

School of Medicine

RealMD Workbook

A guide to finding your highest purpose in medicine



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine extends its sincere appreciation to the founders and authors of the RealMD Journal from the Spencer Fox Eccles School of Medicine. Their pioneering work and dedication have laid the foundation for the insightful content featured in this publication.

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Your commitment to advancing medical knowledge and your willingness to share your expertise have significantly enriched the RealMD Journal. This collaborative effort underscores the spirit of academic excellence and fosters the exchange of ideas within the medical community.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine is honored to stand on the shoulders of the Spencer Fox Eccles School of Medicine's RealMD Journal pioneers. Together, we contribute to the collective pursuit of excellence in medical education and research.

Thank you for your inspiration and dedication.

The photos in this workbook are credited to the talented photographers Dr. Audrey Jones and Rozena Shirvani-Arani.



We are here because we were each and every one of us inspired to pursue medicine by something more powerful than self-interest. We began an arduous climb in the pursuit of learning how to care for our fellow humans. We did so intentionally, and in the knowledge that it would be a sacrifice; accepting that it would mean long hours, sleepless nights, and emotional hardship. So we stand strong in our authentic selves while the winds of a demanding system dare us to fail. We willingly step off the beaten path into the wilderness, in search of deeper meaning and a higher evolution of self.

We challenge the status quo in search of meaning within. We uphold the finer traditions of our calling, but also transform and interrogate those traditions through hard work and personal development. We strive for intentionality and personally meaningful goals. We refute negativity in the cultivation of gratitude and mindfulness. We choose to foster in ourselves, and in others, laughter and camaraderie within the struggle.

We believe that the real art of medical school is in learning how to keep our feet on the rocky ground while staying connected to the larger, grander picture. We keep people at the center of our meaning and our purpose, for in the end, they are why we are here in the first place.







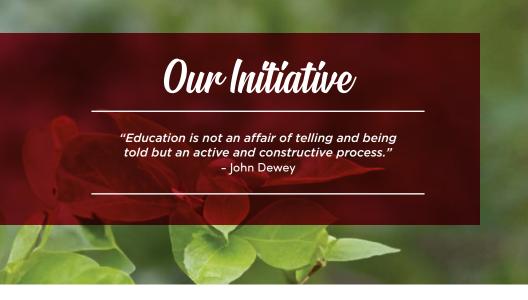
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Self & Meaning Team & Community System & Purpose Clinical Experience Reflections Career Exploration





The Beginning of a Meaningful Career

Welcome to your career. You are excited and hopeful for what lies ahead. At the same time, you are aware that you will be challenged. For many, medical school is one of the most meaningful times in their lives. It represents a time where they grew as a person, forged deep relationships, and created a direction for their future careers.

We believe in the talents and capacity of medical students. We know that you are resilient and can work hard. Medical school will seemingly demand much from you, and you will respond with immense effort and perseverance. While effort is an important component, another important component is perspective. With perspective, you can make choices consistent with your values, can find success on your own terms, and can be a student without "putting life on hold."

While in school, will you choose community, or will you choose isolation? Will you choose learning, or will you choose performance? Will you choose purpose, or will you choose expediency? How you go through medical school will greatly shape how you will go through your career. (Don't worry, no one is perfect. We must each find a balance.) However, the point of medical school is not to do well in medical school—it is to shape you as a professional so that you can actualize a meaningful career where your offer your unique gifts as a physician to impact health and care of patients.

You will then look back at your career and say, "What an amazing career!" That's the real goal for you, and that is the goal of the RealMD program.



Your Highest Purpose in Medicine

When you applied to medical school, what did you write on your essay about why you wanted to go into medicine? Sure, it was hard to write with certainty then, and a part of you was grasping in the air. It was a combination of your dreams and what you thought might look good to get you into medical school. Now, you are in medical school. In a few years, you will be applying to residency programs. How much progress will you have made on understanding your dreams, and how much will you need to compensate for the rest by writing "what would look good?"

This dream you originally expressed is about serving a meaningful purpose with your career. As you are working within that purpose, you will find joy and fulfillment. You will say to yourself, "I made the right choice in becoming a doctor." If you are not working within that purpose, you will doubt yourself for choosing this career.

The further you get into your career, the greater the urgency to understand your purpose. In medical school, it doesn't "feel" urgent. Other things seem to shout while your inner voice of purpose seems only to whisper. It's easy to tend to the shouts in the short-term. Ten or twenty years from now, the shouts will still be there, how much will you have strengthened your sense of purpose by heeding the whispers?

Do you still remember your dreams? Will your career be guided by your highest purpose? Why you chose medicine in the first place. This is why placing priority on finding meaning and purpose is so important. It will ground you and provide an energy source you can use when you start to lose yourself in the shuffle.

How the RealMD Program Connects You to Your Meaning, Community, and Purpose

What is my highest purpose in medicine? Unfortunately, this will not be covered in next week's test. It will not be covered in any tests in medical school. While you will need to learn the formal curriculum in medical school, the formal curriculum can't "teach" you about the things that you must learn for yourself. The formal curriculum can teach you about compassion, but it can't teach you to be compassionate. It can teach you about professional purpose, but it can't give you purpose. There is a part that must be learned through experience and personal reflection.

Through reflection, you listen to the whisper of your inner voice. This whisper tells you about what you really value in life. It tells you about how you will show up for others. It tells you what commitments you are willing to make to something greater than yourself. These three dimensions are referred to as meaning (intrapersonal dimension), community (interpersonal dimension), and purpose (extrapersonal dimension) in the RealMD framework.

