

ESTHER AMUYUNZU TRANSCRIPT

Segment 1 - Personal Background

>> **Esther:** My name is Esther Amuyunzu. I was born and raised in Kenya, in the city of Nairobi, and right now I'm a second year medical student at University of California, San Francisco. My mom is a nurse and so growing up I spent a lot of the time in the hospital with her just waiting for her to get off work, or just hanging out when I didn't have anything else to do. So that made me interested in the field of medicine because my mom said as a nurse you are not able to make as many of the decisions as you would want to, so that's what made me decide to become a doctor, because I did want to help people, but have a lot more autonomy as to how I can go about that.

Segment 2 – What Does It Take?

>> **Esther:** When I first came to this country I went to community college because I had wanted to go to a four year university, but then I wasn't able to because my qualifications from Kenya were different from what they needed here.

When I transferred I majored in biological sciences and I was interested in development so I also minored in community and regional development. I think one thing I would advise people, especially people in community college, is that a lot of people in community college don't have a plan for how when they are going to get out of community college. So I would advise people to have a clear vision in mind of what you want to do after and just know that whatever it is you are going through the stepping stones, you shouldn't let it define the rest of your future.

Segment 3 – Medical School

>> **Esther:** To become a doctor, it takes four years of undergraduate and four years of med school. I am in my second year of med school. So the four years of undergraduate can be taken as either a four year university or two years at a community college and two years at the four year university. That's what I did. The application for med school takes about a year for everything to be processed. You turn in the initial application in the month of June, and then go through like a primary application and a secondary application process and an interview process. The medical school takes four years and

the four years include two years of classroom teaching where you are taught pretty much everything you need to know, but in a classroom setting. But then the third and fourth year are when you actually get to use all this knowledge you have accumulated in helping patients. After the four years of medical school, then you become an MD, medical doctor, and you can practice, but then with the obligation to do a minimum three year residency. Something like pediatrics takes three years; other things like surgery can take up to seven years. You do get to do a lot of the work, a lot more than the doctors who have been there a bit longer than you, but you get to learn a lot.

Segment 4 – What Personal Qualities Do You Need?

>> **Esther:** I would recommend medicine, but then it would take someone who enjoys working with people, and doesn't mind learning for a significant amount of time. It is rewarding because every time we get to see patients in school, I feel like I'm learning to help a lot of people, because everyone needs a doctor at some point in their lives. So that makes me feel like it is a noble thing that I'm doing.

Segment 5 – Challenges and Successes

>> **Esther:** It takes a lot of hard work, I never knew what I was getting into, but what did help me was having my family around me and having supportive friends and all the encouragement they gave me. I think the greatest challenge has been sometimes feeling perhaps I'm not capable of doing whatever step it is I'm doing. For example, when we took the medical entrance exam, I would wonder if my education at community college and what I've done at university was enough. Even if at the time it seems like a big challenge. Looking back it doesn't seem as big as it was. I'm happy to be where I am.