

30-Day Microjournal Project

We are all struggling in these times; let's share our experiences to learn we're not alone.

SURVE, SAJID JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 1 Prompt:

How are you feeling about everything that is happening in the world?

Overwhelming

Everything that's happening right now is making me feel overwhelmed.

Discouraged and frustrated

There is only a limited amount of things that are in my control.

Numb

Initially, everything was shocking and it felt like our lives were being turned upside down. Now everyday is something new and it doesn't have the same effect. That's really scary. That nothing surprises us anymore.

*It's definitely strange to have such low expectations these days...
Trying to stay hopeful anyway is difficult!!* – ANONYMOUS

Disheartened and frustrated

I hate how covid has become a political issue instead of a medical/scientific issue. I don't understand why people won't step in to help their community and just wear a mask and follow guidelines

Actually I'm more motivated than ever

At first when COVID happened, I was (like everyone else) very upset, frustrated, and even angry. This will be my first year of school and I have been looking so forward to this my whole life. As frustrating as everything going on is (especially with the good chance of white coat being virtual) I've come to decide to instead think of all of this as a challenge. Things are changing, everything is different, and yes, maybe nothing will ever be the same. But I want to be the kind of a physician who is a leader in the community and is willing to take on tough challenges. It all starts here! Nobody knows what's going to happen, but that just means

ANYTHING can happen! But things aren't just going to change suddenly, WE have to do something about that! What I can do to contribute is adapting and becoming the best physician I can be! You don't get stronger without tough times! I believe in all of you and we will all get through this together

I appreciate your positive framing. Thank you for sharing.
– SURVE, SAJID

Annoyed

After spending countless hours studying from PPTs, books, lectures, and online resources, getting to 3rd year was something to look forward to; being in the clinical setting. But with COVID limiting the hospital from allowing medical students, here I am right back behind the textbook and computer learning from the text.

That really is frustrating to hear about. I hope you will be in the clinics soon. – SURVE, SAJID

Frustrated

I'm angry and frustrated that people are not taking this seriously. Taking the proper precautions during the pandemic can be annoying, I agree, but they're not hard! It's disheartening that people not only don't care, but don't even believe this is a real thing. Yesterday I saw a post from a facebook friend I knew in high school who is now a mom of two. She made one post about how vaccines are dangerous for kids, and another about how everyone wearing masks are just sheep buying into fear mongering by the media. I hope I'm not coming off too political in this post, that's not my intention, but it angers me that so many in the country don't take this seriously, and innocent people are suffering as a result.

As medical professionals, we take an oath to do no harm and help in the lives of others. When people don't share that sense of well-being for others, it makes me upset too. – SURVE, SAJID

Frustrated

I resonate with what the others are saying. I have been looking forward to my third year of medical school for so long and now it is finally here, yet I am still learning medicine behind a computer

screen. This is not how my medical education was supposed to go. It is also discouraging seeing some of my peers have the opportunity to be in the clinics due to being in the ROME program or at remote sites. I just feel we are at a significant disadvantage and it really lowers my motivation to want to do anything for medicine at the moment. Don't get me wrong, I am so happy they are in the clinic! I just wish it were all of us getting these experiences.

Ditto! We will get there eventually. – ANONYMOUS

I feel your frustration! I hope we can all get into clinical settings soon. – ANONYMOUS

Anxious, Numb, Disheartened, Frustrated

I also resonate with what others are saying. Disinformation is everywhere, people are not listening to recommendations and with each passing day, COVID seems like yesterday's news to people. As an incoming first-year, I am anxious and feeling even more isolated because I feel robbed (by COVID) of my opportunities to make connections with my fellow first-years.

I'm so sorry that your first-year experience isn't going to be as you'd pictured. The friends I made early in first year have become a family for me. Your TCOM family is here to support you. We will have to come up with some innovative ways to interact, but we can do it. Don't hesitate to reach out to people. TCOM is a collaborative school and you are not alone. – ANONYMOUS

Numb but Hopeful

I just finished boards and quite honestly it was one of the most difficult times I have experienced. I have never felt so isolated or inadequate in my life. I am determined and hopeful to change my outlook and mood now that boards are behind me and we are (kinda) starting rotations. I am starting new habits and finding hope in others' joy and company.

Overwhelmed

With COVID, the upcoming return to campus, and significant family matters going on right now, I feel unsure, anxious, and helpless most days. I worry that these feelings of anxiety will become overwhelming once classes start and that I won't be able to do as well as I want. I'm trying to take things a day at a time and not get ahead of myself. That's the best I can do right now, and my best is going to have to be good enough.

If you need to talk to somebody about how you're feeling, please reach out to your advisor and let them know. We can get you help. Thank you for sharing. – SURVE, SAJID

Nostalgic

I miss studying in the library. I miss hugging friends. I miss being able to meet my friends in person without worrying about a pandemic.

*Agreed! *Sending air hug** – ANONYMOUS

Miss this, too – ET PHONE HOME

Oh man, I miss hugs too! – ANONYMOUS

Discouraged, Heavy

The people in my community are the reason I got into medicine. I always wanted to be able to mentor and fight for the values of others. Since COVID-19, and especially since the removal of the lockdown, it's been so tough to see more lives lost as others fight to go to the bars and to not wear masks as a public health policy. I want to believe that these people are worth the sacrifice we are all putting in to our work, and that they'll appreciate it when we can intervene at their most vulnerable moments, but the disregard toward others just makes me depressed at times.

Relatable – ET PHONE HOME

Towards Justice

We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

–Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution.” Speech given at the National Cathedral, March 31, 1968.

While I feel overwhelmed and frustrated, I also have a sparkling sense of excitement at the movements going on in our nation and world. There is so much transformational work to be done in our minds and social structures and medical system - so much overwhelming pain on display - but I feel as if I am living through a big bend and have the chance to participate in the bending.

What a beautiful quote. Thanks for sharing. <3 – ANONYMOUS

Hard to discern the truth

With the pandemic, protests, rioting/looting, and the global instability, I am reminded of how broken we are as humans. I wish that we had more unity and humility toward each other.

I agree – ANONYMOUS

Overwhelmed, Hopeful, Committed

This is often similar to how I have felt in my medical school journey. If being at TCOM has taught me anything it is that community, respect, openness, and progress toward helping those around us is ESSENTIAL. During these times the thing that has

stuck out the most as being destructive is division. **A gentle answer turns away wrath**, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Difficult to stay focused, but trying to remain hopeful

I haven't taken my boards yet so I feel unfocused, in a weird limbo between 2nd and 3rd year, especially since rotations are fully online for now. Every day feels like a repeat of the same routine of staring at my computer! Sometimes I feel kinda useless, like I'm only doing things for myself, but I'm reminding myself that boards studying (and hopefully, the pandemic) will end soon and that every day gets me closer to helping others.

Disappointed

I was very disappointed that I didn't get to have a college graduation ceremony, especially because neither of my parents went to college and sacrificed everything so that I could. Now, I won't be having an in-person White Coat Ceremony, which almost brought my father to tears. The fact that people are still ignoring social distancing and refusing to wear masks, as if they have nothing and no one to lose, makes me very frustrated. I feel as though our country will be like this for quite a long time, and I am worried about how it will impact my education and the people I love.

Your new TCOM family is going to be here to support you in every way we can. I know it's disappointing that this year won't be as you'd imagine, but we will come up with innovative ways to be there for each other. – ANONYMOUS

Choose faith instead of fear. Work instead of worry.

Someone shared those words with me several years ago. They have been helpful in moments when things seem overwhelming. I have faith we will make it through this pandemic. I am at peace because of my firm belief that our Heavenly Father (God) has things under control. All of this is happening for a reason and instead of asking "why" it is better (though harder!) to ask "what are we to learn from this."

make it go away

I definitely sympathize with a lot of points brought up here by my colleagues, but if I'm being honest about how I am feeling, I'm just really angry about how much social media has played into the disinformation and lack of unity that we see. I see how social media can be and has been a beneficial thing to connect people to their friends and families, but it so easy to spread lies, disinformation, and hateful messages that have profound effects on us as individuals and societies. Not only that, but social media

has been a nidus for us to grow feelings of inadequacy and self-loathing because we don't look like, cook like, or feel happy like some of the people we see on social media. I feel like we would all be a lot healthier and happier if Facebook never existed.

I'm making a conscious effort to scale back my social media presence for precisely this reason. I've also tried (usually unsuccessfully) to not follow the news too closely. – SURVE, SAJID

Thanks for sharing. I've 100% been feeling the same way about social media! I wish there was a better way to stay connected to people. I've been wondering if quality connections and quality of life that I can gain from removing social media is worth losing about 120 connections. I mostly hesitate because of school updates and family connections. – ANONYMOUS

Frustrated and Numb

Im frustrated because it feel like everything that made school and life fun is gone or limited, I usually motivate myself by having things to look forward to or hanging out with friends and family but now most of that is gone and seems like the only thing left is just to grind which sounds exhausting to be honest.

