Being A Rebel Leads A Chicago Psychiatrist To His Career

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Pointing out flaws from a trainer or mentor doesn't always bode well for students, but in a life-or-death situation, sometimes rules must be broken.

(Photo Courtesy of Dr. Carl Bell)

"This guy had gotten shot, and we needed to figure out whether his intestines perforated," said Dr. Carl Bell. "I had seen one of our teachers making a mistake and I called him on it. I was respectful, but [he gave me] a dirty look because you're not supposed to question your teacher in medical school."

After that incident, one of his peers told Dr. Bell, who was a medical student at the time, that he was "crazy" for doing so. Being accused of terms like "crazy," "arrogant" and "bold" were nothing new to a young Dr. Bell, and he believed these traits would come in handy in the medical field.

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"Psychiatry was a field exploring what was going on inside the brain. As much as I'm a surgeon at heart, I climbed the next highest mountain to try to figure out what's going on in people's minds."

Dr. Bell went on to earn an M.D. from Meharry Medical College and a certificate of Psychiatric Residency from the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute. He currently works at Jackson Park Hospital on their medical surgical unit and family medicine clinic.

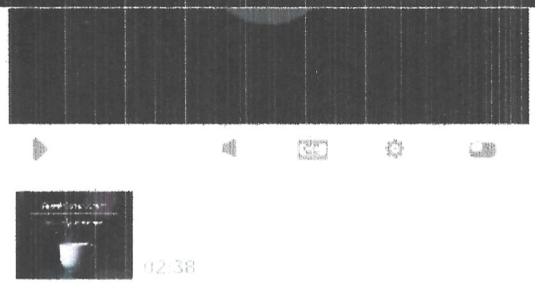
"I help people, make a decent amount of money and I have some fun. Those are three things every job should have. I'm one of those people who likes to explore and go on adventures in psychiatry."

Outside of mandatory psychiatry courses, Dr. Bell encourages medical students to pay attention to art and literature courses.

"As you go through the humanities, there are people who have always been able to tap that inner-being that people have, similar to religion. Shakespeare was the same kind of guy as Smokey Robinson. Smokey can write a song that resonates in millions of people. He taps into the core of human spirituality, human emotions, human thought, human suffering. The stuff that Shakespeare wrote is [also] the core essence of human existence."

Dr. Bell also encourages graduates to continue to crave learning.

"People are how they are because of their personal philosophy. One of the core features of human existence is curiosity. Don't lose that lust for information and knowledge. Seek out that 'Aha!,' where you learn something and the lights go on."

Shamontiel L. Vaughn is a professional journalist who has work featured in AXS, Yahoo!, Chicago Defender and Chicago Tribune. She's been an Examiner since 2009 and currently writes about 10 categories on Examiner.com.

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