

## **Interview Assessment #3**

Name of Professional: Gary Schwartz

Profession/Title: Thoracic Surgeon

Business/Company name: Baylor Scott & White

Date of Interview: 9 October 2017

My third interview was conducted with Dr. Gary Schwartz, a thoracic surgeon at Baylor Scott and White in Dallas. Dr. Schwartz has studied transplant surgery, surgical oncology, and trauma surgery. In his current practice he does transplant, critical care, and cancer surgery. Leading up to this interview, I had hoped to gain more knowledge about fields pertaining to cardiovascular surgery. Dr. Schwartz is a thoracic surgeon, a specialty very closely related to cardiovascular surgery, so I hoped to discover similarities and differences between the lifestyles and job requirements of the two specialties. In addition, I wanted to get more advice on how to differentiate myself as a young medical student.

Following my first question about how he got into the field, Dr. Schwartz told me he always knew he wanted to be a surgeon. He had always wanted to work with his hands and the concept of surgery and medicine was very intriguing to him, even from a young age. Dr. Schwartz also mentioned that during his high school years, he volunteered on an ambulance to gain exposure. I thought that this was a really cool concept - one that I've also never heard of before. I've heard that being able to put something medically related onto one's resume before college is a big help to getting accepted into a good school and this opportunity would provide more hands on experience over doing research on a specialized topic in a lab. Dr. Schwartz said nothing but good things about his experiences with the EMTs and strongly recommended it as a way to help me get acquainted with the medical world. Not only would it allow for me to get used to being around open wounds, blood, and the fast pace of emergency procedures, I would be exposed to the language of medicine and all of the vocabulary unique to it. In college, the first couple of years are heavy in learning the language of medicine along with introductory classes so the head start I would receive by volunteering would help me in my collegiate experience.

In response to my question about changes occurring in the medical field specific to his specialty, Dr. Schwartz stated that the working hours have significantly dropped due to new, strict regulations. He mentioned that while he was in training, it was common to work around 100 hours a week (while only getting paid close to minimum wage) compared to the 80 hour weeks that are regulated now. The reduction in working hours has allowed surgeons to maintain somewhat more normal lives and has allowed for more women to enter the surgical field. Additionally, Dr. Schwartz also mentioned

that his lifestyle has been greatly impacted by being a surgeon. He claimed that his phone is on 24/7 and that no matter where he is, he is a surgeon at all times. This was new information for me and proved to be very interesting because of how it compared to a normal office job. Most people come home from work and don't have to think about it again until they leave the next morning, but with surgery it is different. Dr. Schwartz mentioned that once neighbors know there is a surgeon in the vicinity, they constantly come to them with questions about their children's health. While this may appear to be an annoying concept, surgeons always have to be ready to help and maintain a good attitude while dealing with sick patients (or neighbors).