

Caroline Zielinski
Personal Statement

Dentistry has been a part of my life even before I can remember that it was. When I would get a loose tooth, my dad would always come up to me and say, "Come here, I'm only going to look at it." Then he would pull it out before I could even blink and I would giggle because I thought it would hurt but it never did. He always had such a gentle touch and a certain way of doing things that I always admired. In our foyer, there were old cabinets with black drawers and big, clear knobs. I would search through them and what I found were interesting metal tools that I had never seen before. My dad explained to me that those were his dad's dental instruments from many years ago. I hope to someday have my own set of dental instruments that hopefully will inspire my children the way that my grandfather's and my dad's inspired me.

I went through high school having an interest in the sciences, and in college I decided that majoring in Biology would enhance my interest in the sciences. I always knew that I would be in the medical field, and dentistry was at the top of my list. Then I took organic chemistry. Although it shook me up a little bit, I decided that I would try it again with a different attitude – a positive one. After succeeding, I knew that I really was on the right path. I always told people I wasn't sure what career path I was going to take, but truthfully, I really did know that I would eventually attend dental school. After working in my dad's office every summer since I was a junior in high school, I knew that I wanted to do what he does. He forms wonderful relationships with his patients, and even when their faces are numb after a difficult extraction or root canal, they leave his office smiling.

I want to make people smile. I want to give people the opportunity to be proud of their smiles, and I want to be with them through every aspect of their transformations. I know there are many specialties within dentistry, but I feel that I would be the happiest as a general and comprehensive dentist. Being able to work with a child who needs braces, a woman who wants veneers, and an elderly man who has to have his dentures adjusted, all in one day, would be so rewarding. I wouldn't want to have to pick and choose who can and can't be a part of my practice. Helping people has always been a big part of my life, and I wouldn't want that to end after my college and graduate life.

My parents always tell me that I have been blessed, and I truly have been. Every day, I am thankful for what I have been given and I have always wanted to give back to those less fortunate than myself. A big part of my undergraduate life is the IFC/Panhellenic Penn State Dance Marathon, also called THON. THON has taught me that no matter how bad of a day I am having, there is always someone whose day is worse. I am a healthy twenty-one year old, intelligent and privileged young woman, and in Harrisburg a five year old girl named Molly is going through chemotherapy and spinal taps. I may not be able to cure cancer, but I hope that maybe, by being a dentist, I will be able to get rid of someone else's pain and help make sure that other people do not have to experience any pain in the first place. I believe that the mouth is where health begins. How mouths are treated is a precursor to how the rest of the body is treated, and I hope that in some way I can spread this message and give people the same understanding that I have.

Dentists are a very important part of a community, and I would be lucky to be given the opportunity to become one. I have a desire to learn, and dentistry would be an outlet where I would continue to learn and advance for the rest of my life. My parents are my two biggest role

models. They have taught me so many valuable lessons, and have given me the privilege of an education. My dad has taught me that if I put my heart into something, I can do anything I want. Dentistry is that path I want to take in life. I want to continue to utilize the skills and values I possess now, expand on them in dental school, and embrace them for the rest of my life.