



Perspective/Opinion

A Match made in...Med school?

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Keep your friends close, and your significant other closer; the story of two classmates-turned-love birds as they walked hand-in-hand through the trials and tribulations of medical school and beyond.

In the beginning...

We met on a cold April day during the 'Second Look Day' at Medical College of Wisconsin. Haley was there with her mother, Cheryl, and Sam was there alone. Funny enough, one of the first things that stood out between the two of us were our footwear - Haley had black loafers with big pearls on the heel, Sam was wearing rainbow socks. At one point, Sam tried to talk to Haley but Haley was distracted and led Sam to believe she was ignoring him. What a first impression! In a matter of a few months, we would soon be thrust into a small class in a small city in beautiful, rural, Central Wisconsin together.

Fast forward about 5 months, as we were approaching the first exam block of M1 year. We both enjoyed our Physiology professor, an older gentleman who was quite a character. He was the type of guy you could just tell was excited to be teaching, even before he spoke. He had this distinct way of starting class by essentially yelling "Ohhh-kayyy" in a drawn-out manner. Sam developed a near- perfect imitation of him and would burst out with an "Ohhh-kayyy" every now and then to lighten the mood of everyone in the class. Somehow, Haley was the only person who laughed, which only encouraged Sam to do it more. Around that time, we started studying together almost every night on campus, mostly out of coincidence. Hours and hours of studying together led us to develop a close friendship that gradually turned into something more. We consider our first 'date' to be a Wisconsin Medical Society party with a 16-piece swing band and an open bar. Sam even picked Haley up in his beat-up Ford-150 (who needs floorboards?!). We danced the night away with our classmates, but never strayed far away from one another.

Lectures, tests, clinicals, oh my!

Dating as 20-something-year-olds is filled with excitement, fun, and an overwhelming sense of anticipation for the future. Dating as young medical students is all of those things, and then some! One of our favorite parts of our time in medical school was going through so many experiences together. There were little moments like sitting next to each other in class, doing the post-exam bar crawl with our classmates, and practicing exam skills like auscultation and cranial nerve assessments on one another. There were also plenty of big, life-changing experiences like studying for board and shelf exams, choosing specialties, moving to various

cities, and applying to residency that marked each big chapter in our education. Through it all, we were each other's BFF, confidant, cheerleader, and therapist.

Looking back, we cannot help but acknowledge some of the immense challenges we faced in medical school as a couple. Medical school is full of high-stakes exams, long hours, and an overall immense sense of pressure that was only more pronounced in Central Wisconsin's 3-year curriculum. At times, the stress would seem insurmountable and inevitably creep into our relationship and expose its vulnerabilities. However, from each up and down, we grew more mature as a couple and ultimately learned how to support and love each other in the way we both needed. Through it all, we built an incredibly solid foundation of resiliency, trust, and loyalty with one another that serves as the core of our relationship. We would not trade those hardships for anything as they made our relationship what it is today.



Looking ahead...

At the moment, Haley is a second-year resident in Internal Medicine at the University of Iowa. She recently accepted a one-year research fellowship position and will subsequently be pursuing Pulmonary and Critical Care medicine upon completion of her residency. Sam is currently a first-year General Surgery Residency at the University of Iowa and will likely subspecialize into either Vascular or Trauma & Critical Care Surgery. Together, we have a black lab rescue "puppy" named Ethel who is about 8 years old and is spoiled beyond belief. Being married to a resident during residency is certainly challenging and does require a lot of planning to ensure life stays on track. However, it is also such a blessing. There is no need to explain at the end of a hard day of work if we do not feel like we have the energy to make dinner or to hang out. We are able to support and understand each other in a really unique manner. Meeting each other and

finding a spouse in medical school was not really in the plans for either of us. However, it has changed the entire trajectory of our lives, for which we are forever grateful.. We are also thankful for the friends and mentors we had during medical school, many of whom were able to attend our wedding despite getting married in St. Paul, MN and so many of our friends are residents all over the country.

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