

From an early childhood, my parents instilled in me the values of honesty, self respect and respect for others. As far back as I remember the concept of exploring my curiosities, whether dissecting my toys or building electronic robots, seemed to be infinitely fascinating. My parents continually encouraged me to be active and to explore all that was around me. I surrounded myself with automobile magazines, books, and scientific kits always looking for new ways to enjoy these apparatus. This happy adolescent environment was interrupted when the reality of the xxxx and xxxx war hit home. Under these hostile and many times traumatizing events my parents made the brave decision to migrate to Canada in the hopes of providing a better future for their children. The experience of war through such innocent eyes could have had a negative impact on the rest of my life. Instead, the horrible event instilled me with a sound understanding of the value of life and a strong desire to develop skills, which would allow me to assist others during times of need.

My academic studies began in the amorphous realm of business management. In the fall of 1998, I decided it was time to sharpen my skills in the marketplace. I gathered associates, raised capital, and launched xxxx., Inc. a private consulting firm offering website design, e-solutions, and graphic design tailored to the often technologically averse healthcare industry. As President & CEO of this small company, I not only managed my own business, but more importantly I honed by academic skills through real world application. As my education in business progressed, my business career continued to expand, but I soon realized that Internet technology was not what I loved—a difficult conclusion that I reached while busily navigating xxx through the boom times of the Internet. Suddenly, business, as an end unto itself seemed a rather empty proposition. I was unsure of my direction, drifting unfulfilled, looking for a meaningful niche of my own. In this haze of personal uncertainty, a good friend introduced me to the possibility of dentistry; this friend came from a family of dentists and thus was able to reveal a life lived in dentistry. Although the skill set would be wholly different, I would be able to apply much of what I learned through my own endeavors with xxxx consulting the healthcare industry. I knew I needed to spend time in the clinical setting to determine if this is my bliss. I arranged to follow Dr. xxxx and Dr. xxxx, both of whom patiently explained each procedure, no matter how routine or rudimentary. However, I crossed my own personal Rubicon not with such shadowing experiences, which while helpful, served to buttress a budding curiosity about the field of dentistry. It became a pursuit after I was chatting with Dr. xxxx as he was literally closing his office and had sent the remainder of his staff home for the evening. A mother came screeching through the parking lot, emerged from her SUV frantic about how her 10 yr old son had incurred a dental injury during a sporting activity. Calmly and in a matter of minutes, Dr. xxxx proceeded to both alleviate the child's pain and the mother's worry. It could not be any clearer for me than at that particular moment: dentistry was an avenue for me to help people, make a difference in there lives, and build relationships of trust and care. The curriculum shift in order to seriously pursue dentistry as a vocation, I knew, would require a radical change from what I was accustomed to. From starting out not knowing if a mole was really anything more than a feature on "Uncle Reza's" nose, to a serious student of science, to soon thereafter being awarded a position as a teaching assistant in the xxxx Department of Chemistry, I noted with great enjoyment my progress in the sciences.

In summary this is an essay about first looking, then finding, and ultimately following your bliss. For many people, this can be a lifelong pursuit. Luckily, I have found my springboard to this end. Starting my studies as a Graduate Student in the School of Dentistry, I feel, will be the natural compliment to the path I have undertaken. As a dedicated individual driven by an evolution of

varied experiences, I plan to continue my studies of dentistry beyond my doctorate. I am determined to play an active role in research, keep up with new dental technologies and promote oral health in the community.