

How I Help IMGs Succeed: My Story

The best way for me to explain what I do for international medical graduates (IMGs), to help them “match” for residencies, is probably to tell the story about how I got involved with this.

For many years, I had been assisting applicants to colleges and graduate schools gain admission to their schools and programs of choice. The background story about this, for anyone who is interested, may be found [here](#). The key point there is my discovery that **there is a body of principles and formulas that apply to applications, regardless of field or profession.**

One **August 17** a number of years ago, the husband of an international medical graduate from India contacted me by email, to request an appointment to work on his wife’s personal statement and resume (CV) for purposes of residency applications.

The session was for me as typical as it was for them eye-opening. The wife, L.E., told me with a great sense of disappointment that her previous round of applications had not even garnered her a single interview. To me, the mistakes that she had made on her personal statement (and also her resume) were obvious. After a great deal of explanation, she and her husband accepted my suggestions for changes to her materials.

Nearly three months later, to the day (on **November 20**, to be exact), I received an email from L.E., which I will quote verbatim: “My name is [redacted] and I had come to you for help with my resume and statement of purpose for Internal Medicine residency application in August. By God's grace, I have 6 interviews. Thank you so much for helping me.” She continued: “Now I want some help with interview questions and thank-you email drafts for people who have interviewed me. Could you please give me an appointment for couple of hours this Saturday? As this is the only weekend before I start my interviews, I would really appreciate it if you can make some time for me Saturday.”

We met that Saturday afternoon—L.E., her husband and I—for mock interview training. I used a large bank of questions gathered from various residency program interviews around the country. Again, it took some convincing and explanation, to get L.E. and her husband to understand and accept the principles of the approach I was trying to teach them. To their credit, however, they eventually caught on and acknowledged the merits of this approach.

Almost four months later, to the day (on **March 21**, to be exact), I received this message from L.E. in email: “I matched for Internal Medicine residency at [name redacted] Hospital Center, my first choice! At every interview I went, they said they were impressed by my personal statement. Your interview coaching gave me confidence to perform well and the questions you shared with me to ask the programs, really made them think! They told me this is the first time any candidate has asked that question to them. Thank you so much for all the help. We could have never done this without your help.”

This was gratifying but no more so than all the other success stories I had been getting from applicants to other types of programs, so I didn’t give the experience any additional thought. Of course, I thanked L.E. for sharing her joy with me, wished her all the best and encouraged her to stay in touch. (I also thanked her for writing a glowing online review for me.)

Then I began to notice, after my wife (who works as my office manager) pointed out to me that the same experience seemed to be repeating itself over and over again. IMGs who had failed completely during their first round were getting interviews and “matching” after working with me, the way I had worked with L.E. If this was not magic, at least it was magical in nature. In many cases, I had also been helping them with their letters of reference, which represent another potentially important part of an applicant’s supporting material. My experience seemed to demonstrate fairly conclusively that, **although there are many elements that go into an applicant’s residency application, the personal statement (and CV) can be critical.**

This got me to think about my own identity, as the son of immigrants, and I began to reflect on the amount of good I was effectively doing by helping IMGs succeed. I do not have the power to cure people of disease or save lives. Not directly, anyway. But if I help to make it possible for a physician to practice medicine in this country, then—by virtue of my non-medical skills—am I not at least indirectly helping to cure people of disease and to save lives? The older I get, the more appealing this idea becomes to me.

With this in mind, I decided to do something I had never done before: To reach out specifically to IMGs, to offer my services, as mentioned above, relating to personal statements, resumes, letters of recommendation and interview training. **Though it’s beyond my power to guarantee you any particular result, I can almost certainly guarantee that I will improve your chances of success—and improve them to a degree that is significant.**

I am not some anonymous person, hiding behind a website, whose name you will never know and whom you can never meet. I do not employ others to do the work for me. I work on my own and do all the work myself. When the situation lends itself to working asynchronously, I can. I can edit files sent to me by email and I can work in real time with individuals remotely, using a combination of Google Drive documents and a voice connection (the standard mode of collaboration since the outset of COVID-19).

The best way to begin to explore the possibility of working together is by completing and submitting the intake form located at BestPersonalStatements.com.

One word of caution: I do get busy at times and, as I said, I do all the work myself. I don’t farm out assignments to less skilled independent contractors. So if you think you may need my help, it would be best not to wait until the last minute.

To your success!

Dan

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[Reviews on Google](#) (scroll down to see reviews)

[Reviews on Yelp](#) (see link at bottom for "filtered" reviews)



P.S. In case you’re curious as to how L.E.’s residency worked out, this is what she wrote to me several months later: “We are doing great. My residency is hectic, but am learning a lot. People are friendly too and I am so glad I chose this program. [My husband’s] company have a branch here So, he got a transfer and moved with me. It worked out perfect for us. I feel so blessed.” I, too, feel blessed, to have been able to play a role in engineering this success story.