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Dichotomy of a Person in Medical School

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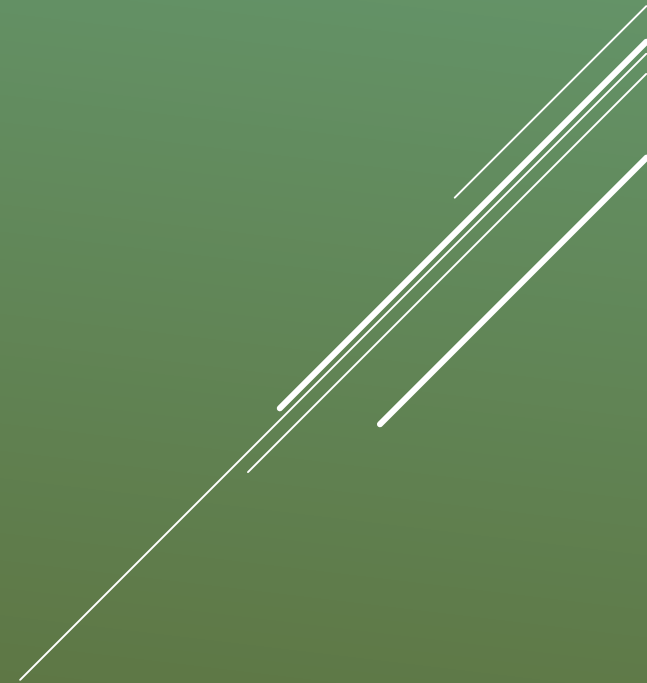
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Our minds are often in a constant state of internal conflict most especially during seasons of change. In this piece, I explore the balance of being a first-year medical student while maintaining my identity of personhood.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT



Dichotomy of a ~~medical student, person,~~ person in medical school

“Maybe I should make dinner.” “Maybe I should keep snacking to save time.” “I used to love baking, why don’t I make some cookies?” “Why waste time baking when I can study?” These conflicting thoughts raced through my mind all throughout the first months of medical school. Constantly feeling like I had to choose between being a person and a medical school student. Sounds intense, I know. But it was my truth. The thoughts of calling home but while on the phone thoughts of if E.coli was a gram positive or negative bacteria. Never feeling like I was fully in one place or the other. Always a divide. My two sides always at war.

Conflict, I know brings a change whether good or bad. My change started out being bad because I felt I had to give in to one side to have peace, and the medical student side often won. Being a person lost because the guilt of failure surpassed the guilt of not talking to friends and family. It wasn’t until I realized the beauty of the tension between the two that I began to identify **as a person** in medical school. The conflict pushed me to acknowledge both sides were equally important. It was okay to schedule in breaks.

It was okay to do the things I loved like reading my Bible, meditating, journaling and cooking. I realized in doing these activities that I felt more energized to tackle memorizing a 119-slide lecture on bacteria. The conflict in me showed the value of attending to both sides and brought my attention to them. Internal conflict brings change and awareness to the opposing sides within us and with that, the power to fully embrace our true selves.

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Freda Assuah is a first-year medical student in her second semester at KPCOM. She is also concurrently enrolled in the Master of Informatics program.

Born and raised in Accra, Ghana she moved to the United States to pursue her education when she was fifteen.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading memoirs to learn more about other people's stories and playing "no rules tennis" with friends.

She hopes to someday be a neurologist, helping patients through innovative technology.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