As difficult as it seems, we NEED to take time out for ourselves. I have 4 kids and 2 dogs, and my 1 hour commute to and from Ft. Worth was my sanctuary to listen to music, think about things, etc. Now that I'm basically home most days, that time is gone. I've had to force myself to take a walk around the block to get that alone time that I need as an introvert to recharge the batteries. – SURVE, SAJID

Frustrated and Anxious

Recently moving to Fort Worth was a hard move. My girlfriend is going to attend grad school 3 hours away from here and I don't know anyone in the DFW area. The pandemic ruined a lot of my summer plans just like it has ruined everyone else's. I was supposed to go on a summer mission trip with a group of friends as one last adventure together before we moved on and it was supposed to happen last week. I just feel like I'm missing some steps that are supposed to happen before med school. I don't have a lot of closure from the previous chapter of my life and I'm beginning a chapter where I will be engrossed in the world of medicine.

Trying to stay hopeful

I'm struggling to keep my faith in humanity and goodness. I know it is out there but it seems like everything happening in the world right now is bringing out more bad than good. I want to have hope that one day we will all realize that there is more power in unity and love but it seems like we're getting farther from that with each passing moment.

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Day 2 Prompt

What is one thing you can do or have done today to be kind to yourself?

^ you got this!! don't worry if you need some sleep-in days once school starts too :) – ANONYMOUS

let myself sleep in before the madness starts next week. #imscared – ANONYMOUS

Express gratitude

I send an email to somebody to thank them for the good they have done for me. It helps me feel better too.

Routine

I have a very kind routine of focusing on myself before starting my day. I will brush my teeth, get dressed, and wash my face. I think it's very important to do these things to be kind to yourself at the beginning of the day.

Yes, I do the same thing! I have both a morning and night routine. Completing the steps gives me time to think and prepare for my day. – ANONYMOUS

I love the idea of ritual as a way to help yourself. Thanks for sharing! – DR. SURVE

Meditate

I meditate every morning for about 5 minutes to allow myself time and space to just exist without feeling the need to do something productive. Usually in this time, I will focus on a word or goal that I feel like I have been missing in my life (like joy or strength or gratitude or kindness) and try to intentionally incorporate that into my day somehow.

Would love to have access to these as well! –Jessica Aird – ANONYMOUS

Meditation is something I'm just now starting to get into. If you wouldn't mind, could you email me with any tips/tricks/tools you use? – DR. SURVE

Show Grace

Show myself (and others) grace. These are difficult times. For everyone. Nothing is going the way it should, or the way I thought it should. By taking a step back, taking a deep breath, and extending grace to myself and others, we'll figure it out.

Dr. Nelsen, click on the circle in the upper right and create a profile for yourself if you want to have a pic and name attached. Or you can just tack your initials if you don't want to do that. :) – DR. SURVE

-Dr. Nelsen....who doesn't know how to make herself NOT anonymous :) – ANONYMOUS

Giving grace is a skill that many do not master until later in life... glad you're working on that already – ANONYMOUS

Forgiveness

I offered myself forgiveness for yesterday's mistakes and reminded myself that today is another chance to try again/do better.

Stop, be quiet & still

I'm constantly plagued by the feeling that I'm not measuring up, doing enough, being productive, fulfilling some standard. I need to keep going, doing, in a panicked frenzy. I realized that I cannot give into the lie that my identity is based on my utility. There are so many patients with disabilities that keep them from all sorts of accomplishments but it says nothing about their inherent value. No one is more valuable just because they can create something tangible or immediately recognizable. There is something above what we can measure that gives us worth as humans. I think recognizing that has the power to transform how we view, treat, talk to, care for others. When I recognize this, the anxiety 'to be enough' fades because I'm not thinking about myself and my resume, and my board score, and my rank; I'm freed to considering others more significant than myself. And this self-forgetfulness seems to be the way (ironically) to that self-actualization that my anxieties yearn for. 🙏 The people we most admire And write about And who 'accomplished the most' are people who can stop the anxious toil and remember what matters.

Run

I got up this morning and ran three miles. I think running is a great way to wake up and get out side. It gets the heart pumping and the body moving.

Music

Music, of almost every genre and style, has always been self-care for me. It can have a profound impact on my mood and emotional state. I have playlists/stations for various activities (study/work, cleaning, relaxing, etc.). For example, my study music has minimal vocals to prevent me from getting distracted vs. my cleaning music which is often upbeat songs I can sing along to. When I play one of these playlists/stations, it helps me get in the right frame of mind for whatever I'm doing and lets me feel a little more organized/centered.

I couldn't imagine a life without music. Definitely a kindred spirit!
– DR. SURVE

Got dressed!

Today I put on real people clothes and did my makeup/hair, even though there was nowhere to go except to take a quick badge picture. It boosted my confidence for the day and got me out of feeling slumpy, since I'm usually in sweats all day.

I have found that I'm much more likely to be productive if I get dressed & do my makeup and hair. Even if my outfit includes leggings & a t-shirt. lol. – ANONYMOUS

Read

Every morning, I like to wake up and read a couple chapters of a book while sipping on my coffee. It is very pleasant and allows me to work my brain earlier on in the day. It is very calming to be reading early in the morning while the rest of the world is still asleep.

I do 20-30 minutes of reading a NON-MEDICAL book almost every evening. Since the start of last school year, I've read almost 14 books.
– ANONYMOUS

Love this!! – ANONYMOUS

Patience

I have chosen to be patient with myself despite my perceived weaknesses.

Its Okay to not be okay

something simple

For the past few weeks, I have been trying to make my bed every morning first thing! And actually it has helped me to feel like I accomplished something already and I just woke up! I've already started my day off with one success. Once school starts I think this will help me not to get into the habit of studying in bed or "just resting a minute" (it's never JUST a minute lol). Also, there's something satisfying about crawling into a made bed at night 🥰

Reading Fiction!

I was feeling like I was spiraling recently so I started reading fiction books again and it has really helped me get out of my own head and reminded while things seems bleak and exhausting right now that there is still a whole world out there and we still have so much ahead of us

Go on a walk

I go on a walk almost every evening while listening to music. Although I constantly look around for fear of being followed, it is still relaxing and a good way to break a sweat. I hope to still be able to take walks in medical school, but hopefully with a buddy so I won't be so frightened in the big city.

Or adopt a dog to be your bodyguard! – ANONYMOUS

Exercising

Especially going on walks, because I feel more grounded to the world around me.

Be Honest

I'm letting myself grieve and be candid with others regarding where I am. I'll likely lose my only grandparent soon. She will never see me get married or become a doctor. I'm letting myself cry and giving myself grace for feeling anxious about the transitions to medical school and about my father preparing to fly internationally to say goodbye to her.

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Day 3 Prompt

What gives you hope about the situation we are in?

Each other

This may be corny, but the students/faculty/staff at TCOM have been so inspirational during this situation. We've been flexible, accepting, supportive, and continued to do our best to meet our mission despite incredible circumstances. I love our team. -SAS

PREACH. I couldn't imagine being in these uniquely challenging and frightening times with another team. Having to navigate new territory with teaching remotely has been such a pleasant distraction from the world outside. And seeing my brilliant colleagues who share my questions and concerns about life right now but continue to push, looking forward to brighter times gives me hope. -mcn – ANONYMOUS

The TCOM community is made up of some amazing people. So thankful to be apart of this community. Thank you all for all the work you are doing to make the best in these difficult times. – ANONYMOUS

Well said, and I second that emotion! – RYNN ZILLER

Family

Social distancing has allowed more family time, which is a true blessing. It's helped me to slow down and appreciate them more. Through them I find comfort, strength, and hope to endure and persevere through these perilous times.

Jesus

I know God hears my cry. I can share the comfort that I receive from God with others. I hope is the one who is higher than I.

I've definitely been relying on God too! My faith plays a major role in my life. I'm glad that there are others at TCOM who find comfort in the same beliefs that I do. – ANONYMOUS

Life goes on

Time continues to pass. I know that a lot will change and that everything seems overwhelming right now but I take comfort in

knowing that eventually, whatever we're going through will end. Time drudges on whether we like it or not; whether we're having a great time or a bad time. It isn't the most hopeful thought for most but it's an undeniable truth for me, and that is what gives me hope.

Sometimes it's hard to envision a future without this stupid virus. Thank you for your perspective. – DR. SURVE

my children

I cannot lose hope and be a good mother to my children. Childhood is about unlimited potential and unclaimed destiny...all arrows pointing to a future yet to be molded. I HAVE to maintain hope for better days to come for them... they deserve it. mcn

These kiddos really are goobers, huh. :) – DR. SURVE

My faith

I have hope in God. And though my faith wavers sometimes, especially in this pandemic, I still choose to trust Him and his will. So much about this time is out of our control so I have to trust that He is taking care of us. I've also had more time to discern what He's asking of me personally during the pandemic (and beyond)-- how can I use the unique skills and strengths He's given me to help others right now? How can I give others hope?

the Lord has been with us for the bubonic plague and the fall of many empires. He will certainly be with us today! – ANONYMOUS

I trust in Him also! – ANONYMOUS

faith, family, friends

The situation we find ourselves in is unique and anxiety-producing to say the least, but what gives me hope is not only my faith in God, but my faith in the people around me. My TCOM friends and colleagues have been a positive voice for change in many arenas, from coronavirus to racial and socioeconomic inequities, and it is really heartwarming and inspiring to see such dedication and passion. My 2-year-old son is also a source of hope and excitement - he is growing and learning so much every day, and is

such a happy, loving, bouncy boy. He gives me extra energy to want to leave the world in a better place for him.

