

THE OPENED DOOR WE HOLD FOR OTHERS

The **structural integrity** of our medical community is only as strong as its accessibility; a room that is difficult to enter is a room that lacks the full breadth of talent it needs to thrive. Dr. Brodsky recognized that the struggle for equity is a shared responsibility to widen the path for those following behind us. This resonates deeply with me because my understanding of advocacy was forged by a mentor who taught me that once you find your seat at the table, your first act should be to pull out a chair for someone else.

I was only seventeen and just beginning my medical journey when I met Dr Adhir, a physician who embodied advocacy not as a slogan, but as a daily practice. I vividly remember a moment during a high-stakes clinical meeting where, as the youngest person in the room by a decade, I felt the familiar urge to remain invisible. Instead of letting me fade into the background, Dr. A didn't just invite me to speak; she set the stage for me to be heard. By turning to the room and saying, *'I'd like to hear our student's perspective on this case, as she's seen the patient most recently,'* she performed a masterclass in advocacy. In that single sentence, she shifted the room's power dynamic, transforming my status from an observer to a contributor. She wasn't just 'being nice'; she was intentionally recalibrating the hierarchy to ensure that the best clinical information—no matter whose mouth it came from—reached the center of the table.

She was the kind of mentor whose influence was felt in moments others might overlook: how she introduced trainees in professional spaces, how she ensured every voice was heard during rounds, and how she challenged inequities without diminishing anyone's dignity. As a medical student navigating a system that often feels hierarchical and intimidating, I initially believed that success required tactical silence, endurance, and assimilation. Dr. A. showed me another way.

She took the time to ask about my experiences—not just academically, but personally. When I hesitated to speak up during discussions, she encouraged me to trust my knowledge and perspective. She emphasized that diversity of thought and experience strengthens medicine. Watching her advocate for trainees—especially women and those from underrepresented backgrounds—taught me that allyship requires action, not just empathy.

If I were to dedicate a **quote** to honor her mentorship, it would be the words of Maya Angelou: "**When you learn, teach. When you get, give.**" This quote reflects the essence of what she modeled so effortlessly. Her mentorship was never transactional; she gave her time, guidance, and advocacy freely, trusting that its impact would ripple outward. Much like Dr. Brodsky, she understood that empowering a single individual creates the capacity to empower a community.

As a medical student currently navigating the transition from the one who 'gets' to the one who 'gives.' The doors opened for me are not just gifts, but models of becoming a physician who views advocacy as a fundamental clinical skill. I want to be the person who notices the student standing at the edge of the room and invites them to the center—mentoring with intention those who may feel overlooked or who struggle to find their footing in a complex medical system. To me, paying it forward requires this type of active stewardship.

Dr. Brodsky's legacy reminds us that mentorship is a form of activism; by investing in others, we dismantle the very systems that thrive on exclusion. I carry forward the lessons of those who mentored me with the understanding that my success is incomplete if it does not create a path for others to follow.

In honoring their guidance, I commit to becoming not just a physician, but an advocate—one who ensures that the **room** remains accessible, the **chairs** are always pulled out for those following behind, and the doors opened for me remain wide open for the generations to come.