

"Your word is 'jejunum,'" the moderator says. The year is 1996, I am in the eighth grade, and I have managed to work my way into the final five spellers in the district spelling bee after winning my middle school bee, all in the hopes of being crowned the nerdiest nerd in the region and winning a spot in the nationally-televised, Washington, D.C., finale. If only I had not been distracted and excited by my knowledge that the top five spellers would automatically win a cash prize, I may have focused a bit more on the task at hand and not spelled it 'g-e-g-u-n-u-m,' which sounds funnier than 'jejunum' when you say it aloud. Although I never made it to the national bee, I reveled in the fact that I had reached fifth place, won \$50 and invented a new word all at the same time.

Sometimes I tell people that this misspelling was the reason I wanted to become a physician because it makes for a good story, but it was not. Fourteen years later, however, I have come up with genuine reasons why I have decided to become a family doctor.

Family medicine fits who I am as a human being. I am an outgoing, friendly person with a great sense of humor who loves interacting with new people. My personal interests are varied and range from sports to rock 'n roll music to current events to outdoor activities. Not only do these things keep me balanced, they improve my ability to connect with patients.

From a medical perspective, I enjoy being comfortable with a broad range of health and disease states and I like rich patient relationships and continuity-of-care with a diverse population. I am excited by family medicine's never-boring variety of chief complaints and I relish the constant challenge to improve not only my medical knowledge but doctoring skills as well.

For fun, I stay active with CrossFit; I am a former certified personal trainer and have completed a marathon. I also enjoy following medical advances in nutrition/food science and environmental safety. I plan to use my expanding knowledge in these areas to augment my holistic skills. I want to be as well-rounded a physician as possible.

In the future, I hope to work in a community setting. But I am open to the possibilities of working in a hospital or a clinic, living domestically or abroad. I am in the midst of planning a rotation in Sweden, hoping that this experience will give me a different perspective on health care as well as some different health system ideas I can bring back to the states. Something that attracts me to family medicine is that the skill set is so broad and applicable across various settings that the clinical possibilities are virtually endless. One thing I do know, however, is that I plan to continue working in the areas of health care quality and patient safety, a path I embarked upon in medical school for my master of public health. Whether I engage in quality improvement projects, research or both, I enjoy the different way of thinking required by this subject matter.

These are the reasons why family medicine fits me and I fit family medicine. From the gritty medical science to the broader public health perspective to the maintenance of health through nutrition and exercise to the fun social interactions, I see myself enjoying a family medicine residency and career. And of course, I need an appropriate platform to spread all of my secrets about the gegunum.