



“Thank you for your application, we regret to inform you that you have not been selected”

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The day has finally come. You receive an email notification and see the sender out of the corner of your eye. You can feel the adrenaline, your heart begins to race as you open the message. The answer to the long-awaited question will be known in just a few seconds. Were you going to receive an **interview or acceptance this time**? The knot in your stomach grows and rises to your throat, as you read **“Thank you for your application, we regret to inform you that you have not been selected...”**. A million questions flood your mind: What else could I have done? Is my MCAT score too low? Should I re-write it? Is my GPA high enough? Did I take enough courses? Should I even apply again? Am I good enough? **What is next for me?** I remember all these moments very clearly, and I will be completely raw and honest with you for the rest of this reflection.

The first couple of days after the rejection emails were extremely difficult. I experienced a lot of self-doubt and what I would call **“grief”** every time an application was unsuccessful. This was especially true when the rejection email from the last school left arrived in my inbox. I cried, questioned every single thing I had or had not done and was **extremely hard on myself**. Getting rejected sucks and it is hard to not take it personally, especially with this type of application where you are putting the best of yourself forward. **If this is you this cycle, I want you to know that you are not alone in feeling this way.** It is ok to allow yourself to be upset and cry if you feel like you need to. There are a lot of peers going through what you are going through right now, and **I can guarantee that many medical students and physicians may have found themselves in your shoes at some point in their journey.**

Make sure that you take the time you need to process and deal with the rejection, explore how you feel about it and **dig deep to figure out why these feelings have surfaced.** Be kind and patient with yourself. Once the initial disappointment begins to fade, make sure you **reach out to your support system.** **Talk with your friends, family, mentors, professors and have honest conversations with them.** Hear their feedback and use it to identify areas where you can work on self-improvement. Know that a failed application does not mean you are not good enough and you should never let it define you as a person. As hard as it is to accept, there is a certain **element of luck when it comes to applying to medical school,** and sometimes luck may not be



on your side. No matter how many times you get rejected, always go back to where your passions are rooted, why you are pursuing this dream, get back up and continue to push forward this time stronger than before.

There is something about the fear of failure, especially in the areas of academia, science and medicine. **As humans we tend to focus more on the negative aspects of what may have caused us to fail, and we forget about the small wins and how far we have come in these moments.** Our failures are learning opportunities, each one a test that life throws at us to make us stronger. As such, I am always proud to share that I applied to medical school five times, wrote the MCAT three times, and received two interviews - one of which was not successful - before getting my acceptance in 2019. I can tell you, every rejection hurt just as much as the other and was disheartening. But each time I learned something about myself and each one of my experiences with failure helped me appreciate the time when I was finally successful so much more. If I could get through it, so can you. And so, if I can leave you with one piece of advice today, embrace your successes and failures equally. **Each one of our paths are unique and the trials and tribulations we face prepare and make our future selves a stronger, more confident, and empathetic version.**

