

Interview

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Professor Kathy Griendling, Ph.D.

《Profile》

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平成 26 年 3 月 17 日、本学大学院医学研究科病態分子薬理学の大学院特別講義でご講演をいただいたジョージア州アトランタのエモリー大学医学部の Griendling 教授にインタビューしました。

矢部千尋男女共同参画推進センター長(病態分子薬理学教授)と同教室の松本みさき助教がお話を伺いました。

Q1: How did you envision your future when you were an undergraduate student? What kind of experiences during your school days help you shape who you are now?

When I was an undergraduate student, I did not think very hard about what my future would be. The advice that I give to women now is to plan and to look at your options. I didn't do any of that. I just took some courses and when I took physiology, I loved physiology because it explained to me why things worked. So I knew when I finished the course that I wanted to do physiology. I had to work during school, which really instilled in me very strong work ethic. I had to work to pay for school, so I worked very hard during college, which influenced what I do now.

(What kind of work have you done there that time?)

I worked in a dining hall. *(Dining hall? Waitress, you mean?)* Actually washing dishes, even worse.

Q2: How did you choose your current career? Can you think of someone, among your supervisors and colleagues, who influenced you most? How did they influence you?

Once again, I didn't give much thought to what I was doing. I needed a recommendation from my physiology teacher to go to graduate school so I went to him. He said, "Why did you apply to those schools? You should be applying to Johns Hopkins". So, I applied Johns Hopkins and they accepted me. Since then, I have worked with my postgraduate adviser, Dr. R. Wayne Alexander, who was very supportive person. He's a very kind man, amazing at generating loyalty in people. Everyone I know who worked with him was very loyal. So he was a wonderful adviser and when he moved to Emory, I moved with him. And he became a chair of medicine, so he was my supervisor for my whole career until last year.

(I see, he retired, you mean?) Yes. *(I see. I think you are lucky to have a good supervisor.)* I think I was, too.

Q3: In Japan, many married female professionals are struggling to develop their career and to break the glass ceiling. What do you think of it? How is it in US?

It's very true there as well, although it seems not to matter whether you are single or married. But it's very difficult for women to achieve the highest ranks in academics. We have many women students, we have still many assistant professors, but there are fewer associate professors, and there are very few full professors, similar to Japan I think. I think the times are changing, and at least in the US, it's now much more accepted and expected that women should have leadership roles. It's just that we have to work very hard, maybe harder than men, to achieve those positions. It's a matter of not giving up. You do what you like to do and do it well and that's how you become successful.

(Thank you.)

Q4: Could you please tell us a little about yourself and your family?

I have five children. They are 12 years apart, so the oldest is now 31, and the youngest is 19. The oldest and the youngest are girls, three boys in middle, and they've all grown up and gone to college. They have their own jobs, and their own families. I now have three dogs and a cat, and I have two grandchildren. My children are mostly in science and engineering. My daughter is a PhD in aerospace engineering, my son is completing,

his Master's in Business Administration, and my second son is a mechanical engineer. Then I have one who doesn't know what his career will be, and a daughter who wants to go to medical school.

(Oh, that's a wonderful family. So, your family gets together like thanksgiving and Christmas day...) We are very lucky that all of our children still live nearby. In the United States it is very common they move all over the country, but they all live within an hour of us, so we see them a lot. We see them at holidays and birthdays, or sometimes just for dinner or to go on a hike or something like that.

Q5: In your career, could you tell us things that prevented your career development and how you have overcome those difficulties?

I think I have been very lucky in not having major barriers. But I do think that my career progression was slower than my male colleagues, because I wanted to devote time to my children. When they were young, I would leave to be with them after school. I had to focus at work to be productive when I was there, but when I was at home, I spent time with my family. I watched my male colleagues who came to Emory at the same time I did leave to be a chief of cardiology, dean or CEO at other universities. It took me longer to be promoted and to be recognized. But I wouldn't change it. I had to work very hard, but with my husband as a full partner, it was possible to do that and it didn't matter that it took longer.

(I think that's very important point, thank you.)

Q6: What do you think are the differences between American and Japanese female scientists in terms of career development? Just give us your impression.

Based on what I've seen and heard during this trip, I think it is much more difficult for Japanese women than for American women. We are generations ahead of you, I think. My mother's generation stayed home to care for their families and did not work outside the home. But in my generation, many women work outside the home, and in my children's generation, more than half of women work outside the home. So I think we are a little further along or more used to it than you are. I think that your scientific

structure, having very few professor positions, is very difficult for women. In the United States, you can be promoted and become professor based on your accomplishments. It doesn't matter how many professors we have, if you reach the criteria you can be promoted.

(That's a thought, yes.)

Q7: We are very curious as to how female scientists and physicians continue and develop their career in US, especially at Emory University School of Medicine. Do you have any special support programs for female scientists or physicians? Please tell us how they manage to continue to work at Emory.

My other job right now in addition to running a research lab is to think about faculty development. Faculty development means putting in place programs that support careers of the faculty whether they are males or females, and whether they are physicians or PhDs. So for all different faculty, the teachers, the researchers and the clinicians, we have a number of programs that are designed to help people develop the skills they need. Early in their career, they do not know how to do many non-science tasks necessary to run a laboratory. For example, when you are in the laboratory, you are trained as a scientist. You can interpret western blots and you can understand PCR, but no one teaches you how to hire someone, what to do when a person you hire is not working out, or how you manage the budget. All these types of business skills are not taught to scientists. So we have a number of programs to help people learn these skills early, so that they don't have to figure them out by trial and error.

(I see, we are totally lacking in that direction.)

I enjoy doing this. I feel like it's a very important thing that I can give back to younger faculty, knowing what skills I wish I had.

(Is that supported by Emory University?)

In my department, I have a role as vice-chair for faculty development, and we have some financial support for those programs. And in school of medicine, in my role as assistant dean we have a very small budget. So most of the training we do is done by volunteers.

Q8: Women are still woefully under-represented in medicine, particularly in Japan. What do you think are the barriers for female faculty to be further promoted? Among what social structures need to be changed for them to be nurtured? What do you think of the recent movements of gender equality in science?

I think that gender equality is a must; it's something we have to do. If we don't, we lose half the work force. Women have a lot to offer. Without women, science will lose a lot of brain power. From what I understand about Japanese culture, many women expect their husbands to work and that they should stay home and take care of the house and children. I think that has to change. You have to become a more equal partner with your husband and you have to both take responsibility for things at home and at work. Without that sense of equality, my husband and I would not be able to make this work. If I had to do all the housework, all of the child care, and all of the outside yard work, there's no way that I could have done everything. My husband is very good about helping with everything. And I think really that's one thing that has to be changed: men have to recognize that if a woman works outside the home, then all the home work has to be split as well.

(It's a good advice, indeed.)

Q9: Could you please provide some words for young female scientists to inspire them?

I think that anything is possible if you work hard. And women have made many important contributions and continue to make important contributions. When I see the younger generation of scientists, the promise and the excitement, I think, "That's the future of science." So the best thing that we can do is to nurture that.

Thank you very much.