



## Perspective/Opinion

# Stories of Love in the time of Medicine: Unconditional Support

By Gabriela Perez, BS

My husband Matthew and I met in 2017 when we were both working full-time jobs. I held a job as a Biomedical Engineer, and he had a corporate job in the Supply Chain industry. We lived our lives to the fullest. We traveled and met amazing people. We celebrated life, birthdays, and promotions throughout the years. When the pandemic started in March of 2020, we were sent to work from home. In September 2020, we decided it was time to move in together as our relationship progressed.

Matthew knew I had always longed for a career in medicine, but never felt “smart enough” to bet on myself and apply to medical school. As I pondered in silence about changing my career, I stressed about what this would do to our relationship.

“Will this change our timeline?”

“Will this scare him away?”

“Am I throwing a wrench into our financial stability?”

“Am I throwing a wrench into our future?”

These questions led to multiple sleepless nights, and eventually, my thoughts gave in. One day over our work-from-home lunch break in early winter 2020, as I cooked our meal, I shared that I wanted to start studying for the MCAT. It was a complete surprise to him, and what happened next was a complete surprise to me.

**Matthew said, “I will support you through this and anything else that makes you follow your dream.”**

We had never talked about me changing my career before that day. I was progressing well in the engineering world, and we were considering marriage in the near future. We next spoke with our families about me starting to prepare for the test over Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. It was terrifying. I had now given hope to my family and to his parents about starting my journey in medical school. I still did not believe I was good enough.

I studied for the MCAT from December 2020 through April 2021. In complete and absolute silence. I wasn't willing to quit my engineering job to bet on myself. Full-time job and full-time studying. I wasn't willing to give up until I was given a full green light.

We went ring shopping around March of 2021. *He's not running away.*

He asked for my parents' permission. *He's really not running away.* He celebrated my interviews more than I ever did. *He's really supporting my dream.*

He proposed; I bought a dress; we booked our venue. *He's truly sticking by my side through the uncertainty.*



**We woke up on a cold winter morning to my acceptance from Medical College of Wisconsin. Matthew celebrated and told the world. He was so proud of his fiancée.**



We married August 2022, in the brim of the start of basic science courses of my M1 year. He took on final errands as I captured one more Molecules to Cells lecture. He has supported me through my lowest lows and my highest highs in this journey.

The decision of attending medical school did bring on uncertainty, financial instability, and a pause on traveling the world during our newlywed years. There was also an uncertain timeline for starting a family and where we would settle down.

However, throughout all of it, I had Matthew by my side.

**People often talk about unconditional love. My marriage relies on unconditional support.**

*Gabriela Perez is a medical student in the class of 2025 at the MCW-Green Bay campus. She grew up in Lechería, Venezuela, and moved to Houston, Texas, at age 13. She attended Texas A&M University and graduated in 2017 with a Biomedical Engineering degree. In her free time, she enjoys bi-weekly dates with Matthew at the Cold Stone Creamery, Boba tea dates with friends, and walks with her Labradoodle, Luca.*