

A narrative essay on why i chose to study psychology

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From the very beginning, law has been a part of my life. My birth mother was a 16 year-old girl, who had an unsupportive family and did not have the personal means to raise a child. She decided to put me up for adoption, and as luck would have it, my godfather and my parent's attorney, took her case. He negotiated my adoption, and to him I will be forever grateful for providing me my family, which led me to my interest in the law.

One of the most prominent memories I have of my childhood is that of me sitting at the kitchen table watching my dad work on one of his reports (forensic psychological evaluations) and me asking questions about his work. As I got older, my dad would explain to me how he interviewed criminals and gave them tests to determine their mental ability. In my sophomore year of college, I began working as his assistant office manager, and found my calling – law and forensic psychology.

For the past three years, I have worked in an environment where I deal with the legal system every single day. My dad is a licensed clinical psychologist who specializes in forensic evaluations for civil and criminal cases (evaluations on competency to stand trial, parental fitness, custody, guardianship, psychosexual, juvenile psychological and psychosexual, and sexual offense/recidivism evaluations). I assist him in testing patients and writing the evaluations, as well as researching case law and listening to his testimonies in court (I have attended two evidentiary hearings – one criminal and one civil – and a sentencing hearing – federal court).

I seriously began considering law school in my junior year of college, following a case that came through my dad's office. A patient was accused of

murdering their biological children. Our office was provided with the evidence to be presented in the case, and my dad met with the patient and completed an evaluation. I helped him review the records on the case, score the psychological tests, and complete his report. Following the review of the evidence and the case, I was sure the patient was innocent of the crimes laid against them, however, the court determined just the opposite.

Following the outcome of the case, I decided that in order for me to become a successful forensic psychologist, I truly need to understand the law, how it works, and what is required of attorney's in the courtroom. When I finish law school, I plan to continue studying psychology, and I hope to eventually receive my doctorate and become a nationally certified forensic psychologist through the American Board of Forensic Psychology.

Through the study of psychology, and my basic studies of law, I have come to understand that many criminals are mentally ill (even many who are found sane). I feel that all criminals, whether mentally ill or not, could benefit from psychological treatment. As a lawyer (and hopefully in the future, a psychologist as well), I hope to promote the integration of psychological treatment within the criminal justice/correction system. I feel that many future crimes are preventable by treating criminals as human beings and providing them with insight as to why they may have committed their crime and what they can do to prevent their criminal urges in the future.

These are lofty goals, but I truly feel that Jones School of Law can help me to further myself and lead me toward my destination. I chose Jones School of Law because it is close to my family, in an ideal location, has amazing bar

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passage rates, and is highly recommended by all of its alumni, (a few of whom I have worked with on a regular basis). I feel that I can bring a unique perspective to my classes due to my background. However, I am also dedicating to learning and am willing to admit when I am wrong.