An important part of the developing as a professional is to reflect on one's meaning, community, and purpose. As you do that, you will find that medicine is an amazing career for you. You will be energized and engaged with the people and the work. On a practical level, developing a greater sense of meaning, community, and purpose will allow you to:

- Make better personal and professional choices ("not putting your life on hold")
- Be more resilient to challenges and setbacks (have greater peace of mind)
- Be more confident and articulate in securing future professional opportunities (be a more attractive candidate for residency)

We believe in the ability of medical students to create careers of great fulfillment and impact. The greatest way to do that is to develop one's sense of meaning, community, and purpose, which activate one's unique capacity and talents. **Welcome to YOUR career in medicine!**



How to Use This Workbook

Before Using This Workbook, It's Important to Understand Its Functions:

- Aid in keeping the big picture in mind, despite being inundated with the responsibilities and expectations that come with being a student
- Foster consistent reflection, allowing for personal awareness and growth
- Help students remain grounded and true to themselves through this journey of medical school

- Encourage revisiting and revising one's purpose
- Provide a space to document experiences and thoughts that can be revisited in the future
- Promote professional development



How to Use:

- Bring to meetings with advisors, mentors, etc.
- Fill out the sections with guided prompts that align with lunch sessions after the corresponding lunches, or ones that align with clinical rotations/interviews after those experiences
- Use the blank pages as spaces to brainstorm and revise one's purpose and/or personal statement
- Refer back to and read what's been written at different times during medical school



Understanding one s unique path of contribution and service to patients, society, and the profession.

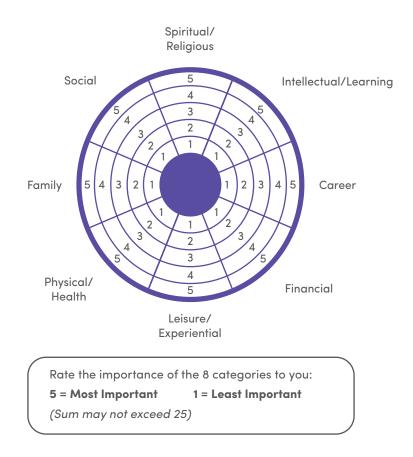
Values

What matters most to me?

LIFE WHEEL

Instructions:

- In this exercise, you will be setting priorities for the 8 domains of your life. This exercise will take about 30 to 60 minutes.
- The 8 domains of your life are: career, financials, family, social, intellectual, spiritual, physical (*health*), and leisure.
- On page 9, circle a number that indicates how important that domain of life is for you. Assign a number from 1 to 5, where 5 = most important and where 1 = least important.
 - Multiple domains can have the same number (*e.g. career and social can both have a "5" or a "1"*)
 - The total of all the numbers in the B domains may not exceed 25.
 - Note: The number is based on what you WANT, rather than what may be the current state for how you allocate your energy now.
- On the following pages, below the wheel, force rank the 8 domains from 1 [*most important*] to 5 [*least important*]. Note: This ranking my change over the course of your life. These are not static but reflective of where you are currently in your life.
- On the following page, reflect on the three things that you must do more of and three things you must do less of in your life as a result of your stated priorities.
- **Note:** If you have a significant other, this could be a beneficial joint exercise.
- On page 10, for each of the 8 domains, reflect on your intention by responding to the prompts in gray. This reflection is the manifestation of your intent for that domain. Example intentions include:
 - **Financial:** \$2 million in savings by the time I am 40 years old.
 - **Career:** Make a positive impact to the way doctors communicate with patients.
 - **Family:** Eat dinner together as a family on most nights of the week.



Rank the 8 categories in order of importance:

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

Reflection. What 3 things must you do more of as a result? Less of?

THEME

RESPONSE

Career	What impact will you have/ what greater purpose will you serve?
Family	How will you meet the "real" needs of your family?
Financial	How much will make you feel secure?
Health	What does it mean to be healthy?
Learning	What do you want to be the expert/master at?
Leisure	What does it mean to enjoy life?
Religious/ Spiritual	How do you connect to a higher power?
Social	How will you spend time with others?

WALKING THE WALK

Who is someone in your life who you believe "practices what he/she preaches," and how does he/she do this? What advice does this person have for "walking the walk" in addition to just talking the talk?

Name three values that you want to prioritize right now while in medical school. This can include specific study goals, or larger things like your relationship with your significant other or making time to go outside twice a week or building a community of friends here at UTRGV SOM.

Are you currently prioritizing these values the way you'd like? If so, how do you do this? If not, what can you change about your weekly routine to create this change?

Ask three close friends what they believe your top three priorities in life are right now, and list their answers here.

MAXIMIZING VALUES

Using the list below, sort each value into one of the two categories: Core Values or Negotiable Values. Feel free to add items to the list.

VALUES	CORE	NEGOTIABLE
Achievement		
Aesthetics		
Altruism		
Ancestry		
Autonomy		
Community		
Competency/Skill		
Control/Influence		
Creativity		
Dignity		
Emotional Well-being		
Family		
Harmony		
Health		
Honesty		

VALUES	CORE	NEGOTIABLE
Honor		
Humility		
Justice		
Love		
Loyalty		
Passion		
Physical Appearance		
Pleasure		
Recognition		
Relationships		
Spirituality		
Wealth		

From your group of core values, list the five that are most important to you below. Then, describe how you see these values activated in your life.

LIST YOUR CORE VALUES	DESCRIBE HOW YOU SEE YOUR VALUE ACTIVATED IN YOUR LIFE (HOW THEY INFLUENCE YOU)

Go a little further and share three stories below. After writing your stories, reflect on how these stories showcase your values in action.

A time when you were happy:_____

A time when you were proud: _____

A time when you were angry: _____

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What attributes do you value in a leader?

Which of these attributes do you see in yourself?

What are the activities that make you, "you"?



Strengths What are my strengths?

REFLECTING ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Use the following prompts to help you identify your talents or strengths.

- 1. Yearning to what kind of activities are your drawn to?
- 2. Rapid Learning what kinds of activities do you seem to pick up quickly?
- **3.** Flow in what activities did you seem to automatically know the steps to be taken?
- Glimpses of Excellence during what activities have you had moments of subconscious excellence when you thought, "How did I do that?"
- 5. Satisfaction what activities give you a kick, either while doing them or immediately after finishing them, and you think "When can I do that again?"

