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Growing up in a traditional Chinese home, I was never empowered by my family to pursue a challenging career, partly because I was a girl. I did well in school but the idea of becoming a doctor was unfathomable to me. I did not think I was smart enough to even consider medicine. My brother once told me in high school that an advanced computer science course would be far too challenging for me. I thought, if I wasn't smart enough for this class, how could I possibly pursue medicine? Moreover, I had no idea what doctors even did in hospitals. My family believed that you only go to the doctor when you feel severely ill, otherwise, you tough it out. Luckily, my family was generally healthy and did not require a doctor for most cases. The times when I did go to the doctor, I usually had a negative experience. My doctor always came in and out of the room within five minutes. He never cared to build rapport and never explained anything to me. I simply accepted what the doctor said like any obedient patient. For these reasons, I vowed that I would never be a doctor.

My world changed when I faced a challenging health issue one month into college. I went to the doctor but this time, I felt accepted and was treated as a person, not simply a patient with a problem. This experience was radically opposite of what I had experienced my entire life. This doctor had impacted my health and my life dramatically. In this moment, I realized that in the future, I wanted to impact other people's lives like this doctor had impacted mine. Thus began my curiosity.

I am a first-generation college student and an immigrant. My family and I had no idea what medicine was or how one would even pursue such a career in this country. Fortunately, I was accepted to

a summer research program aimed towards encouraging diverse students to continue pursuing medicine. That was when I met Dr. Patricia Robertson, or as we like to call her, Dr. R. Upon first meeting Dr. R, I knew that she was committed to her students. Amongst the female faculty at University of California, San Francisco, Dr. R was already known as the mentor that would help you through family-work balance issues, coach you through negotiating for fair pay and, most simply, support you.

That summer, I shadowed Dr. R as she met with high-risk obstetrics patients. I was surprised with how much Dr. R knew about each patient; she asked about the patients' families and how the moving process was for patients moving across town. Although the context of most visits was stressful for patients, Dr. R had built such a strong relationship with her patients and brought into each session a calm and understanding demeanor. I saw how much her patients appreciated her and the dedication she had for each patient. The more I learned about Dr. R, the more I wanted to follow in her footsteps. What I saw that summer with Dr. R inspired me to pursue medicine and to help ensure that all patients receive proper and courteous care from their physicians. No patient deserves to be denied a proper explanation of their condition. No patient deserves to be left confused due to miscommunication or lack of communication from their physician. Dr. R proved to me that there is compassion in medicine.

Moreover, Dr. R helped me face my issues of self-esteem and self-doubt. She challenged the preformed beliefs I had about my own capabilities and helped me realize my potential. While my family was still resistant towards the idea of me pursuing med-

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icine, Dr. R was behind me every step of the way to encourage me. If I work hard and put all my effort into becoming a doctor, I will achieve my goal, even with people discouraging me along the way. I have a personal mission to become a physician who is not only a master of the art of medicine, but also a master in the art of communication and compassion.

Without the support of Dr. R, I would not be where I am today, a medical student at University of Vermont. Without the support of Dr. R, I would not have been confident in myself nor my abilities. Without the support of Dr. R, I would not have been able to achieve my mission of helping others receive outstanding care from their physicians.

I am now a firm believer in mentorship and the power of encouragement. Although there is much greater female representation in medicine today, there still remain many areas for improvement. By encouraging, empowering, and mentoring girls during their formative years, I hope to help change the face of medicine.

