

FAFP SEPTEMBER MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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“He who knows how to read but does not read, has no advantage over one who does not know how to read.” My younger cousin-in-law said this to me. What gifts have I been gifted that I am not using to my full capability?

Since my arrival to USF as an Assistant Professor in Family Medicine, I had the desire to be involved with many parts of a medical career. During my interview, I remember being asked about my interests, and after 3 or 4 questions, one of the senior faculty exclaimed, “you must be interested in everything!” I struggle being tied to just one dish at a restaurant, so sticking to one area of focus seemed difficult for me after finishing residency. For us to continue to learn and to grow, we must continue to take on challenges. We must commit to difficult tasks, thereby expanding our capacity to do well in this world. This is true in our personal lives and our work, caring for those in need.

In order to start those hard tasks, I tried my hand at a project that uses data to improve our teaching/feedback processes. FeedForward started as an application-based tracking system for student feedback. We created and presented a new, on-demand evaluation system for

tracking learning. I was a doctor who tried creating software and received a grant from the National Science Foundation by their I-Corps USF startup bootcamp. We presented it at a Society of Teachers at the Family Medicine National Conference, receiving special recognition. Even if my attempts at starting a tech company were stifled by the Covid pandemic, failure was a great mentor. As physicians, we must be ok with being wrong or not always knowing the answer. I remind my students it is ok to say “I don’t know,” but it is not ok to settle in that valley. We are charged to pursue knowledge.

Chasing my calling as a physician, I became anchored in medical education. I did a fellowship in faculty development. My role changed at USF to leading our primary care clerkship and I taught a lecture, called “What is Primary Care,” where I describe many facets of our family medicine cosmos. Undoubtedly, starting at the beauty of full-spectrum patient care with aspects of clinical informatics and population health. By reminding our learners what we are able to do, it keeps me seeking more ways to stretch my impact as a family physician. Five years out of residency and I still am excited to go to work every day. I am convinced that

between teaching medical students and serving patients, I’ve got the job of my dreams. Now, I am in a chapter where we’re building a new residency program at Tampa General Hospital. Challenges make us grow, and we should fear stagnation.

Medicine is my calling. But my life is energized by my faith and my family. Mentorship to the next generation of youth is important to me, as I was mentored through my church while growing up. My wife is the runner I aspire to be and the best friend I can always lean on. She and I enjoy exercise and setting goals, like running a half marathon together. We enjoy traveling the world with our little 8-month-old daughter, be it for medical mission, or for fun and relaxation. Disconnecting from the busy schedules to reconnect with ourselves and one another. Sometimes this may be the most difficult task of all, but time away from our work proves to reinvigorate us as caregivers. So, if we want to give patients the best version of ourselves, this is imperative.

Fellow doctor, use your gifts to your full capacity.