



DR. LAUREN PENZI

DERMATOLOGIST

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Dr. Lauren Penzi is a Board Certified Dermatologist in New York City. Nobody in her family has a career in medicine, so since a young age she has always been curious about the field and respected medical careers. She is successful as a dermatologist because she enjoys combining her intelligence with helping her patients.

WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE GENIUS?

"I am able to make my patients feel comfortable and well cared for while using my analytical brain to give them the best dermatologic care possible."

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THIS CAREER?

"I have one sister and I'm incredibly close with her. She did, truthfully, have very severe cystic acne. I can remember her coming home from school crying about it—it really impacted her life. We were always at the dermatologist for her.

They ultimately put her on a medication called Isotretinoin, which is what you might know as Accutane. I was very impressed with the fact that they made such a dramatic difference in just one person's life. That struck my interest.

IN WHAT WAYS IS YOUR CAREER A PERFECT FIT FOR YOU?

"I've always been very naturally good at the sciences. I was also always a visual learner, and for dermatology specifically, that's very important because you have to see to diagnose, treat and assess."

"I was worried about not getting into medical school, so I switched my major to mathematical sciences. The first semester of math classes started and I thought, 'This is terrible.' From that day on, I've always been pretty eagle eyed—I'm going to be a dermatologist."

WHAT DOES A DAY IN THE LIFE LOOK LIKE?

"A typical day is usually pretty busy. My clinics usually run from about 8 am to 5 pm and I spend all day seeing patients back to back. I see patients for skin checks, rashes, eczema, and acne. Then there's your occasional excision or surgery and also some cosmetic procedures as well."

WHAT SKILLS DOES IT TAKE TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR JOB?

"I was the child that was very, very smart at math and science. I'm not saying you have to only be good at math and science to be a doctor, but certainly it can't hurt."

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?

"I wish I knew just how much time it was going to take to become a doctor. People always warn you that it's a long road and a lot of commitment, but when you really get to it, it takes up a lot of your your life. Most of my twenties were spent dedicated to studying medicine and definitely looked different than my friends."

"At the end of the day, we always make it work and we always satisfy the needs of our people."

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ON YOUR JOURNEY?

"I'm really proud of training at Johns Hopkins. It's a powerhouse institution and I had just world-class faculty there. It's something I am proud of and hold near and dear to my heart."

WHAT IS THE COOLEST PART OF YOUR JOB? WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR JOB?

"Laser medicine! It's really cool! With the shot of a laser, you can get rid of somebody's hair, wrinkles, somebody's tattoo... in the right hands, it can be pretty magical.

What is most challenging is the pace of the patients. I only get ten minutes to see each patient and I think it's challenging to get everything in in those ten minutes. Patients want to tell their story to you and I certainly want to hear it—but sometimes it's difficult to fit in every patient and give them all the time they deserve. But at the end of the day we always make it work and we always satisfy the needs of our people."

WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR FIELD/JOB?

"People automatically think of Botox and fillers when they think of dermatology. That's certainly one aspect of what we do, but dermatology is actually a really cerebral field as well. We study over 4,000 diseases of not just your skin, but your hair and nails. It's a very diverse field."

WHAT WAS A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE?

"I can remember being in college and everybody was saying medical school is so hard to get into. I started to listen and have self-doubts to the point where I switched my major to mathematical sciences. The first semester of math classes started and I thought, 'oh my gosh, this is terrible.' I went straight to the admissions office, and from that day on, I've always been pretty eagle eyed—I'm going to be a dermatologist and not let anybody talk me out of it anymore."