

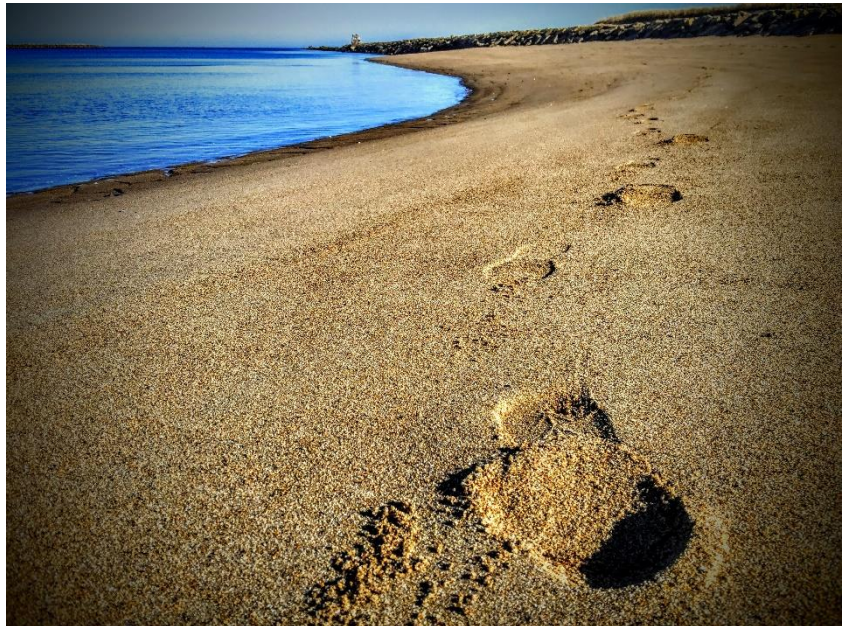
# Medical School & The Ocean

Duncan Grossman

Do you remember where you were one thousand years ago?

Nah, me neither. I can barely remember which episodes of "The Office" I've already seen.

Every single student in medical school is lucky. That's not to say they haven't worked hard to get in, but by the same token there are thousands of people who also worked hard and will never get to see the inside of a cadaver bag. (Well, at least not as a medical student.)



*Hills Beach, Maine – February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 1:52pm*

Just as an example, let's look at my school's acceptance rate: a few years ago, they received more than 3,600 applications and offered up just 220 acceptances. If my Google calculator is correct, that's a 6% acceptance rate.

That, my friends, is a dicey proposition. How many of you are relying on 6% right now?

Did you plan on eating that burger if there was a 6% chance it had E. coli? Would you use a condom if there was a 6% chance of pregnancy?? (Actually, there is – 6% over three years with **perfect** use. With "typical" use, there's a 45% chance. Sorry.)

(Also, you have a 5.5% chance of getting into a car accident this year. Wear a seat belt.)

(Aside from bruising, the most common seat belt injury is breaking your sternum. You just can't win.)

Odds are slim – I think we've hammered that point home. I'm now going to speculate and say that of the 6% accepted, not all of them were the Mother Theresa's of their generation. Of the 3,380 people denied, **don't you think at least a few slipped through the cracks of the admissions process?** Let's be honest here, there were probably some great future-doctors in that group.

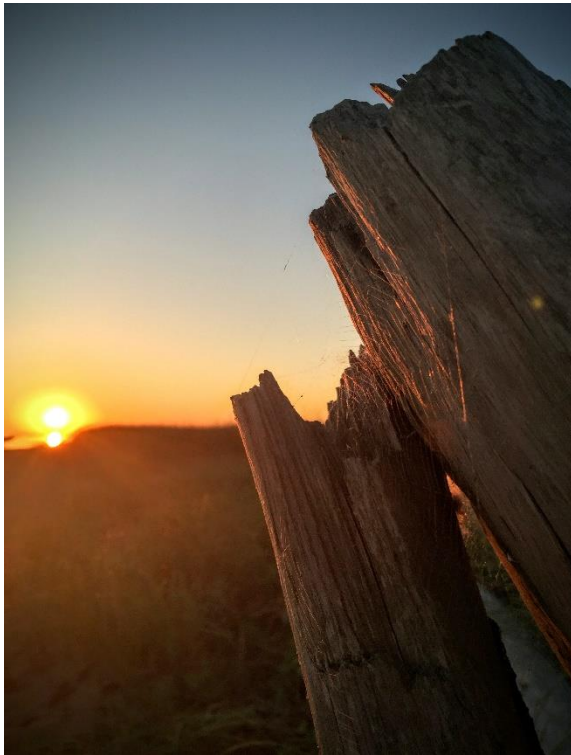
**There's an element of luck when getting into medical school.**

My first year of med school, I took somewhere in the ballpark of one hundred exams. This year I get to take a couple of tests notorious for influencing where I live after graduation.

It is easy – so easy – to get caught up (at least in the moment) in what we **think** is important. The stakes seem high. We've gotten so lucky.

Luckily, I live near the beach.

I've always hated the beach. Sand gets in my butt-crack, I get sun burned, I hate being half-naked in front of people... jellyfish... sharks... naked old people... seriously, why even bother?



*Hills Beach, Maine – September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 6:34am*

I walked down to the shore the other day, mostly because I felt obligated. The idiot seagulls were all parked on the sand-bar and the water was freezing. The beach, I thought, What a miserable place.

And while the background noise of studying buzzed in my mind's ear, I took a moment and stared at the ocean.

There's so much to say about the ocean. It has its own relentless rhythm. It doesn't care about any of your tests. Strange to think we were born in it – something as selfish as the ocean did something so selfless by breeding life on earth. There's an independence associated with the ocean. There's freedom and yet something so rigid about it.

It can really change your perspective.

I'd like to invite my classmates to take a moment and reflect on the ocean – these facts may make you realize what's important in life. (Or, perhaps just as beneficial, what's not important at all.)

-Ocean water takes around 1,000 years to travel around the world

-Half of all the oxygen you breathe is made in the ocean

-The blue whale's heart is the size of a Volkswagon

-Water pressure at the deepest point in the ocean is more than 8 tons per square inch, the equivalent of one person trying to hold 50 jumbo jets

-The gray whale migrates more than 10,000 miles each year, the longest migration of any mammal

-If all the gold suspended in the world's seawater were mined, each person on Earth could have about 9 pounds of gold

-If the salt in the ocean could be removed and spread evenly over the Earth's land surface it would form a layer more than 500 feet (166 m) thick, about the height of a 40-story office building

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