

dear residents

Plan A vs Plan B

December 5, 2021

Dear Residents,

One of the purported advantages of attending Karachi Grammar School was its track record of placing its graduates in prestigious universities around the world. Year after year, we received the list of universities where seniors had secured admission – Stanford, Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, Harvard, etc. It was my turn to apply. I applied to 16 medical schools in the UK. I knew that it was a long shot, but my hope was that the combination of the reputation of Karachi Grammar School and solid grades would work out for me. It was not to be. My three best friends in school, none of whom were medical school bound, were admitted to Boston University, Rice University and UC Santa Barbara. I felt left out. I moped for several weeks. Staying cheerful and engaged became a major task. I had worked so hard to get those A's. I was valedictorian of my school. This seemed so unjust. I had been raised to focus on my big hope to study abroad and my only plan was for everything to go right. It didn't.

It was time for Plan B. I applied to medical school in Karachi and was granted admission to Dow Medical College. The first year felt tough. Letters and postcards from my high school friends were a constant reminder of the lost opportunity to study abroad. And then Plan B began to grow on me. I made new friends, began to value the education I was receiving and was grateful to be living at home. Then I had some unexpected paths open up for me. In 1985, I secured an elective at UT Houston – this eventually opened up the chance to match at UT Houston for residency training. Plan B worked for me. As for my three best friends: one became a NASA scientist (he is now retired and lives in Tucson), another returned to Karachi to become a notable lawyer and the third became the CEO of a major chemical company in Pakistan.

I think back on the foiled Plan A with relief now. I'm so glad for Plan B. It led me to UT Southwestern – to this fulfilling career, the friends I've made, the experiences I've had, the people I've met along the way, the family I've raised. The lesson for me is that life is full of Plan B's. Life is rich and filled with surprises and opportunities. I know that some of you have lost your Plan A. My message is that Plan B's do work out, and in my case, it turned out better than Plan A could ever have.



Grateful to be here with you,
Dino Kazi