Jesus Christ

What strengthens me during these challenges are my

honestly, Gen Z...

I have really enjoyed the humor and personality emerging as characteristic of "Generation Z".

While there is certainly plenty of classic teen self-absorbed silliness out there (i.e. tiktok), I have also genuinely been blown away by the knowledge and passion of "the generation below me".

Social justice concepts that have been hard for my generation or our parents to swallow seem to be considered common sense to the average Gen Z-er. Middle school kids today are learning things I learned in high school and high school kids today are already on college material. Knowledge of the internet and computer programming concepts are second only to oxygen for most kids. Everyone alive right now is facing the work of discussing and retooling issues of injustice, societal failures, and scientific gaps. It feels a bit easier to work with those massive concepts knowing I have some real neat minds to hand things off to in the future. :)

their tik toks are killer too – ANONYMOUS

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Day 4 Prompt

What have I learned that I do not actually need in my life through this experience?

It's the little things

I haven't learned some thing profound about myself but I've learned I don't need to go out to eat as much as I thought. I'm actually a decent cook. It's has been fun to try to recreate my mother's traditional home cooking.

I have been cooking more too. Since we have less obligations I have more time so I feel less pressured so I actually enjoy cooking. Home cooked meals are the best. — ANONYMOUS

I've found a new love for baking as well.... too bad my waistline disagrees — DR. SURVE

Real life social interaction

As a learned extrovert its nice to not have as many in person obligations and just be able to relax by myself

Social Obligations

Without unnecessary social obligations taking up my time, I have been able to reconnect with old friends and spend time with current ones on a more meaningful level. In our society, I feel like a certain level of disingenuous social interaction is expected, and I think being separated from people who I don't actively choose to be with has showed me how often I engage in that.

**snap snap snap snap* — DR. SURVE*

Consuming

While I still consumer a lot of Netflix and the like, I've found that I don't need to spend as much time and money buying things and attending events.I spend more time on old hobbies that are more creative.

Constant stimulation

This time has really taught me how to step back and calm down. One Buddhist concept that has resonated for me is that we are human *beings*, not human *doings*. I need to take more time to just be. Not doing anything at all.

Snacks lol

Being at the library all the time, I was a frequent visitor at the Java Lounge. Now since I mainly eat what I have at home and I mostly buy healthy things - I probably am a lot more healthier. I definitely eat a lot less sugar and I have cut my caffeine consumption way down.

Two cars

Obviously there's less to drive to these days, but it's made my spouse and I think about saving more money by sharing a car instead of having two. We've tried to think about how we could make it work once the pandemic ends! Definitely a budget- and eco-friendly consideration.

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Day 7 Prompt

What is the most embarrassing moment of your life? What did you learn from it?

Humility

When I was in high school, my senior year I landed the lead role in the spring musical. I was pretty cocky about that fact. On our opening night performance, all of my friends and family, teachers, etc. were in the audience. Our theater teacher was also personally friends with the actor who played my role on the national tour of that show, and he was in attendance too. During one of my solo songs, I completely blanked on the words to the second verse. I'd sung it literally hundreds of times, but that part arrived, I opened my mouth, and nothing came out. I was left standing there dumbfounded with everybody in the building looking at me. After the performance, that actor came up and congratulated me on the show. I asked him about my flub. He smiled and told me, "it happens to all of us. I'm glad you stayed in character and didn't give up. That's the best we can do."

I have learned to be a lot more humble since that time, and be gracious and supportive when others stumble and fall. -SAS

last place

I completely bombed the first exam in MSS 1...bombed as in lowest grade in the class. Obviously, grades are anonymous, but I felt like I had a sign on my forehead that read "Exam 1 64%". My heart sunk when I saw my grade, and I remembered I went home and cried. Looking back, I studied the wrong things and I got an hour of sleep the night before the exam--not exactly a recipe for success. This caused me to have extreme test anxiety going into the next exams for the rest of the block, and I still struggle with test anxiety because of this experience. I ended up with a final score just below the average, which I was more than okay with, and a new outlook on medical school.

1. Resilience--no matter how good or bad a test/block/quiz went for me, I *always* look back on this time. I remember how I was able to greatly improve my exam scores with hard work and dedication. It helps me believe in myself.
2. No judgement--there is so much going on for people outside of medical school, and unfortunately this is sometimes reflected in

our performance. Discussing grades is never beneficial, but if it comes up, BE KIND and ENCOURAGING TO EACH OTHER.

3. Fronts--another reason I felt so embarrassed during this time was because it appeared that **everyone** had it together, except me. Why couldn't I study right? Why didn't I get it? Why couldn't I manage my time right? Everyone has their own journey and trials. And, no one has it all together. Medical school is **hard**, and its impossible to do everything right. Take a breath, and stop comparing yourself to others. You are more than a test score.

Feeling like I didn't belong

I thought the first block of med school would be a piece of cake. After all, it was a review of undergrad! But as soon as I took I test, things didn't feel right. I had failed my very first exam as a first year. It was at that moment all of the self-doubt crept in. Did I even belong in medical school? I was so embarrassed by my grade, I didn't even talk to my roommate for a bit. Just threw myself into studying for the next exam. Not the healthiest coping mechanism. It wasn't until second year that I shared this with my friends. I realized I wasn't alone. Many other people had failed something here and there. It didn't define them. They picked themselves up and made it better. I do wish however, that my self-confidence would not be tied to my success on an exam or a number on a UWorld block. I struggle with this every day.

I'm more important than an iPad.

When I was in high school, my parents surprised me for my 15th birthday with an iPad. My mom worked as an elementary school teacher and my dad did not have a job, so I knew it was something they had worked very hard for (it was more than a week of her income!). Then one day, I came back home from school and my iPad was no where to be found in my backpack. The last thing I had remembered was using it outside the school building while I was waiting for my friend's mom to come pick us up after school. I used to come back home before my mom, so I had exactly 2 hours to retrieve it from that bench, before I turned into the biggest disappointment on the planet. We also only had one car which was with my mom and my dad was asleep. So in all my panic, I decided to run out and hitch-hike (yes, super cringe I know - what was I thinking?) while frantically running towards my school. Well, 5 minutes go by, then 10, then 15 and a bunch of people from my school passed me giving me the wth-you-doing look. I was the

weird new girl (had just moved to the US 4 months ago) and no one stopped to help me. I did not care, I was on a mission. Finally about 20 minutes in, this guy in a pick up truck picked me up. I rambled and pointed to him to take to my high school 5 blocks down. He started driving in that direction, trying to make conversation, telling me not to worry and that he was going to help me. Then he asked me where exactly I lived so he could drop me off, and how he had seen me on my street, so he turned his car around to come help me - and in that moment my heart dropped. He now knew where I lived and that was such an uneasy feeling. In that moment I really regretted my mistake! As we got about a block away, I started telling him to drop me off right there and I would walk the rest. He insisted - "no don't worry I'll take you, relax" and the more he said that, the more I freaked out making the next 2 minutes the most afraid I've ever been. "Please drop me off right here, please" I said - at this point basically screaming my head off, when finally, in all my hyperventilation, I saw the sight of my school. I frantically opened the door and ran out. I just heard the man say "lady, I know you're scared but I was just trying to help you, don't assume the worst in everyone!". In that moment, I did not even turn to say thank you, I just ran straight into the arms of my counselor who was standing outside the school, writing a lost and found report for an iPad that she had found on the bench. She made sure my mom came to pick me up and well, my mom already knew about my mindless idea because my friend's mom had called her when she saw me on the road (who by the way did not bother to stop and help!). I was also definitely the talk of the school next day. What did I learn from this experience you ask? I learned too many things that day. Like, literally WAY TOO many to count!

Quite a story! Thank you for sharing! — DR. SURVE

My first crime

One morning I decided to go out for a run. It was about 5:30am. It was still so dark outside, and I did not see a single soul on the bike path. I had never gone on a run this early before - I felt pretty cool about it! I was about to start 9th grade in a week, I was going to be super fit, all the boys would want to talk to me etc etc. I locked the door, took my water, keys and phone. I was ready! There was a bike path across from the house, so I decided to go there. A mile and a half into my run, I'm feeling great listening to music. And then I hear loud footsteps approaching me, like someone was coming to get me. And they get faster so I tried to run faster. The faster I ran, the faster the footsteps got. Now I'm really far from home, just running for my life. There was no one around to call for help, just a shadow approaching me, fast! As I started getting tired and slower, I felt like I had to do something since the shadow was right behind me at this point. I turned around and used my pepper spray to my defense. The shadow behind me fell to the ground in agony - this very sweaty guy in shorts and a bandana, with headphones in, loud music playing, running behind me on a running track, like what was he thinking? Right, I had just pepper sprayed a poor runner who was obviously faster than me and was just trying to overtake me. I left my water bottle next to him, and just ran. I couldn't have him see my face and know who I was. I

learned to never carry pepper spray again and to own up to my stuff. I mean, I should have helped the guy!! Hopefully being in med school will one day allow me to make up for it.

