

## **“I Want to Make a Difference because...”**

Word Count: 495 words

I want to make a difference because of the numerous people that have made a difference in my life. When I was 16 years old, I was diagnosed with a brain tumor. From the first moments of my diagnosis, doctors, family and friends have been making a difference in my life. However, one doctor in particular, Dr. Wisoff, made the difference between life and death. Now that I am a one year survivor, I would like to be the difference maker for others.

Back in July of 2005, I went to my optometrist complaining of double vision. I was immediately sent for an MRI. Once out of the MRI chamber, the diagnosis came quickly. The words, “You have a brain tumor,” echoed through my head. My world stood still; I did not know what to do or what to think. When I heard the term “brain tumor”, I thought I had been given my death sentence.

While riding by ambulance to a Chicago hospital, I decided from that point forward, I would face each step of the journey ahead armed with a positive attitude and faith. Through the next four months of treatment, I went through numerous MRI’s and three brain surgeries. My final surgery was to remove the tumor from its deep location on top of my brainstem. I went to New York University Hospital for this risky, seven-hour surgery because Dr. Wisoff believed he could remove my tumor. He was knowledgeable, experienced, had a positive attitude, and most importantly, he never used the word “inoperable” like many other doctors.

My flight to New York was for a second chance at life. I was nervous, but confident I would get through this surgery because of the people who were praying for

me back home. Even though I faced surgery that could leave me blind, deaf, or unable to walk, I was not worried. I remained optimistic just as I had been throughout the whole ordeal.

Today, I am tumor free and doing excellent in school. I know this is because Dr. Wisoff dared to take a chance in hope of saving my life. Equipped with knowledge, experience, and the latest surgical tools, Dr. Wisoff set himself up for success. I am alive not only because of my positive attitude, and the many prayers said for me, but because Dr. Wisoff made the conscience choice to make a difference.

I look at my experience as a test that showed me the depths of my endurance, and proved to me that I can navigate the valleys in life if I have determination and a positive outlook. I want to take my gifts and talents and become a doctor who helps children diagnosed with brain tumors. My desire is to help find a cure for this evil disease. I want my life's work to make a difference in someone else's life just as Dr. Wisoff made the difference in my life – the difference between life and death!