

In life, there are few exceptions to the rules that we abide by...but the field of dermatology is the exception to the rule that we “should not judge a book by its cover.” The foundation of dermatology rests on the diagnosis of skin diseases with the unaided eye, and I am pleasantly surprised by how much I love contradicting the aforementioned rule! I want to provide support for patients with skin problems and watch them overcome their own physical and emotional barriers. Qualities that I possess in great strength that will serve me well in this field include compassion, versatility, and a love for general medicine.

As a result of my own personal experiences, I have developed more **compassion** than many of my fellow peers. I was badly injured in a car accident during my second year of medical school, and I can appreciate the experience of the patient in the health care setting. I sustained injuries that left me with both physical and emotional scars. Losing vision in my right eye and dealing with a permanent surgical scar from a fractured radius forced me to develop a great deal of empathy for the “other side” of the physician-patient relationship. As a dermatologist, I will deal with the underlying psychological issues concerning appearance far more than other fields of medicine do. This field requires an enormous amount of patience and understanding, mannerisms that have become second nature to me in the natural course of my recovery. While working in dermatology clinics, I heard far too many patients express a desire to hide from their disfigurement...but these patients made remarkable recoveries right before my eyes! The visual and emotional gratitude that patients express are very powerful feelings, and ones that I know I will witness on a daily basis as a dermatologist.

Versatility is a unique feature in dermatology, because the field requires me to perfect the techniques of direct visualization, information processing, and pathological examination. It is one of the few fields in which the complexities of identification, microscopy, and treatment are very delicately intertwined. Aspects of dermatology that appeal to me the most are the fast-paced outpatient setting which offers the benefits of clinic and procedure time, the continuity of care, and the pleasure of seeing patients get better with time. Dermatology has its roots in **internal medicine**, a field that I genuinely love, which allows for the etiology of many skin diseases to be traced back to “the basics.” Furthermore, dermatology is one of the few fields that is inextricably linked to pathology, another field that I am truly passionate about. Pathology was my favorite subject during medical school, as is evidenced by my induction into the Association of Pathology Chairs Honor Society. This award is granted to the top ten percent of each class completing the pathology course, and my love for the subject matter is reflected by my performance.

While “the surface” is central to dermatology, digging beneath the surface is far more critical to making a difference in the medical field. I would like to pursue a career in academics, so I can pass “the surface” on, but continue to dig deeper into the unknown. I believe communication and education are paramount to a successful career in medicine, and I wish to teach my patients and my peers. Through my own disturbing twists of fate, I have dug deep within myself and learned to value the following quote: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.” I have become a stronger person, all-the-while gaining incredible insight into all aspects of the medical field in the course of recovering after my car accident. I have discovered a quiet strength that has allowed me to overcome obstacles and will serve me well in my endeavors to help others. The knowledge I have gained as a medical student and the compassion and insight that I have developed as a patient will serve me well as a dermatologist. I will bring a unique combination of endless energy, diligence, and fun to any team I am a part of, and I hope I get the chance to fulfill my dreams and aspirations as a member of your residency program!