

Every finger of the little boy's hand was adhered to his palm except for the extended third digit. I examined the severe burn injury as the plastic surgery attending discussed how we were going to fix the damage. Several contracture releases, K-wires, and skin grafts later, I excitedly realized he would eventually regain function of his little hand. I didn't know what I wanted to be at the start of my third year, but after patients and cases like this one, I was energized by learning what I found in no other rotation. Plastic surgery emphasizes the highest of expectations and skilled precision in an amazing field that can't be matched – I have found my place in medicine.

Surgery was compelling to me as soon as I began my clerkship. The OR environment was exciting and fast-paced, requiring me to develop the dexterity of my hands. Growing up I used to help my dad with everything from building houses to plumbing, from landscaping to auto-body work. Then I began taking up projects of my own, building and designing bookshelves, tables, and desks. Now as physician-in-training, Plastic Surgery is the culmination of my interests in medicine, artistry, and craftsmanship. During my rotations, I appreciated the healthy, competitive environment of people with whom I shared similar goals and interests, encouraging each other to improve. Additionally my need for attention to detail and precision was thoroughly satisfied through cleft lip and hand repairs, flap designs, soft tissue transplants, and aesthetic surgeries among others procedures.

My goal has always been simple: to exceed all expectations in what I choose to do. My parents overcame search dogs, machine guns, pirate attacks, and the loss of a brother at sea to reach this country – the land of opportunity. Growing up listening to their stories of survival embedded in me the strong value of humility and the overwhelming drive to excel. They taught me that hard work is its own reward. Now I am determined to focus my energy towards being a great plastic surgeon, like all the physicians I have met in the field thus far.

I seek a program with talented faculty and good exposure to the variety of topics in plastic surgery, and look forward to a well rounded education. Exposure to research in the field is also important to me because without it there can be no advancements. My prior research experiences have been in cancer and although fascinating scientifically, I realized during a summer internship at Children's Hospital Los Angeles that cancer was not the field for me. I need the ability to fix the problem at hand and the instant satisfaction that comes from alleviating pain and suffering. Research endeavors, however, are intellectually stimulating and I look forward to pursue it in my new chosen field as a plastic surgeon.

To my program I will bring my considerable energy and drive to excel, and will share it with my colleagues. My comfort in any role and preference to work as part of a team will also support my patients and colleagues. A strong leader is just as important as a reliable team member, and when selected and appropriate I thrive in leadership positions. My desire to learn, my calm and patient demeanor, and my teaching experience will be key traits I will contribute to my residency program.

Choosing a residency is choosing a partnership with lifelong impact. To my partners I offer my eagerness, reliability, and skills. In return, I ask for the opportunity to develop my talents and use them to discover and become the exceptional plastic surgeon I strive to become.