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**Power, Pregnancy, and Purpose: A Lesson in Leadership**

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I was eagerly anticipating my obstetrics and gynecology rotation. The chance to witness the miracle of birth, support women through their most vulnerable moments, and learn from experienced physicians was thrilling. However, I was unprepared for the profound impact one particular physician would have on my life, both professionally and personally. Through her actions, she not only inspired me to pursue a career in obstetrics and gynecology but also demonstrated the transformative power of women empowering women in medicine.

The labor and delivery floor was buzzing that day, the air thick with anticipation and adrenaline. A woman was in active labor, and the obstetrician scheduled to perform the delivery had been delayed. Just as tension began to ripple through the team, the door swung open, and in walked Dr. Patel, a physician known for her boundless energy and unwavering optimism. She was in her late pregnancy, with a

pronounced baby bump and an unmistakable glow. Despite what must have been her own physical discomfort, she exuded confidence and vitality. Her presence was electric; the atmosphere shifted instantly. Smiles appeared on faces, shoulders relaxed, and the energy in the room transformed into one of excitement and camaraderie.

Dr. Patel’s demeanor captivated me. Here was a woman juggling the physical demands of her own pregnancy while providing exemplary care to another. She led the delivery with precision and empathy, making it look effortless, even as beads of sweat formed on her brow. The strength she radiated left an indelible mark on me. In that moment, I knew I wanted to pursue obstetrics and gynecology—not just to help women but to emulate her resilience and inspire others as she had inspired me.

After the delivery, I gathered the courage to speak with Dr. Patel. She smiled warmly as I expressed my admiration for her dedication and energy. “We’re stronger than we think,” she said, her words a gentle affirmation of the power and potential of women in medicine. That simple statement, coupled with her example, encapsulated what gender equity means to me: creating a professional environment where women feel empowered to thrive, lead, and inspire without being held back by societal or systemic barriers.

Dr. Patel’s words resonated deeply with me, as I had recently grappled with a challenge that had tested my own resilience. Earlier in my medical training, I struggled with balancing my academic responsibilities with a family crisis that arose unexpectedly. My mother, who had always been my rock, faced a serious health issue, and I suddenly found myself shouldering new responsibilities at home while keeping up with demanding coursework. Juggling hospital rotations, late-night study sessions, and caregiving often felt overwhelming. There were moments when the weight of these dual responsibilities seemed insurmountable.

Yet, through this experience, I discovered an inner strength I didn’t know I possessed. Leaning on the support of mentors and friends, I learned to prioritize, set boundaries, and ask for help when I needed it. This period of adversity taught me invaluable lessons in time management, empathy, and resilience—skills that continue to shape me as a future physician. It also deepened my understanding of what it means to care for others while maintaining personal well-being, a balance I saw reflected in Dr. Patel’s actions.

Despite increasing representation of women in medicine, gender equity remains an unfinished journey. Female physicians are still underrepresented in leadership roles, face pay disparities, and navigate unique challenges in balancing career and family. To me, gender equity is not just about achieving parity in numbers but about fostering an inclusive environment where women’s contributions are valued equally, where they have access to mentorship, and where institutional policies support work-life integration.

Dr. Patel’s example taught me that empowerment is contagious. Her energy not only transformed the mood of the labor and delivery room but also inspired me to reimagine what is possible for myself as a future physician. However, her ability to shine within the system does not negate the structural inequities that persist. For every Dr. Patel, there are countless women whose potential remains untapped due to systemic barriers. Achieving gender equity requires addressing these barriers through advocacy, mentorship, and institutional change.

Dr. Patel’s influence extended far beyond that single delivery. In the days that followed, I watched her effortlessly juggle the roles of a physician, a mentor, and an expectant mother. She demonstrated that women could not only excel in their careers but also redefine what leadership and resilience look like in the face of societal expectations. It was empowering to witness a woman carve out her own space in a system not always designed to accommodate her needs.

As I reflect on this experience, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to contribute to the ongoing legacy of mentorship and empowerment in medicine. My own journey through adversity has shown me the importance of creating supportive environments where individuals feel seen and valued. I want to be the kind of physician who not only provides excellent care but also fosters an environment where others can thrive. This means advocating for policies that support gender equity, such as parental leave, flexible scheduling, and initiatives to close the pay gap. It also means serving as a mentor to future generations of women in medicine, ensuring they feel empowered to pursue their dreams unapologetically.

Dr. Patel’s presence in that delivery room was a turning point for me. Her energy, resilience, and compassion were a testament to the strength of women in medicine. She showed me what is possible when women lead with confidence and grace, and she inspired me to strive for the same. Gender equity is about more than fairness; it is about unlocking the potential of an entire workforce to better serve our patients and our communities.

As I continue my journey in medicine, I carry with me the lessons learned from the incredible women who have empowered me. Dr. Patel’s example has shown me that mentorship and advocacy are powerful tools for change. I am committed to honoring her legacy by fostering a culture of inclusivity, empowerment, and excellence. At the same time, my own experiences overcoming personal challenges remind me of the importance of resilience and the strength that comes from persevering through adversity. In doing so, I hope to inspire the next generation of women in medicine, just as she has inspired me.