Upon completing the Clifton Strengths Assessment, complete the following:

What is your first reaction to your strengths?_____

Did anything surprise you?_____

Is there a particular theme among your strengths? Anything unexpected?

When you share your strengths with someone else, what is their initial reaction?

Write about a time when you used one or more of your strengths:

How have your strengths helped you succeed in the past?

How are you using one or more of your strengths in your daily life?

Use the space below to identify your strengths in action

LIST YOUR TOP 5 STRENGTHS	DESCRIBE A RECENT SITUATION IN WHICH YOU APPLIED YOUR STRENGTH

PEAK MOMENTS

Can you recall three specific memories of instances where you felt like you were your "peak self?" These don't need to have anything to do with medicine or your career, they should just be moments where you felt especially capable, present, energized, inspired, and fulfilled.

١.	
2.	
2	
3.	

What did these particular moments all have in common?

In what situation and setting do you feel most confident and why?

When you think of situations that play to your strengths, what do these situations look like?

What are the most important things you need in your life to be your peak self? These are the things that you are not willing to sacrifice for performance in school or work.

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

In what area would you like to be an expert in?_____

What are your innate strengths and are they the same things that you spend the most time developing?

What traits will help you in the fields of medicine that you are interested in studying?

In what environments do you feel as if you have expended a lot of energy to feel most like yourself? In contrast, what environments energize you?

What are you the go-to person for?_____



Self Awareness

How do I see myself and how do others see me?

GRATITUDE

Medical school is hard. It can be really easy to get stuck in a rut and lose sight of the bigger picture. A simple way to take a step back and get better perspective is to think about what you are grateful for. For the next 30 days, either in the morning or in the evening, take one minute to answer any one of these questions in the spaces provided. Set a timer or reminder on your phone so you don't forget.

- What made you smile today?
- Who did you have a conversation with that improved your day?
- How did you make the world a better place today?
- What relationship supported you today?
- How did you support someone else today?
- What song do you love right now?
- What was a "win" for you this week?
- Who or what inspires you to be better this month?
- What difficult experience are you grateful for, and what has it taught you?

1	16
2	17
3	18
4	19
5	20
6	21
7	22
8	23
9	24
10	
11	26
12	
13	
14	
15	30

Days 1-30 with one or two lines to write simple answers to any question.

HOW WOULD PEOPLE DESCRIBE YOU?

Working in medicine, you are constantly working in a team to provide care to patients and their families. This often requires communication in situations where your body language and tone sets the vibe for the conversation. Understanding how people perceive you is vital in creating an environment that patients feel safe in. This worksheet is designed to help understand how people perceive you and aid as a reflection for future patient interactions.

- Think about words that you would use to describe yourself, write a list of maybe 10 or so. These words can be personality traits, working characteristics, or other descriptive terms.
- 2. Ask three different people that are either related to you or that you work closely with to describe you using three words. Have them either write the words down, text them, email them, or in some way send them to you so you can read the words.
- 3. Do the words other people used to describe you match or relate to any of the words you wrote down about yourself?
- 4. What was your initial reaction to the words other people use to describe you? Do you agree with these words?
- 5. How do you see these descriptions of you impacting the way patients see you as provider? Do you think that the words used to describe you are the way patients would also describe you?
- 6. How will understanding how you are perceived change the way you interact with patients to cultivate a safe and trusting environment?

BRANDING

Creating a brand helps you develop "a reputation that makes people want to work with you, that allows them to trust you, and gives them an expectation of quality and delivery that meets their unique needs." – Ashley Wendel

What reputation are you creating for yourself as a future physician? How do you want to distinguish yourself from your peers? It is important that you spend time thinking about how others currently may perceive you and whether you want that perception to change in one way or another.

How would you describe yourself? Think about characteristics, work ethic, interests, and other descriptive terms/phrases.

What items above do you think others are able to perceive based on your actions, involvement, etc.?

In what ways do you feel you successfully demonstrate these qualities?

Are there qualities you listed that you feel aren't as apparent to others? How can you make these more apparent?

Defining Your Brand:

1. Clarity

Who are you? What do you stand for?

2. Specialization

What unique services do you provide?

3. Consistency

In what ways are you exposing/reinforcing your brand? Is there consistent messaging/demonstration of this?

Exercise: Use the "Emotional Bank Account" below to begin assessing and building your reputation.

"If I make deposits into an Emotional Bank Account with you through courtesy, kindness, honesty, and keeping my commitments to you, I build up a reserve. Your trust toward me becomes higher, and I can call upon that trust many times if I need to. I can even make mistakes and that trust level, that emotional reserve, will compensate for it. My communication may not be clear, but you'll get my meaning anyway. You won't make me 'an offender for a word.' When the trust account is high, communication is easy, instant, and effective." -Stephen Covey

EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNT

DEPOSIT	WITHDRAWLS
Keep promises	Break promises
Do small acts of kindness	Put people down
Be loyal	Gossip and break confidences
Listen	Don't listen
Say you're sorry	Be arrogant
Set clear expectations	Set false expectations

Think about your relationships, social situations, etc. How often are you making deposits and withdrawals?

Can you think of ways you can make more deposits?



FAILURE AND RESILIENCY

Failing is scary but it is normal, and sometimes necessary, for learning and progress to happen. You will have moments of failure during medical school, during residency, and during life in general. How do we cope with these moments and bounce back from them?

Make failure productive and purposeful:

How did you experience failure/a moment of defeat recently?

What can you take away from this experience to improve your performance/ yourself in the future?

Finish this statement in relation to your experience: "This experience was necessary for me to:"

Practice resiliency through identifying or reminding yourself of your purpose and giving yourself grace

Go back to your moment of failure or defeat. Pretend a close friend experienced this instead of you and they approached you to talk about this. How would you respond to them? What types of things would you say?

Give yourself the same support, advice, and grace by saying these things to yourself.

Re-focus your energy on your purpose instead of your mistakes/failures. Write part of your purpose statement here: (Think – why am I here? What am I striving for? What do I want for myself/my family/my community?)

