



We are humans first, and doctors second.

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“How is first year of medical school?” I was asked by many when I came back home after a long hiatus from seeing friends and family. At first, it was hard for me to answer; there was so much to share but I knew what was expected of me was a light, cheerful answer. After all, I had finally achieved my dream of getting into medical school, so why did I have mixed feelings? Don’t get me wrong, I didn’t have doubts about my career path, but it would be a lie to say that it has not been a challenging transition.



I wasn’t oblivious to the arduous journey that lay ahead but I thought I had prepared myself by talking to those who had gone through it themselves. However, looking back, most of them barely acknowledged having difficulties, few expressed their vulnerabilities or struggles, and least of all, gave insight on how they overcame them. So when I started feeling overwhelmed, I began to question my resilience and my ability to achieve such a distant goal.

But what’s important to realize is that there’s something most of us don’t openly admit about medical school, and it’s this: we’re all struggling, in one way or another, and some more than others.

So going back to the question of how my first year of medical school was - it was amazing but I also struggled a lot. I had days where just merely looking at my long to-do-list sucked the soul out of me. I felt anxious every time I didn’t have the answer to a question that was asked. I had days where I felt myself drowning in a sea of self-doubt, negative self-talk, and fear of failure. I had extreme migraine episodes, sleepless nights, and lost my appetite, as I tried my hardest to be the “perfect student” that I was supposed to be. If you know me, you would know that my laughter defines my personality, yet all of this inevitably led to nights where I broke down crying. In a class full of extremely talented classmates, I couldn’t help but feel mediocre. The worst of all, I felt everything that I was going through was not severe enough for help and that I should just “get over it”.

I suppose what I’m trying to convey is that you’re not alone, and medical school has the ability to make us our own worst enemies. But, at the same time, it doesn’t have to be the end of you. You don’t have to try and cope with these thoughts alone. You are entitled to receive help and to have what’s going on be validated. Know that when bad days turn into weeks, there is help available and you are allowed to reach out. Know that you are not weak or dramatic or a failure for doing so. Don’t assume that everyone else is easily coping because they’re not.





This is me sharing my journey thus far but I know there are so many voices left to be heard. So many feelings left to be normalized. So many conversations to be had. Very few of us wear our hearts on our sleeves, including myself, but I'm learning to let myself be a little more vulnerable each day. And I hope you do too.

We are humans first, and doctors second – there is no shame in expressing how you're feeling and asking for help. That's a reminder to you as well as myself.

