-looking deep into~~ my eyes for signs of Kayser-Fleischer rings. ~~Their questions are endless and but I sit back amazed at their vast knowledge of an illness that I once was unfamiliar about.~~ However, while my friends in medical school can tell me about the pathophysiology of my disease, they ~~can-could~~ never tell me about the fear I felt ~~when I while I was in my specialist’s office and I~~ heard the words “You have Wilson’s disease”. No ~~medical~~-textbook can ever tell me about the tears I wept at the age of 10, when I had to let go of my twin’s hand as he was being wheeled to surgery as a result of our shared genetic anomaly. Inadvertently, what I thought was a curse, has become an eerie blessing as it has instilled in me the drive to become a physician in order to share what I have learned from my past. ~~What I gained from my experience with Wilson’s disease is the knowledge of being a lifelong patient, a memento serving as a reminder of the challenges one faces when bound to an illness that does not just go away.~~

I still remember the fall day in ~~the-my brother’s~~ hospital room, ~~of my brother’s~~. My mother was weeping uncontrollably as we heard the news that my brother’s initial liver transplant failed. ~~I found myself in a position that a 10-year-old child rarely finds himself themselves in, being the stronghold of our family.~~ Fortunately for our family, this burden was ~~also~~ shared amongst my brother’s medical team, whom became our beacon of hope during a period we needed it the most. Just moments prior to his second surgical procedure, “Dr. Mark~~z~~”, his surgeon, stood by and assured my family that my twin will be waiting for me after completion of his procedure. ~~I credit this surgeon to saving my best friend’s life, and realized that the extra time they spent with my family prior to performing a 10-hour long procedure profoundly strengthen us during our time of crisis. That simple act of kindness and empathy invigorated me to be a physician, so that I may be a fortitude to others and their families during their times of illness, as my brother’s medical team had done for us.~~

During my childhood, I began to ignore my illness as a coping mechanism due to the fear of my future ~~while~~ living with a chronic illness. While I was in my teens, my body compensated despite me failing to adhere to a strict medication regiment~~;~~ ~~H~~however, eventually the negative effects of my lifestyle began to manifest, ~~particularly academically once I reached university. It was when I attended university that I saw the consequences of illness, such as my inability to excel academically.~~ This led to self-doubt on whether I had the capability to ~~become~~ a physician, someone who helps others manage their respective illnesses, when I struggled with my own.

After graduating, I took the time to explore whether medicine was the right choice for my future. My doubts ~~in medicine~~ began to resolve one November day ~~while~~ working as scribe in an emergency room. As I ready my fingers to type, I watched the patient cradle his distended abdomen in agony. ~~While obtaining history,~~ I noted that the patient had liver cirrhosis secondary to alcoholism which he had not sought treatment for in the past. I could not help but feel for the patient as I saw myself in him. We both shared an illness which we neglected to address due to ~~the~~ struggles of ~~our-the~~ past ~~and perhaps psychosocial factors involved as well.~~ ~~However,~~ ~~f~~ Fortunately, I had still had time to make amends with my body. From then, my journey to becoming healthier was my embodiment of my desire to pursue ~~osteopathic~~ medicine. In order for me to help others, I had to mature and help myself. This moment reinvigorated me to be a physician, specifically one with an osteopathic foundation. ~~This is due to the~~

**Commented [EF1]:** I assume this is your thesis and what I want to do with the next draft is make it both specific to encompass what you will talk about in your next few paragraphs and also specific to osteopathic medicine. This way the thesis itself reflects your interest in osteopathic medicine.

**Commented [EF2]:** I like this sentence but I think removing it doesn’t necessarily take away from the message here. Thoughts?

**Commented [EF3]:** I think we might be able to encompass the idea that the surgeon took into consideration what made the patient (your brother, obviously) whole – which was his family. This may have inadvertently lead you to reflect how you could do similarly – which was an osteopathic medical education.

I am not entirely sure this was the case, obviously but this may be a good starting point to also encompass an osteopathic principle here as well.

**Commented [EF4]:** What is due to it? I think we can clear this point up a little.

tenet of osteopathy which emphasizes that an individual is a “unit of body, mind, and spirit”. As an osteopathic physician, am I encouraged to not only treat a physical illness but to also help the individual as whole so that they maintain on the course of self-healing.

Since then, I became compliant with my medication and my associated symptoms have greatly improved. The benefits associated with proper management of my disease began to permeate in other aspects of my life, from exceling in my post-baccalaureate program and to achieving leadership positions within my scribe program. ~~With the knowledge I gained from addressing my past mistakes with my illness, I sought to be a mentor to others who were once in my shoes.~~ Two years ago, I had the privilege, along with my brother, to speak at my children’s hospital, sharing our stories of living with a chronic illness. After giving our speech and stepping down from the podium, I happened to spot “Chris” from amongst the crowd. Chris was a pediatric patient of whom was currently admitted for management of his own respective illness. His face had displayed the same look of fear I had after my initial diagnosis. I placed my arm on his shoulder and informed him “while the journey seems long and scary, it is far from over”. He responded with a smile and from there I was reassured that my calling was in osteopathic medicine. ~~With the knowledge I have now, I hope to implement the lessons I have learned from self care in a direct role involving the health of the chronically ill.~~

While there are other professions which may serve as avenue for my empathy and mentorship qualities, an osteopathic education will provide me with the foundation to not only approach my patients with my hands-on skills but also with the knowledge to guide my patients as they live with their respective diseases and ailments. Being born with Wilson’s disease has initially led me to believe that I was weak, however I now realize that ~~it my disease~~ is my strength as it has given me realization that I not only want to be a physician, but it has shaped the image of the physician I want to be. It would be an honor and a privilege to be an osteopathic physician at your institution so that I may practice being the physician that I need to behave set out to become.

**Commented [EF5]:** Perhaps we can use this tenet in the context of addressing the last experience described. If perhaps someone had addressed his illness in the context of psychosocial factors including the mind, body, spirit – then perhaps he could have also made amends with his own body.

This is a curious statement that may tie together quite a few things here. Let me know what you think about it.

**Commented [EF6]:** I like this! Great job!

**Commented [EF7]:** I think the story you tell after this says just that so we can save the characters 😊

**Commented [EF8]:** I think this paragraph is best off on its own to serve as a conclusion. One thing I would recommend doing is trying to tie back to something you mentioned in the introductory paragraph, even if subtle. This will allow the PS to come full circle and really connect things. If you need a little help with this, we can chat more! 😊