Keep your eyes on the prize (your purpose) and this will help you build resiliency when you misstep.

EXERCISE:

Set a timer for 90 seconds. When you're ready, start the timer and write down why you will make a good physician until the timer goes off.

When you experience failure, or feel defeated, repeat this exercise or re-read your previous answers. You can even change the prompt to something more relevant like "What makes me a good student?" or "What makes me a good partner?" Despite a recent mistake or failure, remind yourself of all the other ways you are succeeding and will contribute positively to the world of medicine, your community, your class, etc.

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

What is a unique perspective you bring to medicine?

What are some things that are especially bothersome to you in other people? Is there a chance that you yourself possess some of these characteristics?



What do you notice about yourself and the way you treat yourself when you are stressed? Is this something you would like to change or keep the same?

What are five activities that replenish your source of energy and motivation?

What are five examples of times that you did something you were scared of and how did you benefit from those experiences?

What is one component of your resume/CV/med school application that means a lot to you but is overlooked by others?

What does it mean to you to be a physician and has your answer to that question changed throughout medical school?



Team & Community How Will I Show Up for Others?

COM PANS

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Understanding how to work effectively with others and influence people to achieve desired results.

Networking Who do I need to know?

FOUR MENTORS BY DR. RYAN

In a lecture given by Dr. John Ryan on mentorship, he narrowed mentors down into four categories, based on the type of mentoring they provide. The four types are as follows:

Traditional Mentor: This usually takes the form of frequent hour-long meetings in which mentors provide feedback on papers, projects, scholarship, and career milestones. The best mentor-mentee relationships are characterized by mutual respect, trust, shared values, and effective communication.

Coach: This person teaches people how to improve in a particular skill or subject. Although some use the terms coach and mentor interchangeably, coaches are distinct because they focus on performance related to a specific issue rather than growth in multiple dimensions. Unlike mentors, coaches spend less time with mentees and can thus provide feedback to a larger number of individuals.

Sponsor: An individual who is committed to the development of a program, project, or individual. With regard to mentorship, sponsors are distinct in several ways. First, sponsors use their influence in a field to make mentees more visible.

Connector: Pair mentors, coaches, and sponsors with mentees. In his best-selling book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Malcom Gladwell (*p62*) describes connectors as "multipliers that link us up with the world." Connectors are master networkers who have extensive social and political capital accrued from years of academic success.

Dr. John Ryan:, "the mentor guides, the coach improves, the sponsor nominates, and the connector empowers, but always the mentee benefits."

1. Who are your traditional mentors, and why do you value this relationship?

- What do you bring to this relationship?
 Who are the coaches you've interacted with, and what skills have they taught you that will be valuable during rotations and residency?
 Can you think of people that have served as sponsors for you? In what ways have these people impacted your educational or career opportunities?
 Who are the connectors you've interacted with? How have you benefited from this relationship?
 - 6. Are there people that you feel should be in your mentor circle that aren't currently? How can you foster these relationships?

7. Are you acting as a mentor for anyone right now? How can you be a better mentor for other students?

Regularly check in with your mentor circle, and adjust to fit your career goals.

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What relationships are most important for you to maintain throughout your career?

Make a plan to maintain these relationships _____



Relationships

How do I connect with others?

ROLE IN A TEAM SETTING

Health care is a team sport. Finding your role in a team setting can make all the difference in having successful experiences and positive patient interactions.

What experiences have you had that will allow you to contribute to a health care team?

Think about a time you worked in a team that was non-cohesive. Why was that the case?

Think about a time that worked with a really successful team. What attributes did this team have?

What do you think determines if a team is successful or not?

What is something you can work on today that will allow you to be a better team member?

What are your strengths in a team setting?

Why do you think it is important to develop skills that will help you be a better member of a health care team?

How can you help a team work better together even as a medical student without a leadership title?



CLASS CULTURE

What does your ideal medical school experience look like/what do you want medical school to be?

What is your ideal class culture? In other words, if you could look back in 15 years and say, "My class was known for______?" what do you wish you could say? Reevaluate & see if this changes with each year of school.

MS1:	
MS2:	
MS3:	
MS4:	
How can I personally contribute to this type of class culture?	

What aspects of this ideal culture do you want to be present in a future working environment, and how can you help create that?

Pay attention to this ideal culture through these four years, and let it guide you toward the specialties that embody this culture



MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

When you are especially stressed, do you note a change in the way you relate to your team or your environment?

Regarding the people who take care of you and make med school possible... Are you supporting them as well? Are your relationships balanced?

How do you find yourself helping other people?

How do other people "push your buttons"?



Communication

How do I communicate with influence?

GIVING FEEDBACK

"Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots." - Frank A. Clark

What's the most valuable constructive feedback you've received / why was it so valuable?

Try to revisit those valuable aspects as you give feedback so this can be a meaningful experience for the recipient, just as it was for you

	Giving Feedback Checklist
•	Pause. Evaluate your emotional state & take a minute to cool down if necessary Is this feedback necessary? What do you want to come from this? Is giving this feedback the best way to achieve this?
•	Is this the right avenue/most appropriate way to provide feedback? (Email vs. over the phone vs. in person, etc.)
•	Try to lead with something positive Polite & respectful wording Ensure the feedback is actionable Personalize, rather than generalize (For ex. "In my experience working with you…" rather than a generalized statement)
•	If unsure of how your feedback might be received, consider asking an objective party's opinion before giving the feedback

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

"Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfills the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things." - Winston Churchill

When have you observed someone receiving feedback gracefully? In what ways did they handle it well?

	Receiving Feedback Checklist
•	Pause. Evaluate your current level of receptiveness
•	Genuinely listen, and do so with an open mind
•	Be able to differentiate between constructive and unproductive feedback, taking the latter with a grain of salt
•	If it is the unproductive type, still try to find something within it to learn from
•	Rather than jump to the defense if you disagree, take a deep breath and do your best to see things from their perspective
•	Reflect on the experience – internalize the feedback without personalizing it
•	Try to be grateful. Remember that receiving feedback is an opportunity to grow, which not everyone has

You can't control what you hear, but you can control how you react to it and where you go with that information

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is the most important tool that you need to obtain to work more seamlessly in a team?

