

“My Glass Container”

People come in all shapes and sizes, with their own unique experiences that shape their personality, values, goals, and behaviors. Just as no two people are exactly the same, no two souls are identical.

When thinking about our prompt, this quote by Neel Patel stuck out to me: “Pour a soul into your body, and the soul becomes you.” If society truly accepted this statement, we would eliminate some of the bias against people who are overweight. Our souls are uniquely ours no matter what our bodies look like; we should all be treated with respect and kindness.

When reading the book we were assigned in class, “What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat” by Aubrey Gordon, I realized that I cannot delve into my biases without first understanding myself. This is a crucial step in my journey to become a truly empathetic doctor and person. Without understanding myself, I cannot understand nor explain the purpose behind my actions and choices. When trying to dismantle my own biases, I had to start with introspection of my past and how I came to this position today.

With this idea in mind, I decided to visually represent my soul, not just for this assignment but for myself. This container is a culmination of my experiences and values to this date.

The rocks represent my rough childhood, due to the persistent struggles I had with one of my parents.

The sand represents the small bright moments during my youth as well as the learning that occurred in that time. These helped me to build a solid foundation despite the hardship.

The blue orbees represent my pursuit of positivity through those trying times and the eventual upswing that occurred after the court ordered that I didn't have to see my father anymore.

The brown clay/glass shards represent my rock bottom – my father had come back into my life to take my college funds. That was when I realized that just moving away from my problem did not make the past go away. My grades that semester shattered, along with my self-identity.

Originally these layers were distinct, - but as time went on, they melted into each other and became one muddled amalgam. Even though this was not my intention, I do feel that it accurately represents my childhood. It was messy and hard and honestly, my memories of that time are all blurred together.

The grass represents the significant growth I had to go through by getting a therapist and dealing with my past. I had to start fresh. This represented my time at Bluegrass Community and Technical College, where I rediscovered my roots and motivations.

The multicolored balls and blue orbees represent a wonderful time in my life, one where I truly rediscovered myself; my positivity shined through as I reached my potential in school, in friendships and in life.

The red cotton balls represent safety and love. I found family, both in my relatives and in my friends, and though I am still working on it, I truly found self-love.

The blue/white stars represent getting into medical school and continuing to thrive here at UKCOM.

The flower represents growth through hardship. I am proud of my container, and I know my journey to becoming a doctor was built on something strong and pure: a desire to help another kid out there who was in a situation like mine.

Seeing who I am now, no one would guess that this was what my life experiences entailed. This is as true for me as it is for every human.

Judgements and biases were an evolutionary adaptation, a way for our minds to quickly assess situations and to keep us safe. However, they have now become maladaptive and harmful to many. While they are usually subconscious, personal awareness and deliberate intention can help address these biases. When you see a patient who uses drugs or has a larger weight, I compel you to notice if your first reaction is influenced by internal stigma. Did you assume that this patient lacked willpower? I urge you to show compassion for other humans and understand that getting to know a person's layers is where the magic is.

It is not the glass container you come in, but what's inside,

So this is my challenge to you: what would one find in your glass container?

Supriya Challa

