# Personal statement

Sitting nervously, memories of my childhood flooded my mind as I waited for a long-awaited moment. It had been over a decade since I had a real conversation with my dad. Our paths diverged when my parents decided to part ways, and we had only briefly crossed paths at holidays or big family gatherings. Now, on the verge of entering college, I couldn't help but wonder how much had changed since then—for both of us.

Growing up without my dad's presence had a profound impact on me. Initially, it left a void in my heart, a sense of longing for a connection that was severed. However, over the years, I learned to adapt and find solace in the support of my mother and the love of my friends. This experience shook my perspective on relationships, family dynamics, and life itself, forcing me to reformulate my understanding as I gradually adapted to the new form of family I had after the separation.

As a child, my worldview was simplistic, confined within the boundaries of my limited experiences, which is likely how my dad last remembers me. I wondered if he truly knew who I had become. Would he ask me about my college plans? Did he understand the struggles I faced as I tried to figure out my next direction in life? While I had occasionally met my father for coffee or lunch, every conversation we had since the divorce had been shallow as if I were talking to a distant relative who knew very little about me.

As he entered the restaurant and sat at the table, I realized how much I yearned for validation and the chance to rebuild our relationship. We exchanged pleasantries, as we often did, but as the conversation progressed, he asked about my college plans. "You're still going into medicine like both your siblings?" he asked with a smirk on his face. He was certain he had guessed correctly. Smiling, I reminisced about the grip the medical field had on me growing up—the countless programs and competitions that filled my free time. I looked at him and simply said, "Not anymore." I couldn't contain my excitement any longer as I shared with my father my newly discovered passion for biomedical engineering—a field that perfectly blended my love for science with my desire to make a positive impact on people's lives. I explained how I stumbled upon this field accidentally while exploring different international summer programs offered by the Institute for Gifted Students in my country. Disappointed that the medical and surgical course was fully booked, I chose biomedical engineering as "the closest one to medicine." Little did I know that this unfortunate mishap would create an exciting new path for me.

I went on to describe how this experience had allowed me to explore a new field, broadening my perspective on what is interesting and exciting. I found that biomedical engineering combined my old interest in medicine with the intriguing world of technology that has been transforming our lives over the past decades. When my father expressed his excitement about my newfound passion and plans, I felt a sense of relief and accomplishment. I realized that I had been harboring worries and fears of disappointing him by letting go of my old dreams and making new choices. It was strange how I nourished feelings that shouldn't have been there in the first place. Despite the resentment I had felt towards him, which had held me captive for years, I found myself seeking his approval. Our conversation became a reconciliation that I had longed for without even realizing it.

After that dinner, I made peace with how I had processed my father's absence. As I embark on my college journey, I am grateful for the experiences that have shaped me into a more resilient and empathetic person. While the road ahead is uncertain, I carry with me a newfound understanding of the complexities of relationships and refuse to let the fear of those complexities cripple me any longer.