An honest mistake, although as you said you certainly could have handled this situation better. I'm glad you were able to learn from it.

— DR. SURVE

Ed and Chocolate

Freshman year of college, my university required a course called Seminar. It was simply a class to integrate students into college culture. One of the most well known days of seminar was known as 🤔 ed and chocolate. This was a course where they taught all the students in the class about 🤔 ed. One of the perks of going to a college that wasn't UT or A&M was the small class sizes... or so I thought. I happened to be the only boy in a class of 20. This seemed like a perk to a teenage boy who had only dated one girl before. That is, until this particular day of seminar. The class started out fine. It was exactly how I thought this type of class would be. The speaker was a 3rd or 4th year student who worked at the university clinic and she went over all the dangers of unprotected 🤔 ed, pregnancies, etc. Every time the speaker asked a question and you answered, you were given a piece of chocolate for being brave enough to speak on this topic. It wasn't awkward at all... Until the speaker decided to put a huge twist at the end. There were probably ten minutes left in class and the presentation seemed to be over. And out of nowhere during a small instance of silence the speaker went into her Wal-mart bag and whipped out a very detailed, anatomically correct version of a male part. More detailed than it should be. She put it on the table and then placed a condom next to it. Then in a stern tone she told the class, "nobody is leaving until someone volunteers to show the class how to correctly put this on." Everyone in the class immediately looked down at the table to avoid eye contact with any human around them. The awkward silence was astonishing. After about 45 seconds, the class began to think of the best candidate for the job. Perhaps the only guy in the class? I look up for one second and notice that the only person not staring at me, is well, me. So I reluctantly stand up and walk to the front of the class. As I'm walking, I realize that I have never done this before and actually don't really know what I'm doing. I figure that it's common sense and I'll figure it out pretty quick. I immediately start to put the condom on upside down and have an entire class start to giggle. The teacher notices my bright red face and happily takes over to save me. After, she hands me my payment of one snack sized snickers. I hated every single seminar class for the rest of the semester to say the least but hey now I have a really funny story to tell all my friends so it worked out. One thing I learned from this is that even though something is embarrassing to do or even frightening, it can teach you something. Stepping out of my comfort zone wasn't easy and even though it didn't feel like my choice at the time, it actually was and I'm glad I was brave enough to do it. Now, I don't mind doing embarrassing things in front of crowds because I know nothing will ever be as bad as that and I have completely recovered from it.

slow clap for safe 🙌! – ANONYMOUS

If this situation taught you a growth mindset, it was well worth it.
That mindset will bring you success into the future! – DR. SURVE



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DR. SURVE JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 8 Prompt

Underneath your name and dates, what would you like written on your tombstone?

how beautiful is it to have something that death can't touch-- LOVE.
— ANONYMOUS

Husband. Father. Physician. Musician. -SAS

Daughter of God.

Friend to all. Brother to many.

Loving wife. Mother. Adventurer.

Dr. Ziller, you get to define your adventure. — ANONYMOUS

I love that. I want to be adventurous, but fall short. — RYNN ZILLER

Her legacy carries on...

She lived and loved fiercely.

Rather than on a tombstone, I'd prefer my family and friends travel somewhere they've never been, and with a glass of wine, toast the above.

This is amazing — DR. SURVE

Beloved daughter, wife, mother, and sister.

Pax et Bonum

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Day 9 Prompt

I love this! – ANONYMOUS

What are your personal superstitions? How do they impact your life?

You definitely need to tell her that! What a great way to make her feel a part of your success! – RYNN ZILLER

I would not consider myself superstitious, but there are a few things that I notice myself doing whenever I'm preparing for things. I will often close my eyes, take a deep breath, and picture myself doing the action. This comes from me being a gymnast for 6 years, and preparing for tumbling passes mentally. Maybe that is my superstition? Maybe it's me meditating and focusing? – ANONYMOUS

I

I take a few cinnamon jolly ranchers with me to every test...if my blood sugar gets low I have a quick source of sugar to perk me back up! – ANONYMOUS

Rain

I'm not really superstitious, but I always feel like something good is about to happen when it rains. I consider it a "good luck omen." (I may be the only bride you know that wanted it to rain on her wedding day.) I love a good thunderstorm (without threats of large hail or tornadoes) and all the sights, smells, and sounds that come with it. ☁️☔️

Good Luck Charm

I lived with my parents throughout first year and I swear if my mom told me "Good luck on your test!" right before she left for work that morning, I always did better...like, without fail. I would even catch myself lingering around in the kitchen some mornings just to hear it! I never told my mom this at the risk of jinxing it, but maybe I will when I graduate? hahaha

Grounding

Before I treat any patient, but especially with cranial, I always intentionally lightly "stomp" my feet into the floor and press the backs of my hands into the table to ground myself before I begin palpating. Not sure this does anything, but I do it to ground myself and create a mental barrier between myself and the patient so I don't let their dysfunctions affect me. –SAS

Spirits

Though I don't explicitly believe in ghosts and spirits, they haven't exactly been disproven either. So I walk this line between "Ahh ghosts aren't real" to "Well, maybe we shouldn't go to this haunted area in case ghosts ARE real and we piss them off." I'd rather play it safe and respect spirits just in case they're real.

Knock-On-Wood

I religiously follow the knock-on-wood superstition. No matter how silly!

Wind

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Day 10 Prompt

What was the most surprising gift you ever received? What were the circumstances surrounding it?

The most surprising gift I ever received was a \$500 scholarship for which I had not applied. The head of the nursing department where I was enrolled, invited me to her office and notified me I had been chosen by the faculty. I was touched that they had thought so highly of me to bestow such an award. — ANONYMOUS

Fly fishing rod

My husband and I just started fishing. We were loving it! My birthday rolls around and he chooses to get me a fly fishing rod. I can't say I was over the moon because neither of us have ever fly fished and I certainly didn't know how to use it. It seemed like one of those comical stories you would tell your friends: "husband uses my birthday as an excuse to buy himself a new toy."

It's been several months now and, to my surprise, it was the perfect gift. We've made so many fun memories together trying to use it and learning how to use it.

My mom always told me that "there is no love like the love a parent has for their child." I never doubted her about that, I know that she would do anything for me. And I have always looked forward to experiencing that level of selfless, unconditional love myself one day — but I never thought that day would come so soon and in such an unexpected way. Prior to starting medical school, my aunt gifted me two cats to keep me company and to lift my spirits when things got tough (her female cat had unexpectedly gotten pregnant!). They're the first pets I've ever had, and I swear I would do anything for those two. They have taught me so much about life, love and family, and are by far the greatest gifts I could have ever asked for.

I have one female cat, and she is my BABY!! — ANONYMOUS

I love cats. <3 — ANONYMOUS

Puppy

When I was young, around 4 or 5, I wanted a puppy SO BAD. More than anything. I asked for one for my birthday and for Christmas

the year before, but my parents always said that a puppy was just too much. The next year at Christmas morning at my grandparents' house, we had opened all of our presents, and there was still no puppy. I had asked Santa for a puppy, but wasn't surprised because my parents always stressed that we don't get all the things we ask for. I was occupied with some other gifts when my dad told me "Look, I think you two forgot that big box!" There was a giant box tucked behind the back of the tree and I remember thinking "How did I not see that!?! It's huge!" So I walked up to it, and an adorable little puppy popped her head right out of the top. I was overjoyed! I had that dog until I was 20 years old and she was the best, and most unexpected, gift.

A Trip To Japan

My sister paid over half of the cost for me to fly to Okinawa and stay with her for two weeks right after I graduated from highschool. This trip was not necessarily a surprise because we had to plan it, but the generosity was surprising in the sense that it was very generous. I think because I was so young I did not appreciate it as much as I should have. Now looking back over the last ten years I see how my sister has always pursued a relationship with me despite our differences. I think that is kind of the surprise with in a surprise - love in action.

Their first born!

One of our former TCOM students (now a FM resident in Utah) contacted me during his second year concerned about his wife. She had taken a nasty fall onto the back of her head a year prior, and ever since had daily severe post-traumatic migraines. She was on a ton of heavy duty medication and still had daily pain. He wanted to see if OMT would be helpful for her, but unfortunately their health insurance wasn't accepted by our practice. I agreed to see her in my Denton office because she was a student there, so we could cover it under student health. She responded really well to OMT, and over a series of visits was able to get off all her medications and drop her headaches to mild tension headaches maybe once per month. After about 8 months, she stopped coming in because she didn't need me anymore.