What are the hard conversations that you have been avoiding but need to have?

Do you struggle more with being candid or being sensitive?

How well do you feel you communicate with your team? What are the things you look for in interactions to indicate that your communication is effective?





Developing a desire and capacity to create positive

Developing a desire and capacity to create positiv change in health care.

Mission

What am I committed to that is greater than myself?

MISSION STATEMENT GENERATOR

In column A, think about "who will be the people impacted by my work?" This can be groups of people you intend to impact in the future. Identify 3 to 5 groups of people and write them in the boxes in Column A.

In column B, think about "What are the problems I feel compelled to do something about?" These could be problems experienced by the people in Column A. Identify 3 to 5 problems that you would be interested in working on and put them in Column B.

In column C, think about the approaches that would be natural to you to address problems in general. Page 3 has examples of approaches that you can take. Identify 3 to 5 approaches that you would like to use in addressing problems and put them in Column C.

А	В	С
In the boxes below, identify 5 groups of people or populations with whom you are most engaged.	In the boxes below, identify 5 problems or issues with which you are most engaged.	In the boxes below, identify 5 approaches/ strategies that are most natural to you.

Now, draw lines between Column B and Column A, connecting problems to people. Then, draw lines between Column B and Column C to identify approaches that could relate to each problem.

Once you have 3 to 5 items identified for Columns A, B, and C, pick the most compelling item from A, the most compelling item from B, and the most compelling item from C and write them in the section below.

Α	В	С

Write a mission statement in the following format, and refine wording as necessary.

To help some people (*column A*) with some problem (*column B*) through some method (*column C*).

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Reflect back to the personal statement you wrote while applying to medical school. What were the primary messages and characteristics you tried to portray in your essay?

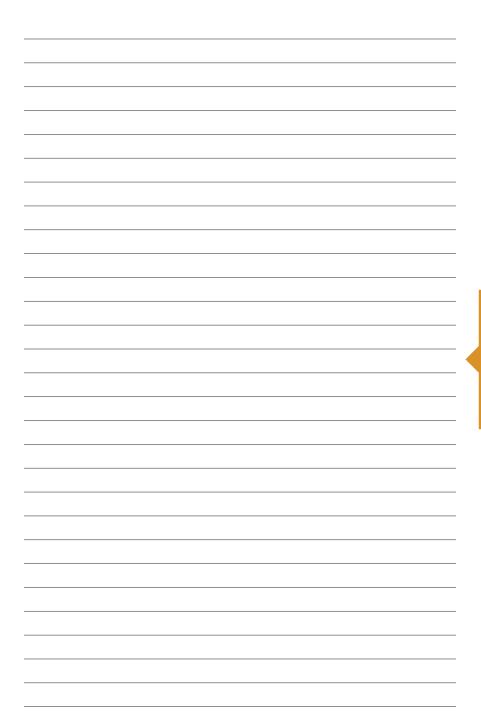
Do you think the way you depicted yourself in your medical school personal statement still fits the way you'd like to represent yourself to residency programs?

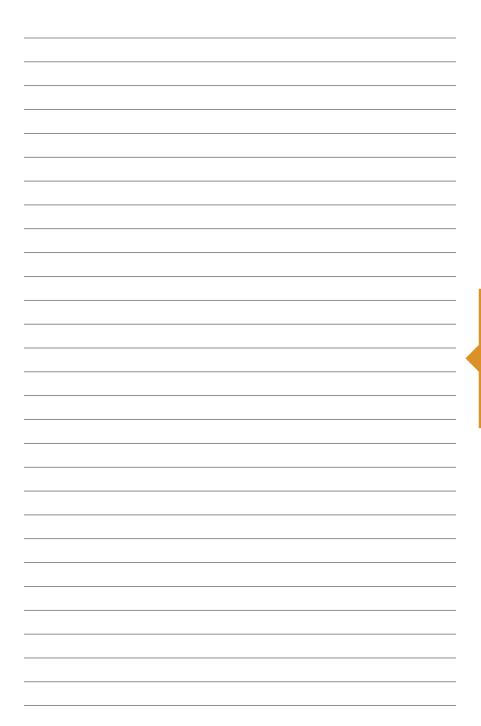
List the three most important qualities or values you have that you want residency programs to be aware of through your personal statement:

How are you exemplifying these qualities or values in your life right now?

Briefly summarize your path to medicine, the aspects of medicine that provide you with joy and fulfillment, and the goals you'd like to accomplish over the course of your career.

Rewrite your p	ersonal statemen	t here:	





MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

In your opinion, what is the biggest weakness in the current health care system? How can you help resolve that in your career?

If you could be part of one major change in health care, what would it be?

If you couldn't add anything to your resume, what extracurricular activities would you do?

How are you working to integrate your mission into your community in small ways every day?

If your future salary was locked in at a certain rate, how would you spend your career?

What are three ways that you are currently making the world a better place?



How will I define success?

DEFINING YOUR FUTURE SELF

Taking a second to think about how you want your life to be in 10 years can help you make decisions now that will be beneficial to you in achieving those expectations. These questions are to help you think about what you want to look like, and then to identify where you could make small changes today that will lead to that future self.

You, 10 years in the future:

Are the extracurricular activities you are involved with things you are interested in pursuing a career in? Are you participating in groups that help exemplify the physician you want to be?

How is your financial situation? Are you spending money appropriately to cut down on loans?

How are your core relationships? Are you happy with your groups of friends and colleagues? If you have a partner, how is your relationship? Are you being supported as much as you're supporting your partner?

How is your health? Are you at a healthy weight? Do you exercise frequently? Are you eating a healthy, balanced diet? How is your mental and spiritual health? What are you doing to avoid burnout?

