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Describe your personal goals, challenges or commitments and how you will draw on what you've learned about Michael Rothberg's legacy to inspire your own.

From the moment I started swimming at age nine, I developed an affinity for the water; I fell in love with every turn, stroke, and breath. I committed my life to it, training vigorously for hours every day. Swimming for miles at a time, I was the epitome of health. Then, suddenly, I was sidelined. All that training produced a stress fracture in my lumbar spine, barring me not only from swimming, but from my old life. Reduced from race-ready to bed-rest, I couldn't grasp my fate at the time.

Fortunately, I understand it now. My injury put an end to my swimming career, but gave me a brief insight into the struggles of the chronically ill. Luckily, after a long year of x-rays, MRI scans, and physical therapy, I regained my good health. Grateful and relieved, I also developed a passion for medicine, for its ability to heal my body and spirit. The doctors who devoted themselves to my care displayed the utmost expertise and compassion, and I pledged to myself that I would join their ranks -- to make a difference in other people's lives.

After learning about Michael's story, I hope to emulate his legacy of ethical commitment and utmost charisma when treating my future patients. I know there are countless others with ailments and injuries far greater than my own. Nonetheless, my brush with suffering allows me to empathize with them on a deeper level. I intend to take the same approach as Michael -- one guided by kindness, humor, and compassion -- to treat them not just as patients, but fellow human beings.