To my astonishment, roughly a year later I got an email from that student letting me know that he and his wife were pregnant! More

importantly, he told me that they were having a baby girl, and they had decided to name her "Sage" after my name. You see, they were holding off on having children because of all the meds she was taking, which they didn't think she would be able to stop during a pregnancy. So they credited me and OMT with their ability to have children. Hands down the most surprising (and humbling) email/gift I've ever received. -SAS

MIC. DROP. – ANONYMOUS

A graduation gift

I consider my Dad a best friend, and while he doesn't express his emotions with words that often, he usually writes sweet notes in birthday cards and such that I treasure every year. But when I graduated from undergrad, in addition to the usual card, he included a page-long letter of how proud he was of me and it completely blew me away. Like I was sobbing in my room, because my heart could not take all of the love he expressed. On top of that, he searched for the nicest rosary he could find in our city and gifted me that too, even though he is no longer a practicing Catholic, just because he knows that I would pray with it. I felt so cherished in that display of love and never expected it!

The most surprising gift I ever received was free tuition sponsored by a retired physician. After 3 years at university, I was expecting to graduate in May 2019 with all of my classmates. However, my class advisor failed me and never informed me of the changed rules that affected me requiring that I take one more chemistry class. I was so distraught that I was not able to graduate with my classmates, and that I had already accepted a job in fort worth

(200 miles away), and signed a lease for a house here. I was also upset because I had run out of money in my savings account for college, was paying for my own car, and had to pay rent. Long story short, one of my chemistry professors (more like my second mother now...) reached out to all of her contacts without letting me know and told them all about my situation. Dr. Vanderpool understood my situation and sponsored my last semester's tuition with an extra \$1500 to help with the other financial burdens and the gas that it took to drive back and forth for in-person classes. I have been so blessed!

I have always loved baking and dreamed of having my own KitchenAid. One year they came out with a limited edition version and when I saw it in the store the first time, my eyes lit up! I did some research and found out more about this particular model.... I also found out how expensive it was (\$500 to be exact). Every time me and my husband (then fiancé) went to the store, I always wandered over to go look at it. Well, Valentine's Day was around the corner and we were talking gift ideas--not only does V-Day happen to be my husband's birthday, this particular year it fell 3 months before our wedding and we were trying to save up for our honeymoon. Needless to say, we agreed on nothing too big. V-Day came and I wanted to sneak over to his apartment and cook dinner before he got home. I was so excited to see his reaction, but it turns out I was the one getting surprised. When I got to the door a huge box had been delivered, and I literally screamed...It was the KitchenAid!!! Every time I look at it I am reminded of his thoughtfulness and a sweet memory.

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Day 11 Prompt

As our brand new first years finish orientation and start CMB next week, our final prompt this week is for the rest of you:

Looking back, what do you wish somebody had told you when you first started medical school?

You're never alone

Medical school is unique in both how shared of an experience it is and how isolating it can feel. While it takes courage, I've noticed that every time I'm feeling alone if I voice my feelings I find that most of my peers are experiencing whatever I'm feeling too - doubt, inadequacy, stress, struggling to balance life. Sometimes just knowing you're not alone in your challenges makes all the difference.

But also, don't be afraid to voice your positive feelings! Excitement to be making a huge step towards your goal, when you see your first standardized patient or real patient, etc. Always err on the side of humility, but I've also found my peers can celebrate my accomplishments in a special way because they know more intimately than my friends and family what a given accomplishment means or took to get there.

snap snap snap snap – DR. SURVE

This is great insight and is so uplifting. Thank you for sharing
– ANONYMOUS

Find a Balance

Everyone around you will have their own interpretation of success. Find your own definition and **try** to not get distracted by what others say. Medical school is a LOT of effort but there will be downtime. Develop the skill of prioritizing your time and taking time off.

Yes! – ANONYMOUS

I fully agree with balance and this cannot be said enough! We often don't even realize we need it until we look back. – ANONYMOUS

When I started school, I knew that I didn't want to be the typical med student that lived in the library and never saw my family or friends. I still don't think that's EVER necessary, but I think I went a little too far and brushed studying off more than I should have, which resulted in not being prepared enough for exams and not retaining info over time. Don't overestimate the workload and think you need to be studying all day every day, but also don't UNDERestimate it! If your classmates are putting in extra time for a certain exam, it's probably for a reason. If everyone is starting to study for Step 1 starting in January, you probably should too (I'm still kicking myself for not starting then!). Don't be too far above the study life and think you can do things a different way every time. Sometimes you have to follow the typical study plan that everyone's talking about, and that's okay. But **never** feel bad about taking downtime and family time, as it keeps you feeling like a normal human being :)

I think someone did tell me this but I didn't take it seriously: try to make a mental shift and think about medical school like your job, not like a continuation of college. I admired the classmates who "showed up to work" when they studied, making an efficient daily schedule and routine that kept them focused. A lot of people will continue their college habits of making the library their "hangout" space and dragging studying on and on into the night, sometimes pulling all nighters, and talking about studying all the time. But it did seem like the ones thinking of it more like "work" have been less prone to burnout and overwhelming stress -- either way, think about which version of med school might keep you feeling your best!

Don't put your identity in school

You are more than how you do on a test and you are more than your quartile. You are more than a board score and more than a test score. It is so easy to believe that your worth comes from how well you are doing in medical school or how your grades give you future opportunities. Find what makes you you and remember it daily. Whether that is faith, family, friends, hobbies, etc. Find it and focus on it when school gets hard.

Great advice – DR. SURVE

Agreed – ANONYMOUS

Maintain perspective

The first two years feel like an extension of college with studying and tests, but it's really important to keep in mind that you're learning all this information so that you can impact people's lives in the future. It's not about getting multiple choice questions correct, it's about understanding how the body works so that you can make better decisions when someone's life or livelihood is on the line. -SAS

Such a good perspective. – ANONYMOUS

PREACH. *mcn* – ANONYMOUS

Be kind to yourself. You are unique. You have something to give that is valuable and it may look different than what your peers have to give. Find what you are passionate about and try to get involved with it. Don't give up!

So many people told me a few of these things but I did not really take them to heart until just recently during dedicated board studying. I often wanted to see and do what everyone else was doing, but when it was all on me during dedicated that is when it really clicked - I have to do what makes me most successful - and what does success look like to me anyway? Is it high grades, is it my resume, or is it how I impact the people around me? I have seen my peers struggle with negative thoughts but it took someone else saying my own words to me at the end of first year to realize I had my own negative narrative that hindered my abilities. My words were echoed during a preceptorship last summer "I am just a first year". The NP I was working with said stop saying that- your not JUST anything- your accomplishments are something to be proud of! If you find yourself struggling whether it is grades wise, emotionally, socially, or anything else - reach out without shame or embarrassment. There is so much support at TCOM. Say something to a peer, upperclassman, a professor, curriculum director, or the Care Team. We are all here because we want to help people and that includes you! :)

Run your own race

Run your own race and don't be so critical of yourself. Trust your gut when it comes to what study methods are most useful to you. If you ask a medical student how/what/where they study, you will get many different answers. It is helpful to ask for advice, but at the end of the day, do what works best for you. It is also important to know that life will happen outside of medical school whether that is your own personal health, family issues, or other difficult trials. Realize that you are human, and these things are a part of life. You are not immune to feelings of doubt, fear, or grief -- but YOU ARE NOT ALONE. While there may be times when you may fall, remember that you are loved and worthy. Strive to persevere through what you go through. Take time to talk to your support system and know that no one's medical school journey will look

the same. Be gracious to yourself. Exercise is great too! Despite of its challenges, medical school comes with a lot of blessings. You will meet lifelong friends, practice the skill of perseverance, and learn so many amazing things about the human body. Hang on tight! It's quite a journey, but a great one nonetheless. :)

True words. <3 – ANONYMOUS

PIXORIZE. (specific to CMB!)

Pixorize is a phenomenal resource for Biochem and immuno and looking back i Wish it was available back then, but it is now!!- Im using it for boards and I was thinking about how much it would have helped me during CMB! Just such a fun way to learn as opposed to the long powerpoints.

Could not agree more! – ANONYMOUS

I feel the same! I found out about how awesome Pixorize is a week before STEP1.. – ANONYMOUS

Understand yourself

I remember that first test. It was one of my worst performances in medical school. I felt discouraged and thought medical school was going to be rough. However, I determined to myself that I would do my best and be happy with the results of my efforts regardless of the score. As my scores have fluctuated I have congratulated myself for doing my best and pushing forward.

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Day 14 Prompt

If you could improve any single skill or talent you have, which would you choose? Why?

I'm seeing a trend in answers: we're science geeks who want to be more artsy. My advice: find a way (even if only a few times a semester right now) to nurture that creative interest. Having lifelong hobbies outside of medicine will help prevent burnout. -MCN
— ANONYMOUS

Art

I've always had an interest in art and in music but due to time constraints and an academic focus, I've been unable to develop those interests. I would love to be able to whip out my flute one day and improv or sit down and create a painting without looking at a picture.

People with artistic ability truly amaze me. I can't even draw stick figures right! — DR. SURVE

Dancing

I have always loved to dance and enjoy it a lot. However, throughout college and onwards, I did not get the time to develop the skill. I love dancing as it allows me to relieve my stress. Dancing is also collaborative and I am able to work with others to choreograph or dance together. I used to learn dancing since I was little and hope to continue that skill throughout the next couple of years.

Hope you joined PAMIG! — DR. SURVE

Musical talent.