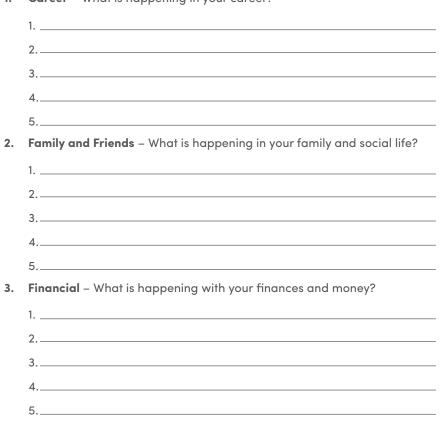
SETTING GOALS

Exercise. What are the top 3 to 5 things which, if they happened, would make this year a success? (Your goals should pertain to more than one aspect of life. Consider goals relating to the following 8 aspects: career, academic/intellectual, family, social, physical, financial, spiritual, leisure).

•	Year 1
	1
	2
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	4
	5
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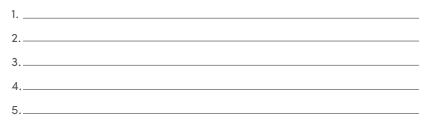
	4
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•	Year 5 (If relevant) 1
	2
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Exercise. Ten years from now, you are at an airport. A former classmate that you knew bumps into you and says, "Wow, it's been a long time! How are you?" You reply, "Things couldn't be better! I'm loving my life!" Describe what is happening in these four aspects to make your life amazing:



1. **Career** – What is happening in your career?

4. Health – What is happening with you physically?



MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

Where do you see your future in medicine and what action are you taking right now to make that future a reality?

Your top 3 priorities for the year:



What is the next step?

ESTABLISHING YOUR ROUTINES

What are my top 3 to 5 habits that I want to cultivate during my time in medical school?

• Examples: Have dinner with a friend once a week, meditate for 10 minutes each morning, read a book for fun 2 hours each week.

•	Habit 1:
•	Habit 2:
•	Habit 3:
•	Habit 4:
•	Habit 5:
Wh	at routines during the day can I establish for myself?
•	Example: I will get up at 5:30am each morning
•	Habit 1:
•	Habit 2:
•	Habit 3:
Wh	at routines during the week can I establish for myself?
•	Example: I will spend two evenings away from studying each week
•	Habit 1:

- Habit 2:_____
- Habit 3:_____

MANAGING TRANSITIONS

From day one, medical school is full of transitions. Transitions—to a new environment, new lifestyle, new curriculum and learning formats. Here is a framework to help you think about and manage these transitions.



Managing Endings:

Identify what is ending/over and what isn't:

What can you take with you from the experience/phase/role that is ending? In other words, what skills, lessons, or values can you continue?

Managing the Neutral Zone:

Create realistic short-term goals/checkpoints to help you work through this "zone":

What is the purpose behind this transition? What is this transition allowing you to do?

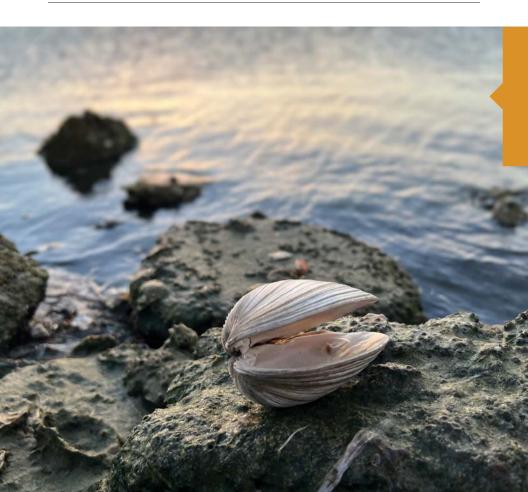
Managing New Beginnings:

What are some positive outcomes that could come from this new experience/role?

What new behaviors am I called upon to adopt to succeed in this new experience/role?

MORE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

What have I been putting off that I need to do?
How do I manage my energy?
What fills my cup?



Clincal Experience Reflections



Clinical Reflections INTEGRATING INTO A CLINICAL TEAM

It's your first day on a new clinical service and you honestly have no idea what to expect or what the rest of the day will bring. All you know is where you're supposed to be and what time you should be there. You show up to the team room, introduce yourself, and get ready for the day. When you think about the fact that you have to be a functional member in a brand-new room full of strangers, here's some food for thought...

- How do you determine the team dynamic and how will that affect the way that you interact with the team? Should it?
- How do you figure out the needs of the team and find a way that you can help fill them?
- What are some ways that you can show that you're engaged and willing to participate?
- What kind of cues can you look for in order to know if you're inconveniencing the team or otherwise disturbing the work flow?

Adjusting to a new team dynamic requires tremendous EQ, not to mention humility. You must first observe and learn, figuring out how each individual serves a role within the team, and where you can be most helpful. On some teams there will be a defined role for you, which makes things much simpler and easier. In most cases, you must decipher how and when you can use your unique skillset to help the team be more productive. One of the most important and noticeable traits you can bring to your team is reliability. Even if you choose one thing to do for your team that helps lighten the load, do it early and do it consistently. When the team knows that they can trust you'll get this one thing done, they can focus on other tasks and will slowly allow you to do more for them. This helps build rapport and build trust and will ultimately solidify a productive and appreciable role for you within a new team early on.

What are the most impactful things I learned? Who are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why v they impactful? What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?		actice?
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What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?		
What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?		
	What die	d I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?

Pediatrics

What did you see a resident or attending do that you want to emulate in your practice?
What are the most impactful things I learned?
Who are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why were they impactful?
What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?

Psychiatry

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Family medicine

•	What did you see a resident or attending do that you want to emulate in your practice?
•	What are the most impactful things I learned?
•	Who are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why were they impactful?
•	What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?

Internal medicine

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Surgery

What did you see a resident or attending do that you want to emulate i our practice?
What are the most impactful things I learned?
Who are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why wer they impactful?
What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?

