

As one of the youngest girls in a large Portuguese family, it always seemed that it was me that all my older female cousins came to with questions about the more private things in life. Perhaps I put them at ease, or perhaps something about me helped to abate whatever natural embarrassment comes with discussing such topics. Maybe they knew how sacred I considered their privacy, and how important I considered even their smallest concerns. Perhaps they were just responding to what seems to be my calling in life. During medical school, I found myself constantly drawn to women's health, regardless of which rotation I was in. I was instantly drawn to the incredible patient population and the variety of experiences. I have found my place in a field that eloquently combines medicine, surgery, and the unique entity of labor and delivery. The first time I delivered a baby is a moment that will stay embedded in my memory forever. Nothing can make one realize that life is composed of small moments in time like that indescribable moment when the entire weight of the baby rests in your hands. It is a moment that seems to stand still and brings with it hope, expectations, and an incredible energy that can be felt like electricity in the delivery room. I am well aware of the sleepless nights, and the long hours, but I have never been one to sacrifice things I enjoy for sleep. I began my medical career in hopes of being inspired by both my patients and their families, and more than anywhere else I found exactly that in women's health.

From the beginning of my medical career it seemed that the cards fell perfectly into place. As part of my first year clinical experience, I was randomly assigned by the school to work in a family planning clinic. My clinical preceptor quickly became my mentor. I was inspired by her extraordinary dedication to what she considered to be the most important aspect of women's health. She had worked in women's health for over forty years and had seen the evolution of family planning from the introduction of contraception to the legalization of abortion. I was invited to spend the summer as a work-study at the clinic, and it turned out to be one of the most valuable experiences that I would have as a medical student. I was trained in counseling women and learned the value of educating and empowering them to make decisions concerning their own health. I hope to apply the unique experiences that I have had working with underserved women in Brooklyn, and use that experience to educate and treat my future patients.

Although I have been surrounded by many extraordinary women in my life, the strength that I have found in my female patients has inspired me beyond my wildest imagination. There are, of course, all the obvious reasons: they carry and birth children, they raise them, they are wives, daughters, sisters, but most of all they have the incredible ability to hold it all together when it would seem that no one else could. I spent a month rotating with a gynecologic oncology service in Manhattan this past summer. Our patients amazed me every single day. At the beginning of my rotation I was escorting a patient into the operating room that was scheduled for exploratory surgery of a pelvic mass. Very calmly and deliberately, she turned to me and asked that we allow her to personally tell her husband if we find that the mass is cancerous. She explained that she would want to be there to support him, and that she could not bear the thought of him having to go through receiving the news alone. Here she was, in the operating room, about to undergo what could be life altering surgery, and she continued to make protecting her loved ones her priority. She went on to make a joke about the surgery, much as I would come to find many of our oncology patients did. During my days on that team I found that we spent a lot of time laughing, and I have come to appreciate the ability that women have to be positive by finding the humor in things.

I have been blessed with a family that places great emphasis on integrity and commitment. As a first generation American, born into a large Portuguese family, I understand that my medical education is a gift, and to practice medicine is a privilege. I pride myself on my strong work ethic and dedication. I believe I am an excellent candidate because of my desire to be involved beyond what is expected of me, my highly driven personality, my ability to work as a member of a team, and my dedication towards continuing to build on my medical knowledge throughout my career. I hope to join an Obstetrics and Gynecology residency program based within a strong academic environment that will allow me to grow as a clinician, and to contribute to the growth of future physicians through teaching