Physician Spotlight

Dr. Amy Blair

1. What was your motivation behind becoming a doctor?
I knew I wanted a career where I could affect the lives of many people, and I had a lot of doubts as to whether medicine was the right way to do it! But as I met mentors in medicine who were taking care of vulnerable populations by applying their scientific knowledge and clinical skills, I knew that it was the right path for me.

2. What motivates you to maintain a healthy lifestyle?
I know that when my own health is in balance, I am a better physician and a better parent. I view my food, exercise, sleep, and stress management choices as a key part of my ability to achieve personal and professional goals. Being well is essential to everything.

3. Best Self-Care Tips while being a practicing physician?
   - First: eliminate the barriers to exercise-which are usually time and energy. If you try to do this by exercising first thing in the morning, before your family and work responsibilities eat up my time, and I focus on high-intensity interval training (7-minute workout!) and yoga. I really never have time or energy at the end of the day, so the morning is my only option. But short work outs could be incorporated into other times of the day as well.
   - Second: eating a balanced diet requires lots of planning and preparation, but if you are organized and buy your groceries and cook (or choose prepared foods wisely) you can avoid those times when you are most vulnerable. For me, I am most vulnerable when I’m tired from work, wanting to reward myself, and hungry—that’s when I eat too much chocolate. When I plan ahead, I have better food available during those vulnerable times.
   - Third: it’s okay to eat the chocolate sometimes. In our Family Medicine clinic, at least one doctors always has a stash of emergency chocolate.

4. What advice do you have for first year students that may struggle with staying motivated while in Medical School?
First, you are not alone. I remember my medical school years as some of the most difficult times to live a healthy lifestyle. Sitting all day was very bad for me, and still is, so if there is a way to incorporate your studying into your exercise that is a great strategy (e.g. reading/listening at the gym or while on a walk). This will help you connect your motivation to study with your motivation to be healthy.

Second, remember to include healthy leisure activities in your life—books, music, museums-Chicago is full of them! Leisure does not always have to occur with alcohol or only after tests. And you need “free time” to clear your head. I promise you the material won’t disappear if you take a break.

5. As a physician why is self-motivation important?
Physicians have lots of responsibilities and life is always full of competing priorities. But in the end, most physicians are motivated by their dedication to patient care, which comes from their own self-motivation, conviction or inspiration. Physicians have to retain and replenish their energy to maintain this motivation and continue to give of themselves to their patients.

Dare, Don’t Be Afraid to Make Mistakes
By Remez Sasson
Success Consciousness: Skills for Success, Positivity, & Inner Peace.

Don’t worry if you make mistakes. Only people who dare, try, and persevere, complete tasks and achieve success. It is so comfortable to be passive, make no effort, and stick to the familiar. However, by doing so, we allow external influences shape your life.

Daring, trying new things, and making changes, seem intimidating. It is more comfortable to suffer, complain, and stay in the same place.

Why Daring Is Intimidating?
• You afraid you might make mistakes.
• You are afraid to look ridiculous.
• You want to avoid criticism.
• There is a lack of self-esteem.
• There is a lack of self-confidence.

If you wish to let the above list intimidate you, and therefore, be unhappy, complain, and stay where you are, this is your choice. However, if you want to live a greater life, you should consider taking a step beyond your fears and start daring.

It is not so difficult to do.
It is a matter of attitude. It is a matter of changing your mindset. As the saying goes, ‘it is all in the mind’.
After the first step, it would seem less intimidating to dare, even if you make mistakes and bad choices.

All people who achieved success, any kind of success, dared to try. They did mistakes, and they failed over and again, but they did not give up.
Where Can You Dare?
This depends on you. It is advisable to start with minor matters, and as you gain confidence, do bigger things.

Dare, don’t be Afraid to Make Mistakes.
After gaining some experience you will feel more confident to dare handle bigger projects, such as:
1. Find a better job
2. Go back to college or start studying at the University
3. Make the move you always wanted, to a new neighborhood, a new city, or a different country
4. Start a business
5. Turn a hobby into a business
These are just a few of the things you can dare to do.

If you make mistakes, it’s all right. Everyone make mistakes. Learn from them and go on. As said earlier, all successful people made mistakes, but they didn’t let their mistakes discourage them or deter them.

It’s quite simple, though not so easy to dare, and be afraid to make mistakes. This has nothing to do with finance, physical strength or education. It is all a state of mind. It is something inside you.

You need to find the strength and courage within you. You should learn to be courageous and daring, and do things, without the need to be pushed and motivated from the outside.

You have this strength within you, you only need to be conscious of it, and strengthen it. Affirmations, visualization, and inner strength/development are the tools to do this.