Emergency Medicine

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W	hat are the most impactful things I learned?
	ho are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why we ey impactful?
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Elective 1

What did you see a resident or attending do that you want to emulate i our practice?
What are the most impactful things I learned?
Who are the people that I met that are meaningful to me and why wer they impactful?
What did I learn about my strengths in regard to this specialty?

Elective 2

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Timeline

MS1 FALL SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus – begin specialty exploration and career planning.

- Complete Clifton Strengths Finder Assessment
- Meet with Advisor to review Clifton Strengths results
- Take Careers in Medicine Assessments
 - Medical Specialty Preference Inventory
 - Physician Values in Practice Scale
 - Physician Skills Inventory
- Meet with your advisor or RealMD Coach to start exploring your professional questions and goals.
- Identify areas of interest and participate in respective activities like student interest groups, volunteering, leadership, and pathways.
- Attend RealMD Lunch Series

Clifton Strengths Finder

Write your top five strengths:

CAREERS IN MEDICINE ASSESSMENTS

Medical Specialty Preference Inventory

Write your top four results:

What surprised you about your results?

What didn't surprise you about your results?

Physician Values in Practice Scale

Write three of your "high" or "moderate" values:

Do any of your specialty results from the Medical Specialty Preference Inventory assessment support/accomodate all of your top values?

Physician Skills Inventory

What type of skills (Psychomotor, Problem-Solving, Counseling) did you score highest on?

What specialty group had the closest average score to your highest scored skill set? What specialty group's average scores came closest to all three of your scores?

Read the notes under "Understanding Your Results." Read the specialties that fall under the umbrella of the one or two specialty groups that you identified having average scores close to yours. Do any of these specialties align with your results in the previous two surveys?

Involvement

Are there specialties/ topics that you are already interested in? List them here.

What, if any, of your assessment results support that you may be a good fit for this specialty?

What else would help you to explore this specialty to determine if it may be a good fit?

Perhaps there are specialties that you don't know much about, are curious about, or are being suggested to you by your assessment results. How do you want to begin learning more about these?

If you are unsure about how to explore these areas – talk with your advisor or RealMD Coach for suggestions!

MS1 SPRING SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Continue exploring specialty and practice options, develop a list of potential mentors, and engage in career planning.

- Take Careers in Medicine Assessments a second time:
 - Medical Specialty Preference Inventory
 - Physician Values in Practice Scale
 - Physician Skills Inventory
- Seek shadowing or informational interviewing opportunities in fields that interest you.
- Actively participate in activities such as student interest groups, volunteering, student leadership, or elective courses.
- Begin identifying potential mentors
- Plan your summer activities seek professional opportunities, research, etc.

Careers in Medicine Assessments:

Did any of your results change from the first time you took them? What changed? What stayed the same?

Do your results (whether they are new or stayed the same) spark any new questions or curiosities about yourself or particular specialties?

Clifton Strengths

What academic or extracurricular activities have you explored so far and really enjoyed?

What aspects of these experiences have come easily for you/ have you enjoyed the most?

How have some of your top 5 Clifton Strengths results shown up for you during these experiences?

What are you wondering about with regards to your top 5 results?

MS2 FALL SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Begin to narrow your specialty search to a few areas you feel confident could be a good fit.

	Continue to engage in clinical and research opportunities.
	Be intentional about setting up Informational Interviews with specialties
	you are becoming interested in.
	Begin cultivating mentor relationships
	Review how your Clifton Strengths results and CiM results align with specialties you are interested in.
	Actively participate in activities such as student interest group gatherings, volunteering, student leadership, and electives.
	Continue attending RealMD Lunch Sessions.
	Meet with your advisor to continue discussing your professional goals and questions.
W	hat has become easier or clearer for you since you started medical school?

What questions or concerns have developed?

What information/ experiences do you feel like you need right now to help with your current questions/ concerns?

Who can you contact to help give you some direction? (Think about the resources available to you – peers, your advisor, RealMD coach, Wellness, Academic Success, etc.) Come up with a plan of action to address your questions/ concerns.

MS2 SPRING SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Identify 1–3 specialties to consider, start preparing application components including CV and personal statement.

- Attend specialty interest groups and panels.
- Continue to engage in clinical and research opportunities.
- Continue developing mentor relationships and discuss career questions and goals.
- Meet with your advisor for resources on CV and personal statement
- preparation.
- Meet with your advisor to plan third-year schedule.
- Actively participate in activities such as student interest group gatherings, volunteering, student leadership, and electives.
- Continue attending RealMD Lunch Sessions.
- Take USMLE Step 1.

How are you "filling your cup" or "re-fueling"? If you aren't currently, what can you implement each week for this?

What stories or life experiences can you call to mind when you need some motivation?

What academic experiences or school-related involvement has made you excited recently? Why?

MS3 FALL SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Goal: Consider specialty choice, continue preparing application components such as CV and personal statement.

- Begin clinical rotations and record your reflections about your experience in each specialty.
- Create and update your CV.
- Compare your specialties of interest using the Careers in Medicine "Specialty Comparison Tool."
- Review the competitiveness of each specialty of interest and assess your qualifications.
- Attend RealMD Kickbacks.
- Engage mentors in discussing career questions and goals.
- Meet with your advisor to review CV and/or discuss professional questions and goals.

Reflect:

Use the following exercise to help you reflect on your experience during one of your clinical rotations.

Exercise:

- 1. Select one of the clerkships you have completed already.
- 2. Set a timer for 90 seconds.
- 3. Start the timer and, based on your experience during this clerkship, make a list of "what you do" in that specialty (ex: tasks, procedures, what are the job functions in this specialty). Do this until the timer runs out or you have at least 8-10 tasks listed.
- 4. Now, rank the responsibilities you wrote down in order of importance. Think – what is priority or the most important action that I complete on time/ properly?
- 5. Circle four of the tasks/responsibilities that you felt you did best.
- 6. Draw a star next to four tasks/responsibilities that you enjoyed the most.