I have a few friends who can pick up any instrument and play them with ease. I think it's an amazing talent to have. It can bring people with different backgrounds together so quickly, and I find it so relaxing to hear. I especially wish I had the talent to play the piano. I think it's possibly one of the most beautiful instruments, and takes so much skill and precision to play.

Counseling

I have always been a sounding board for a lot of people in my life with different problems. Sometimes I actually can give good advice, but there are a lot of times I wish I had the words to say what friends/family need to hear and I end up just sitting there silent. I love listening to the people around me, but I hate not knowing what to do/say to help.

second this — DR. SURVE

Many times, that friend needs only your listening ear, rather than words of wisdom. Being heard in a nonjudgmental setting has significant therapeutic benefit!- mcn — ANONYMOUS

Non-academic goals

In short, I wish I could sing well!

In long, one time my fiancé asked me what non academic goals I have and I realized I hadn't had a goal not related to medical school in a very, very long time. Since then I've taken up gardening (no hope on that singing goal) and while I'm still pretty bad at it, it's been so refreshing to have a goal centered on something besides medicine or academic accolades.

So now I'll ask you - what non academic goal do you have?

When I started medical school, I decided that I would aim to always be reading a non-medical book (fiction preferred). I try to dedicate 20-30 minutes a day to reading something non-medical. Last school year, I read 12 books just for fun. — ANONYMOUS

singing

I have always been interested in people who can sing well, and love listening to music. I feel like I can sing okay and can match a pitch, but I would love to have more time to be able to learn more about music and improve my skill.

Cooking

I would love to be better at cooking without a recipe. I'm more of a baker at heart, and do better when I follow a recipe/instructions. It would be nice to improve on some of my basic cooking skills/techniques, so that I don't have to rely as heavily upon structured recipes.

I'm the opposite: I enjoy the freedom of life without a recipe that comes with cooking, but NOT baking. I've always attributed my kitchen success to many hours in chemistry lab...but instead of HCl and NaCO₃, it's garlic and onion! -mcn – ANONYMOUS

Painting

I admire art and its ability to convey our thoughts and emotions without explicit words. I journal regularly to decompress, but I want to hone my painting skills so I can express myself through colors, texture, composition, etc.

Improve

Instrument

I played the flute for a few years in middle school. However, we moved to an extremely small town - population 700 - right before I started highschool. The school did not even have a basic art class let alone a band. I tried to get one on one lessons but my parents could not afford the cost or the time to transport me. I ended up selling my flute for cheap to an older couple at church which they gifted to their granddaughter. I was happy with that kind of parting. I really have always wanted to play the piano! Music can be so soothing and to create something as beautiful as music would be such a joy.

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Day 15 Prompt

What is one bad habit you have? How can you go about changing it?

Procrastination

I have been an insufferable procrastinator for my whole life. For a long time (through college and even med school) I didn't have any desire to change because I thought that it worked for me and people just needed to accommodate my last minute emergencies. Once I became an intern I saw the error of my ways. Now I practice the "Inbox Zero" method and it has helped me substantially, although the procrastination still creeps into other aspects of my life. -SAS

burning through cash

I. SPEND. MONEY. Guys, I am so good at blowing my budget every single month that if it were an Olympic competition, that gold medal would be mine in perpetuity. I have been working on this for a long time, and have finally managed to tamper down my spending habits. I figured out how to make a budget that actually works for me, I stopped opening a lot of promotional shopping emails that tempt me to overspend in the first place, and I have a list every time I go to the grocery store now. There are some foods that I make from scratch now that I used to purchase pre-made, and I create a weekly menu to help save not only on food cost but also on food waste. It's taken me years honestly to figure out how to be diligent and purposeful with my money, but I'm glad I did this before residency and before those student loans come due :(

It sounds like you have taken some proactive steps to curtail this. (Unsubscribing from promotional emails is such a great idea!) Congratulations for moving in the right direction! Have you tried the "Smart Money" stuff the school is promoting? I did Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University many years ago and it has helped me so much. Good luck! — ANONYMOUS

Food Addiction

I wish I were someone that didn't have an emotional attachment to food, but I do. Happy? Eat. Sad? Eat. Accomplish a big goal? You deserve something good to eat! Family celebration? Let's all eat!

Part of the problem is I don't know what to do instead. I work a lot, I read a lot and have a couple of hobbies, but they don't fill that emotional "hole" that only food will fill. Covid has curtailed the opportunities to go out to eat and socialize, but instead, I just don't socialize at all. (That's not really teaching me anything.)

I would love to get to the point where I just see food as fuel for energy, but that is so foreign to me, and I'm a long way to that goal. How can I be a leader in health/wellness if I can't conquer this myself?

All of the above.

Wow. The posts here all hit my bad habits. Procrastination, spending money, food addiction....

I started using a planner to hold me accountable for my daily/weekly tasks. It makes my daily accomplishments (or lack thereof) tangible so I can reflect back on what worked or what didn't work that day. It also keeps me from beating myself up too much for "not doing enough". OH NO! I spent 3 hours on a lecture that I planned on spending 1 hour on?? Since I was highly focused during those three hours, it was probably a difficult topic...don't beat yourself up!

Buying new things is fun and I cannot resist a good bargain... I've worked on it over there years by thinking to myself, Would I rather have A or B? I can't have both! I try to minimize shopping opportunities now but it's still a work in progress....

I realized how much money I was spending to go out to eat and decided that I'd rather spend my money on things that last longer or on gear for hobbies. COVID helped me realize cooking isn't too difficult either!

Assuming Rejection

I really like people and want to have social relationships. My assumed negative thoughts that keep me from engaging or reciprocating enthusiasm in a relationship. I often reflect my own negative thoughts about myself and the world onto how I perceive others think of me. What I have come to find out over time is this

creates non-verbal communication cues that are unwelcoming. Obviously, this can make it hard for me to make new relationships. It is only recently I became aware of this habit. Awareness is the always the first step though! I have been about how to be more

approachable, to be more comfortable and happy with myself, and how to manage those anxieties about meeting new people.

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Day 16 Prompt

What are 5 positive things about your life right now?

My church, my church group, the residents who help me learn, my husband's support, my family and friends who help along the way!

– ANONYMOUS

My health/family's health
My wife and child
My church group
My education
My friends

My husband is my bestie and has made quarantine time better than I ever expected.
We're bonding over raising a puppy and she is doing really well!
I'm still able to learn medicine through online rotations.
My family is healthy and safe from COVID (especially thankful for my grandparents' health!)
I'm finding time to be more introspective and challenge myself to work on hard things.

School just restarted
Girlfriend and I are doing well
Moved into a new house with roommates
Family and friends are healthy
I'm mentally healthy

positivity

1. fulfilling my goals by going to medical school
2. my husband
3. my cat (sweetie)

4. my apartment is designed just the way I like it!
5. I have plenty of food in my fridge.

1. Still on track to become a doctor
2. My boyfriend and I are looking at rings
3. My sweet pets
4. A great support system here at school
5. An apartment where I feel safe and comfortable

my husband and son are healthy and well
my family spread out across the country has made more of an effort to stay connected through zoom calls
I am finally in my fourth year of medical school
I've had more time to do things I love, like cooking and playing my violin
We have a roof over our heads, enough food to eat, money to pay the bills, and transportation to get us where we need to go; I am especially thankful for this when so many others have uncertainty about these basic needs

1. Passed my boards: I'm still going to be a doctor.
2. My puppy is the best
3. I get to take some time off and travel since rotations are online
4. My new home is so homey and I love living with my friends
5. My fiancée

1. The support at TCOM
2. Home church group
3. Opportunity to learn
4. Accessibility to a treadmill
5. Didn't see a big cockroach today

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We are all struggling in these times; let's share our experiences to learn we're not alone.

DR. SURVE JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 17 Prompt

You just won a scratch-off lottery ticket! You will now receive \$10,000 per month for the rest of your life, but the caveat is that you must spend it all each month. How will you spend it?

Down payments on real estate and rent them out. – ANONYMOUS

\$10,000

this depends on if I am still receiving my normal paycheck! I could totally upgrade apartments (maybe even budget to buy a house!!). If I am still getting my normal paycheck, then I would use this money just for a new house and paying the mortgage (I would have that paid off in no time with a monthly payment of \$10,000!!). Then, I would pay for my other expenses with my normal paycheck; putting some in savings, retirement funds, paying utilities, etc.

I would also have to take care of my parents, who live in the lower middle class. They have not bought a whole lot of NEW things in their life, so I would want to buy them both new cars, a new TV, a new mattress, etc.

Whatever is left over after taking care of my parents, and paying for my house, I would use to buy food/ clothes/ whatever for others.

Scholarship

I think I would use half of the money each month to pay down some debts and spend on family/friends, then use the remainder to set up a series of endowed scholarship funds for underserved communities to attend medical school. -SAS

this! – ET PHONE HOME

I would use it to support my family and friends, pay off loans, and give back to people who have helped me get this far in life. I would also donate to charities and missions. And buy myself a nice thing or two!

