

The day I knew I wanted to be a vet, I was in sixth grade science class, dissecting worms. I knew I wanted to spend my life working with animals, but before that, I didn't think I could be a vet because I was scared of "blood and guts". But when I cut that worm, instead of being grossed out, I was fascinated by its anatomy. My fear was gone, replaced by a desire to learn more about animal science and medicine. As I gained more experience and learned more, I became increasingly confident that I would make a great vet.

I am the granddaughter of a sixth generation cattle farmer, and some of my earliest memories are on the farm. My family calls me nature girl. I make them recycle, I always stop to watch the sunset, and I am happiest when I am outdoors and in the wild. Love is a hard thing to define, but I'll try to explain some of the reasons I love animals and want to be a vet. Animals are beautiful creatures, and nothing manmade could ever compete with their splendor. As a belly dancer, many of my dance moves channel the natural grace of animals.

The ability to heal an animal is a gift. One cold evening at the Central Park Zoo, a lamb was born. That night, his mother failed to keep him warm, and the next morning he was found frozen on the ground, nonmoving. His temperature was so low the thermometer couldn't read it. After wrapping him in blankets, keeping him under a heating lamp, and giving fluids and sugars he came back to life and today he is a healthy sheep. Being part of the team that saved his life was amazing. I have also seen firsthand how animals enhance the lives of people. At Strides, a therapeutic horseback riding center, developmentally disabled children who lack self confidence turn into different people from their lessons. Being part of the lessons and witnessing clients regaining self confidence and even the ability to walk, seeing how their body acquired the balance and strength they need to heal from the horses was extraordinary.

While all my friends were at camp or on family vacations, I spent my summers working with animals. I began at age 13 assisting Dr. Werber in his small animal veterinary clinic. I learned about what vets do, how a practice is run, and about educating owners on how to keep their pets healthy. I also saw the unique challenge of a vet, diagnosing and treating patients who cannot say what hurts. I remember while watching my first surgery the vet told me, "This is where they rip the testicles right out."

While I enjoyed and continued my work with Dr. Werber, I also sought experience with other animals. As an intern at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, I was the primary keeper of the quarantine unit and participated in a variety of treatments for many types of animals. During an amputation of a rescued kestrel's wing, I was in charge of monitoring the anesthesia. It was rewarding to be hands on in the healing process. I assisted a livestock vet who made house calls and treated farm animals using only the equipment in his truck. I was impressed by the innovation and resourcefulness necessary in field work. When I began college in NYC, I needed an escape from the concrete jungle. After spending a year in the vast openness of the Judean Hills, Central Park seemed like a sorry excuse for nature, but once I found my place in its zoo, I felt at home there in the park with the animals. Working at the zoo while taking my science classes allows me to see the practical applications of the skills learned in lab. One day I did a red blood cell count on tortoise blood, and a week later in cell biology lab we used the same type of slide to do a cell count. This past summer I worked for a nature conservatory in the Arava desert in Israel. The most amazing part of working in conservation is rehabilitating animals and releasing them back to nature. There is no greater joy than seeing an animal run free, and knowing I helped restore the natural world.

I have the right motivation and background to be successful in a veterinary career. I am an animal person, and I am a people person too, and I know that's equally important in the field. I work as an advisor for teenagers, have lobbied on Capital Hill as president of a political awareness club, and was specifically assigned to freshman floors as resident advisor because of my ability to handle all situations, even with the most challenging residents.

My goal is to become a wildlife veterinarian. Although I love working with all types of animals, working with wildlife has been my passion. I love the physical exertion in an outdoor setting, I love the diversity of the animals, and most importantly, I want to contribute to the protection of endangered species. And like some of the amazing people I have worked with, I want to be part of the conservation efforts of zoos and national park services around the world.