I AM STEM

Shamone Gore Panter

Shamone Gore Panter is a faculty member in the Biology Department at Cleveland State University and a researcher with the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Gore Panter describes how her career took a sudden shift from engineering to medicine after her mother passed away.

> "I HAVE ONE BLACK MENTOR. EVERYONE ELSE IS WHITE, AND THAT'S OK. I WISH I HAD MORE, BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT. SO DON'T BE LIKE, BECAUSE THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE ME, THEY CAN'T HELP ME. THEY CAN."

Can you describe how you wound up in medicine?

Okay. So my path is not a straight line, not even close. I started at Ohio State. I was there for three years. It did not work out well. I initially was in engineering and then I realized I did not want to do engineering, but I did not know what I wanted to do.

So I took a break and then my mother passed away. And then I had a son, and then I said, OK, it's time to get back to work. But my mother passed away from sudden cardiac death. I was in engineering, but I was like, now I don't know what I want to do, but that is what helped to, you know, really kind of focus me.

Looking back, what advice would you offer to your 9 or 10 year-old self?

I would probably tell myself you can do these classes because there was a lot of self-doubt during that time. And it's OK to be the only one. So I was in the honors classes and all of that, but none of my friends were and you know, it was like, it's okay to be the only one.

Take every opportunity that you get, every single one of them. Even seek out opportunities.

What does STEM mean to you?

It is an opportunity for me to find reasons that people die from cardiovascular diseases. It is an opportunity where I get to really question things and investigate ways to answer my questions. My job is to help you understand how cool our bodies are and the things that they do every day without us thinking about it.

How have mentors helped you?

Don't shy away from mentorship. It's sooooo important. I can tell you unequivocally that I would not be where I am at today without my mentors like period point blank. No question.

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