If I got 10,000 every month I would pay off my student loans and my brother's student loans!! I would also love to give most of the money to my parents. Would also take my family and I on a crazy

vacation somewhere because we haven't been on a vacation in years! After that, I would also probably start investing in pharmaceuticals or Tesla

Same!! Especially the investing in Tesla, haha... should've started years ago – ANONYMOUS

I would spend more than half of it (probably about 6K) paying off student loans. Another 1K would go into savings/retirement each month, 1K to my son's college fund, 1K into a travel fund for family vacations, and then the remaining 1K would go into house renovations - my husband and I love cooking, and we have talked about some nice kitchen features we would like to install once we actually own a home. I've got quite a few home renovation ideas on my pinterest board that I would love to do :) We would also alternate the house renovation fund with donating to charities and non-profits we already support.

I like the vacation fund idea! Would steal this... assuming it was real.
haha – DR. SURVE

Wow, 10, 000 a month

I would start with my own debt. Then family debt and needs. We would definitely be moving out of our tiny apartment into a home. I would hope that I would sign up to be a monthly donor to some of my favorite charities/non-profits locally and worldwide. I would love to set up a scholarship fund as well to help other medical students. Of course it would be very responsible to put some away for retirement. Maybe I could convince my younger siblings to go to college or trade school by paying for it. The main thing is I hope I would not spend the majority of it on myself because I know too many people in need.

Tesla

Invest in Tesla monthly till I own it.

Debt & invest

Since I'm still a few years out from my med school debt being due, I'd spend the first few monthly 10k on paying off family debt and car debt. The other payments I'd "spend" half on stocks (or stonks

as the meme community calls them heh) and the other half on GoFundMe's or causes that invest in the BIPOC community. I've seen several small business near me close so this "community fund" money could go into small businesses keeping doors open or

keeping workers on staff. Some of these businesses at risk are private practice primary care docs!

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DR. SURVE JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 18 Prompt

What is the biggest challenge you've had to overcome, and how did you do it?

depression

therapy
and lots of self-grace

Not Matching

Believe it or not, I didn't match into residency as a 4th year student (I did match into internship). I had interviewed at several programs, but chose to believe a program director who said that I was a top choice, and only ended up ranking 3 programs. The day I found out I didn't match, I happened to be at a conference in Reno, NV. I spent the entire scramble day holed up in the hotel business center, desperately calling the 13 programs that still had unfilled spots. Me and the 200 other unmatched PM&R applicants who were doing the same thing. That very well could be the worst day of my life.

In the end I leaned on my support system and never gave up. 3 months into my internship I learned that a brand new PM&R residency was opening in NY and was looking for interns to be part of the inaugural class. I met the program director, we hit it off, and the rest is history. My career could not have unfolded any other way to get me here today, so I needed to trust in the process and have a little faith. So glad that I did! -SAS

Wow, thank you so much for sharing this. It means a lot to me personally as I have had times in medical school where I failed and felt like I fell short. It is so much easier to hide the challenges we face rather than use it as a way to encourage others. Thank you, Dr. Surve. Thank you for caring for your students. I have so much respect for you and am so grateful to get to learn medicine from you.

— ANONYMOUS

Becoming more accepting

I grew up to be critical of others. If it wasn't my way, it was the highway. Over time, I found it pushed others away. I failed to offer my friends the support they needed to hear when they came to me at vulnerable times. It took a long time to learn that, sometimes, when your friends come to you with an issue, they just want to talk it out and get it out of their system. They just need someone to validate how they feel and LISTEN. They don't need someone telling them how to fix their problems, what they're doing wrong, or that their approach is not optimal.

When I first started trying to just LISTEN and not fix things, it was hard! I felt like I was just becoming complacent and nodding along--like I wasn't really making an impact on them. I continued to hold my tongue and eventually saw the fruits of my labor. My friendships were happier, my friends ended up sharing MORE with me than ever before.

Sometimes I still catch myself falling into old habits. I can only hope a sincere apology can repair the damage I've done when I relapse....

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Day 21 Prompt

Think about the last time you laughed until you cried. Describe that moment in detail.

Google FTW

I recently bought a new Google speaker for our house that does Duo calls so my kids can video call friends and family without a phone. I set up my mother as a contact (my kids call her "Dadijaan" which is Urdu for grandmother). The contact is her actual name, but I put Dadijaan in as her nickname hoping that the kids wouldn't need to use her actual name. I had my son test it out. He said, "Hey Google! Call Dadijaan!" On the screen you can see the real-time transcript of what you're saying and it read, "Hey Google! Call Dirty John!"

Without missing a beat, the speaker asked if I wanted to call his home or mobile number. I was so confused, so I said mobile, and it proceeded to call my best friend John. I have literally 14 people in my contact list named John, but upon hearing "Call Dirty John," Google thought, "Oh, there's only one person this could be..." By the time he answered we were all laughing so hard we couldn't even talk. That's now his nickname in our circle of friends, BTW. - SAS

Thats hilarious! — ANONYMOUS

Lord's Supper

This wasn't the most recent time that I laughed until I cried, but the most memorable. The newly hired pastor conducted a baptism and had all of the believing members stand at the front and receive the Eucharist. My brother, 3 cousins, and I received the elements

and continued to stand at the front as the pastor started praying.

We don't know who started giggling but someone did. The inappropriate giggling sent the rest of the cousins into laughter as we tried to stop. There were periods where we were able to but then someone would start back up, causing the rest of us to laugh until the prayer ended.

Needless to say, the pastor was very confused.

Inside Joke

Several weeks ago it was bed time. My spouse is a night owl but usually I have a strict bed time because I know I function better that way. Well, I did not feel like going to bed. I was channelling the energy of a child being told to go to bed. In a silly voice I made up a little song: "I don't want to go to bed and you can't make me cause I'm not a baby".

Sometime days later, my spouse and I were driving. He was teasing me about my Texas accent in a lighthearted way. It was pretty funny, but also slightly annoying. I am terrible at comebacks so I just acted annoyed, but he was determined to make me laugh. This went on for a while. I even pulled into a gas station unannounced(to get gas) and told him I was dropping him off. I let him back in the vehicle after he made a sad face.

We were in a drive through right after the gas station. I really wish I could remember what I said, but all I remember is saying something sassy when my husband replied very unexpectedly in a silly high pitched voice " cause I'm not a baby". I looked at him and tried to hold back the laughter. The response was so fitting, unexpected, and silly we both started laughing till we cried.

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Day 22 Prompt

If you could have any one secret super power, what would it be and why?

freeze time

I never seem to have enough time, and if I could then I would stop the whole world. I would be able to spend time with my husband, my family, and still have enough time to complete all of my work.

give people what they need

My superpower would be to fix injustice in the world with a snap of my fingers. There is so much inequality in this world and so many people are hurting because of it; I wish I had a magic wand that I can wave to make it all better right now.

Teleportation

I would love to be able to teleport from one place to another instantaneously, and potentially bring people with me. Dinner with the wife in France, followed by dessert in South America? No problem.

Time Travel

This is SUCH a great, dreamy prompt and I'm tempted to get greedy and ask for all the super powers. But selfishly, I'd like the gift of time travel. I don't necessarily want to alter the past to augment the future, but I like to idea of being able to revisit and re-live wonderful, precious moments of my past. It's one thing to look at a photo/video on your phone, but it's another to be able to share a special conversation with your father before he dies, have one more hug from a loved one, experience the sheer joy/excitement of childhood, or return to those early days with newborn babies and savor those snuggles. I worry that my memory is fading/failing me and I still have so much living left to do (God-willing); I don't know how I can retain the details of important/special moments.

-MCN

Impervious to Death

There is so much knowledge in the universe! We are delicate creatures and have such little time to discover it and even less to truly understand it. Some knowledge and experiences are totally out of reach because it would be physically impossible to go there ourselves. For instance, we couldn't simply visit a black hole and return safely. My super secret power is absolutely selfish but I can't help but imagine what it would be like, what I would discover, and how it could change the world.

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Day 23 Prompt

If you were a professional wrestler, what would your entrance music be, and why?

first of all...i would never want to be a professional wrestler...haha
I would probably have something playing with a strong beat saying something along the lines of "you can't stop me" or "you can't touch me!"

Self-Explanatory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHg5SJYRHA0>

Came to make sure this was posted - wasnt disappointed
— ANONYMOUS

this is top tier internet right here — ET PHONE HOME

Walked right into that one... 🤔🤔🤔 — DR. SURVE

"I Won't Hurt You"

could be the truth
could be just to throw them off
my opponent won't know!
Also its feat. on a real good Wes Anderson movie: Isle of Dogs.



The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band - I Won't Hurt You
by Jornaquin

YOUTUBE

Upbeat with a subtle message

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yfd2cQNQDOc>

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Day 24 Prompt

Pretend you're in your 70s/80s. Complain about "the kids these days."