Post Exercise: Ask yourself/Think about...

- Was it easy or difficult for you to think of the specialty responsibilities?
- Look at the tasks you identified as being most enjoyable. How did you rank them in terms of importance?
- Look at the tasks you circled being the best at. Are they also tasks you identified enjoying the most?
- What questions or observations developed after doing this exercise?

Review:

TIP: Keep a dedicated journal, or Word/ Excel doc of your clinical rotation reflections.

Did this specialty "feed" my top strengths?

What concerns you/what are you still curious about regarding this specialty, based on your experience?

How did you feel as you were walking from your car/bus to start each day? How did you feel when you left for the day?



MS3 SPRING SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Identify primary specialty interest. Start ERAS application.

- □ If you are having trouble selecting a specialty, take Careers in Medicine "Specialty Indecision Scale" and discuss results with advisor.
- □ Identify your "specialty mentor" for the residency application process.
- Register for each of the residency application and match services you'll participate in.
- Request letters of recommendation from appropriate faculty members.
- Attend RealMD Kickbacks.
- Meet with your advisor to plan fourth-year schedule.

Reflect:

What has been the most exciting or challenging part of third-year rotations?

What new insights have you made about yourself, your values, your interests, etc.?

If you are having difficulty deciding between specialties, what/who do you think could help you work through the decision process?

MS4 FALL SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Prepare and submit residency application. Prepare for interviews.

- Conduct an initial search for residency programs using Careers in Medicine's residency and fellowship program search and FRIEDA.
- □ Write your personal statement.
- □ Have your advisor review your personal statement and CV.
- Review your noteworthy characteristics for your MSPE with your advisor.
- Secure letters of recommendation for residency application.
- Prepare to interview by meeting with an advisor and/or participating in mock interviews.
- Attend RealMD Kickbacks.
- Take Step 2 CK and CS.

Prepare:

How are you planning to "show up" to your interviews?

What are three key things that you want to be sure are mentioned/made clear about you during your interview?

How are you going to contribute to this residency program/the field/the team? Think about your top strengths.

Reflect:

After your interviews, jot down some thoughts about how the interviews went, things you learned about each program, etc. Similar to how you reflected on your clerkship experiences, keep a journal or Word/ Excel doc with your interview reflections. Here are some prompts to guide your thoughts:

Describe your interview experience at (X) Institution. Was it awkward, comfortable, engaging...?

How did you feel about the program and/or team after your interview?

What makes you excited about this program?

What are some drawbacks of this program?

MS4 SPRING SEMESTER TIMELINE:

Focus: Match into a residency program! Graduate from Medical School.

- Attend residency interviews.
- Evaluate and compare residency programs using Careers in Medicine's Residency Preference Exercise and Residency Program Evaluation Guide.
- □ Finalize your rank order list and submit to matching service.
- Be prepared and participate in Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) if necessary.
- Participate in Match Day Ceremony!
- Take steps to prepare for your intern year and your given specialty/program.
- Attend RealMD Kickbacks.
- Complete AAMC Graduation Questionnaire.
- Attend your Graduation Ceremony!



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND SHADOWING

Informational interviews are opportunities to gain insight on someone's professional experience. They can help you explore your career options. How do you accomplish this? Set up a 30-minute meeting with a faculty, physician, or other professional in an area of interest and ask them questions about themselves, their area of expertise, and/or their work environment.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why/how did you choose your specialty?
- 2. What path led you to this position?
- 3. What do you like most about your specialty/position?
- 4. What other settings or work environments have you worked in and what other settings are common in this specialty?
- 5. What has been most rewarding about the path you have taken?
- 6. When you think about your first year in this specialty/position, what activities or actions were key to your success?
- 7. What are some future career paths/opportunities that open up for someone in your position?
- 8. What advice would you give someone in my position who wants to be successful in the field?
- 9. What is important to know, that may not be obvious, about this specialty/position?
- 10. Do you know of any resources that could help me further explore this specialty/position?

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Your core values Develop some questions around your core values to learn whether they can be accommodated in this area.
- Your top 5 strengths Individuals are more engaged and satisfied with their work when they are regularly using their top strengths. Develop some questions around whether this field provides opportunities for you to use X strength.
- Your lifestyle/family What other commitments or dynamics are present in your life that you need your career to accommodate? Do you have a family? Do you want to work internationally? Think about these other aspects of you and your life and develop questions around those.

POST EXPERIENCE CHECK-IN:

Reflect on your Informational Interview, review your notes, and process what you heard by asking yourself some questions. TIP: It may be helpful to keep a log of your informational interviews in one Word/ Excel document or journal so you can look back on the information and compare/contrast more easily.

What did you like most about this specialty?	What did you like least about this specialty?
•	•
•	•
•	•

Did your values, skills, and/or strengths align/fit with this specialty? In what ways were they incompatible or compatible?

Is there anything about this specialty that you still have questions about? If so, who can you contact to ask these questions?

How did you feel about the program and/or team after your interview?



SPECIALTIES

	Anesthesiology
	IM
	Cardiology
	GI
	Endocrinology
	Hematology
	Geriatrics
	Oncology
	Pulmonology
	Nephrology
	Infectious Disease
	Rheumatology
	Dermatology
	EM
	Family
	Medical Research
	Neurology
	OB/GYN
	Ophthalmology
Ц	Ortho surgery
Ц	ENT
Ц	Pathology
\square	Pediatrics
	Surgery
	General
	Vascular
	Ortho
_	Neuro
	Physical Medicine Rehabilitation
	Psychiatry
	Urology
	Interventional Radiology
	Radiology

WE WILL INSPIRE THE WORLD

JTRio Grande Valley

UT Health RioGrande Valley School of Medicine

The practice of medicine will be very much as you make it – to one a worry, a care, a perpetual annoyance; to another, a daily job and a life of as much happiness and usefulness as can well fall to the lot of a person, because it is a life of self-sacrifice and of countless opportunities to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up those that fall. - William Osler

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