Learn to be a doer, by taking the initiative and acting now, without procrastinating or hesitation. Start with simple little things to gain experience and confidence.
POWDER PUFF 2017
WINTER IS HERE

Sarah Lloyd (M2)
M.D. Candidate 2020
Team: The White Coat Walkers

How have you stayed motivated while practicing for the Powder Puff game?
It doesn’t take much, honestly. PPF helps take my mind off of everything else that we have to do with school, and anyone who knows me knows that I love not doing work.

What do you do to keep your teammates motivated?
We all encourage each other during practice and we have fun together. I think it’s similar motivation of having a break of studying and being able to focus positive energy on an exciting school tradition.

What songs do you listen when you want to get motivated?
Might not be kosher for public record, but it’s the same song I put on repeat before exams: Bodak Yellow.

What has been your favorite part of participating in Powder Puff?
Actually playing! I wasn’t able to play last year because I injured my knee so I’m very ready to be on the field.

Aaron Perlow (M1)
M.D. Candidate 2021
M1 Class President

Team: The Mighty-Chondrias

How have you stayed motivated while practicing for the Powder Puff game?
Dance practice has really been exhausting, but a combination of popcorn and muffin tops has served me well.

What do you do to keep your teammates motivated?
We like to take breaks from our grueling routine by all heading down to the Jacuzzi for a soak with a few bags of Doritos and some jalapeño salsa.

What songs do you listen when you want to get motivated?
We try to keep it upbeat with lots of happy music like Adele's Someone Like You, The Heart Wants What It Wants by Selena Gomez, and Everybody hurts by REM.

What has been your favorite part of participating in Powder Puff?
Knowing that the trophy will belong to the M1 class :)

OCTOBER 2017 SWAG NEWS
How have you stayed motivated while practicing for the Powder Puff game?

We are motivated by the things we love. One of my favorite memories from my M1 year was performing in the halftime show with the guys, and this year the expectation was to go above and beyond last year’s heart-stopping performance. The only thing that could accomplish this is discipline. To achieve the level of excellence that was expected of us we needed to devote hours to practice, creating choreography, costumes, props, the mix of the music we would be dancing to, all while adhering to the theme that was chosen and the story we wanted to tell. I also love to dance, as anyone who has gone out with me on a Friday night will tell you. It was the camaraderie and meaning in my work that drove me to success in Powder Puff. Finding a way to love the work you are doing is one of the best ways to motivate yourself to accomplish greatness.

What do you do to keep your teammates motivated?

I would have been very simple to make excuses or take shortcuts at some point in the two and a half months we worked on the show, yet greatness has no occasion for weakness. As it is when achieving any difficult undertaking, though, there were peaks and valleys in the amount of enthusiasm, in particular one rough week where we still had a good portion of the show left to learn. I could feel the energy in the room was low, and so that night I went home and made the mix of the music and sent it to the group. After that, it was wildfire. They all started to contribute to choreography and offering to make the performance their own. Hearing the mix gave a sense of realness to the project for them, allowed them to bring their own creativity to the show, and reminded everyone of what we were trying to accomplish.

What songs do you listen when you want to get motivated?

Having played percussion and piano for many years before medical school, I have loved music for most of my life, however I listen to different genres for different tasks. If I need to write a paper I’ll listen to classical (like Tchaikovsky), if I need to work out I’ll listen to hip-hop (Kendrick, Kanye, etc.), so depending on the what I need to accomplish I will listen to the kind of music that puts me in the right state of mind.

What has been your favorite part of participating in Powder Puff?

Seeing the joy on people’s faces when they watch the performance is what I remember the most from last year. It makes everything worth it and reminds us that we should be people for others in everything we do. If we can bring laughter, shock, and awe to the M1s and M2s who need it, that alone is priceless.

**Pesto Chicken Florentine**

**Ingredients**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves - cut into strips
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 1 (4.5 ounce) package dry Alfredo sauce mix
- 2 tablespoons pesto
- 1 (8 ounce) package dry penne pasta
- 1 tablespoon grated Romano cheese

**Instructions**

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add garlic, saute for 1 minute; then add chicken and cook for 7 to 8 minutes on each side. When chicken is close to being cooked through (no longer pink inside), add spinach and saute all together for 3 to 4 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare Alfredo sauce according to package directions. When finished, stir in 2 tablespoons pesto; set aside.

In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook pasta for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente. Rinse under cold water and drain.

Add chicken/spinach mixture to pasta, then stir in pesto/Alfredo sauce. Mix well, top with cheese and serve. Drizzle with balsamic and serve.