This is a great prompt. Loved getting the creative juices flowing. It's not often I get to use them. – ANONYMOUS

On Social Media:

These young whippersnappers! Staring at their phones and using their hippety hoppety, or tiketty toketty or whatever it is all day long. Back in my day if you wanted to talk to somebody, you got on your bicycle or ran to their house and had a real dang blasted conversation with them! -SAS

Old School Cool Mountaineer

Back in my day, there was none of this "ultralight gear" or "safety"! You kids don't know how good you've got it. If you wanted to summit something, you had to figure out your own way of doing it without all your new fancy ultralight gear. It was a workout lugging around that heavy pack I tell you what...Nowadays, your whole campsite can fit in a single tiny backpack if you want! If you wanted to get across a dangerous scramble, you didn't have all your new fancy rope systems and gear either! You just prayed to your god and never looked down. SO NEXT TIME YOU GET OUT THERE you better use the heck out of those safety systems and you better make sure you're using them RIGHT! We pioneered those safety systems for you ding dongs so you could have good SAFE fun! Dang kids don't know how good you've got it.....

Bonus points for correct usage of ding dongs – DR. SURVE

butane?? BAHHHH!

Butane is the bastard of the gases, I tell you hwut.

-hank hill

What the heck is a selfie?

Why are the youngins so fascinated with their own faces?? I swear, can't even get my grandson to make eye contact with me but apparently he's got 1.2 million friends? On the internets? Just because he posts videos of his selfie face? Golly. I sent him one of those SMS text messages the other day and I couldn't even see the letters to type without my readers. And that darned autocorrect messed up my words! My grandson just responded with LOL... does that mean lots of love?? I give up.

haahahahhah – ANONYMOUS

Kids...and their dern parents

I just don't know where we went wrong as a society! Back in my day, we raised our kids and raised em right. They knew the value of hard work and did chores because that's what you do! You help out around the house! We didn't have any of this allowance business where the parents pay the kids to exist?! And then they go and give each kid a trophy just for showin' up?! And a participation award?! Everyone's a winner?! In their own way, maybe. But when there's a race or a competition, someone wins...some ONE wins...not everyONE. And now these parents are all helicopterin' around their kids, refusing to let them explore even a little bit. Back in my day, we ate dirt and paste and got dirty and drank from the garden hose. That's part of being a real kid, not livin in a bubble! harumpf!

And ya know what else? We trusted our doctors to do the docterin! If doc said to drink medicine, we drank it. If doc said "take these here vaccines so yer don't die of diseases", we took the dang vaccines. We didn't go home and pretend that we had a medical edumacation and try to tell the doctor we knew better. Same way we didn't argue with the mechanic at the shop when he said we needed a new carburetor or tell the butcher how to do his job and slice up them steaks! Flooey!

harumph and flooey are wonderful words – ANONYMOUS

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DR. SURVE JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 25 Prompt

Describe your favorite movie as boring as possible. Multiple entries allowed.

1. Man goes to prison but eventually gets out.
2. Two Asian-American 20-somethings get hungry.

-SAS

Correct on both! – DR. SURVE

Shawshank and Harold n Kumar? 😊 – ANONYMOUS

High school football team wins a lot of games.

Hmm... Rudy? Waterboy? Friday Night Lights? – DR. SURVE

- 1) Viking kid gets pet
- 2) Man swears off guns, then watches other people use them.

Lost orange fish

this is probably the most accurate concise description of such a cute movie – ANONYMOUS

Trash robot finds plant.

Girl loses shoe fleeing dance...

... and marries the guy that returns it to her.

I love that you flipped the power dynamic with this statement
– DR. SURVE

A guy starts a circus.

fresh gyrations

girl learns to dance in the berkshires, dad gets mad.

Hockey team that shouldn't win, actually wins

Guy is extremely jealous of talented composer, spends his life obsessing.

A lonely hermit lives under the Paris Opera House and teaches a young dancer how to sing; he falls in love with her and she breaks his heart by picking the wrong guy.

Every time the guy dies, he comes back to life on a certain day of his past.

Snakes on a plane

An alien dog who hates water befriends a girl on an island

Ohana! – DR. SURVE

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Day 28 Prompt

Looking back at 2020 so far, what have you learned that was unexpected?

There should be WAY more responses to this prompt people!

— ANONYMOUS

My wife

This may sound corny, but I've realized (again) how much I love my wife. Pre-COVID I worked pretty much all the time, with maybe an hour or two to spend with her and the kids each day. Since the lockdown, I've spent so much more time with her, and the more time I spend the more I want to be around her. -SAS

<3 — ANONYMOUS

How to be independent

I learned how to be independent and perform tasks on my own. Prior to COVID, I always liked to hang out with others and spend time outside my home. However, after COVID, I have definitely become more independent and have really been appreciating this time to myself!

How to focus on the positive

When I stated medical school, I was very optimistic and hopeful, almost too much so. As I have gone through these last two years, I have swung the other direction. At first, COVID made that worse and I became pretty bitter about the state of the world and the situations I was experiencing. However, as I have finished up

boards and been surrounded with those that I love and that encourage me, instead of having my time filled by other commitments, the pendulum has started to swing back to a more positive, but realistic outlook on life.

New Perspective

I'm a creature of habit and admittedly often get "stuck" doing the same things the same way. What I've learned this year is that I can be way more adaptable than I realized and that there is way more than one way to do things. Admittedly (and thankfully), I have not been negatively affected by the pandemic (personally or professionally.) I've loved the change of pace, the different way of doing things, and the positive changes that have occurred as a result of quarantine. I feel like I have a new, refreshed outlook on life and I'm optimistic for the future for the first time in a long time.

I learned that I am easily made grumpy and that I am less flexible than I thought!! I always believed I was very adaptable, easy going, etc. but the world being flipped upside down made me realize that I am only that way when things are going well. I am not so good at adapting to difficult, frustrating situations like this pandemic. I've gotten a lot of feedback from my husband (because he was surprised too, yikes sorry) and now I am working on it! I surprised myself at how grumpy I can get and how unfair that can be, especially on him since we're quarantined together every day. I have a new resolve to be better and actually be the adaptable, easy going person I thought I was, lol.

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DR. SURVE JUL 07, 2020 03:37PM

Day 29 Prompt

Knowing what you know now, if you could go back to your high school self and talk to them, what would you say?

that was fun! :) – ANONYMOUS

dear high school self,

everyone making fun of you for wanting to go to medical school doesn't know what you're capable of. I can't tell you if you do end up going to med school (for the sake of the time/ space continuum), but if you have a dream then be determined and you can do it! Let them laugh because you're the only one in your graduating class going to college. Let them laugh because you put down on your senior announcements that you will be going to medical school. You'll be just fine!!

Congratulations to you for getting through so much negativity! That sounds so frustrating. – ANONYMOUS

Relax...

... everything is going to be fine.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself. There is no need to speed through college and get to med school as soon as possible. Everything happens in its time. Don't listen to the pressure all the adults put on you.

This too shall pass...

Keep going. Don't give up. Life after high school is going to be a lot better than you imagined. Continue to trust in Jesus.

Amen – ANONYMOUS

Go. To. Therapy

You will thrive.

Just be yourself

Who cares what other people think?

Spend more time with your family! This is the last time you'll have all under the same roof and it's a time to treasure. Your friends will travel with you to college and beyond so don't worry so much about spending all your time with them!

Don't be scared

Don't be afraid to do your best. You were so scared that you didn't try at all and THAT was what you regretted the most.

No walls

It's ok to merge your passions for science and music. They aren't in conflict with each other. -SAS

It gets better

When you're in high school, you don't have as much life experience as when you're older. When problems arise, they can seem like the end of your world, because your perspective is fairly limited at this point in time. Be confident in who you are.

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And finally, Day 30 Prompt!

Reflecting back on this microjournaling project, what have you taken from it? What feedback do you have to make it better? Should it be repeated in the future? If so, how and when?

You are not alone...

There are so many others going through the same struggles. As I am used to keeping everything to myself, this has really helped me to learn that it's OK to open up and reach out to others. We are all in this together :)

We're in this together...

No matter where we are, I think we all go through phases of feeling tired of the "new normal" and struggle with feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. I am grateful that the project brought us together and helped us connect with one another whether through serious or silly conversations. I think expanding it to others on campus could be beneficial.

It was a great way to let out our frustrations in an anonymous environment. I also really like the variety of prompts and how it directed the conversation.

This project was a nice outlet

Also I had some laughs. I would participate if it is continued.

Community

Low pressure way to share with others and hear what's going on with them. Makes me feel connected even though I'm physically far from campus.

Most people outside of school aren't able to understand what we go through and it's hard for me to feel supported when my friends and S/O cannot relate. I've been really happy to just have some ppl here to exchange things with.

It has been really nice to feel heard and understood while being isolated from others. Feedback: Make the questions personal and make more questions active, such as getting ideas from others. Yes should be repeated and expanded to all of campus to get more people participating!

It was great to get the views/thoughts of others. I definitely felt less alone with this. I also felt more comfortable airing out my frustrations because it was anonymous. It felt more real and raw since the whole thing was anonymous. Thank you for initiating this and thank you to those who responded. I felt connected to you even though we weren't together.

Loved this project! I would really enjoy seeing more responses each day to feel even more in community with my peers, so I think expanding the reach will be a great way to do that. Feedback: maybe more lighthearted questions thrown in, since those seemed to get the most answers!
