

*Udobi C. Campbell,
PharmD, MBA*



Don't Turn Down Opportunities Even If They Make You Feel Uncomfortable

Udobi, who froze the first time she had to speak in front of people, shares this story to show how she used it in improving her communication skills. She believes if you let these opportunities for growth and development pass you by because you are uncomfortable, you will never fully realize your potential. Udobi also explains how she and her husband are both career driven and integrate their lives with those of their two daughters.

Udobi C. Campbell is currently Associate Chief Pharmacy Officer and previously was Assistant Director of Pharmacy at Duke University Hospital. She has served on the ASHP Section of Pharmacy Practice Managers' Advisory Group on Leadership Development and the University Health System Consortium Medication-Use Informatics and Technology Committee. Udobi received her MBA from the Duke University Fuqua School of Business and her PharmD from Florida A&M University. She completed a pharmacy practice residency at Duke University Medical Center.

Udobi offers the following advice for young pharmacists: ***Take opportunities even if they make you uncomfortable; it is possible to have a progressive career and also be engaged on the home front by relying on support from family and friends.***



Dear Young Pharmacist,

Are you wondering how to get from point A of your career to point B? Do you find yourself admiring others and wishing you were on the same career path?

Do you get energized at times or grow weary about your own potential? If this sounds like you, just remember you are not alone. The possibilities for professional growth, regardless of how you define it, are conceivable from whatever point you are at today. The profession of pharmacy and the expectations of those who practice it

are growing at a fast pace; it is incumbent on all of us to expand our knowledge, abilities, and horizon for the betterment of not just ourselves but also our affiliated professional organizations and patients.

The pursuit for administrative leadership in pharmacy became my goal about 10 years ago. Although I have not yet attained my ideal position, I am content with the level achieved so far. In the following passages, I will reveal some key things that have been remarkably impactful in my career.

“If we’re growing, we’re always going to be out of our comfort zone.” Those simple, yet profound words by John Maxwell seem to define most of my life. Did I know or even fully understand that quote in my younger days? No. But in later years, as I habitually self-reflect, I came to accept that personal and professional growth requires operating outside our comfort zone. In fact, it’s how I try to live every day. Allow me to share a hallmark experience from my earlier years that has been influential in my growth as a person, wife, mother, and pharmacy leader.

The ability to communicate via written word, verbal expression, or body language is a critical skill for pharmacy leaders. As I lament to my students and mentees, how we choose to communicate speaks volumes about who we are as people, how confident we are, what insecurities we harbor, and how we measure on the trust scale. My interest and passion for communication has grown over the years. I have immense admiration for those who consistently do it well, and I enjoy speaking to groups. It is partly because of this passion that I was motivated to pursue academia as an Assistant Professor at Hampton University School of Pharmacy following my postgraduate year (PGY) 1 residency in 2001. It is this passion that compelled me to volunteer when leaders at my institution, Duke University Hospital, were asked to help teach all employees about a new model of communication to be used, particularly with patients, their loved ones, and each other. And this passion also drives me to accept invitations quickly for speaking engagements.

So how did this intense attraction to the art of communication and speaking develop? It did not develop the way you might think. It was 1992, and I was a very timid 11th grader enrolled in an English 101 course at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. I was the only high school student in the class. As if that wasn’t strange enough, I wore my high school uniform when I attended classes. Everything about the class was great; at some point during the semester, each student had to make an oral presentation. I remember my turn as if it were yesterday. I exited my desk while slowly rubbing my right palm across it. Proceeding cautiously, I walked to the front of the room, turning to face the students only to find countless eyeballs focused intensely on me. I could not utter a single word! I just stared. Yes, I froze much like a statue. As innocent as I was, that experience has remained one of the lowest and most embarrassing moments of my life.