



MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT Q & A

1) What are the benefits you see from being a member of NFBPA?

For me, the greatest value added is being in a community of like-minded individuals, from varied lived experiences, who share the singular vision of seeing our communities gain access to resources and opportunities by transforming the systems we inhabit. We all navigate the minutia of feeling othered in the different spaces we occupy, so having this community offers respite and affirmation.

2) As a public servant, what are the top qualities you should have when serving the community?

Two qualities that I think should be amplified are healthy emotional intelligence and building room for transparent accountability. Public servants elevate communities, not themselves. It is not for acknowledgment, but to acknowledge the concerns of those being served. If that is to be done, a keen understanding of the impact of thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions has to exist to prevent projecting unintended harm on those who are vulnerable. And if done, that individual has to value that accountability is a demonstration of others' commitment to their success and not a personal attack.

3) Which has been more valuable in your career, your education, or your experience? Why?

I consider myself a lifelong learner – hence the letters behind the name and the ones pending in front. But with all the tuition I dole out each year, the best lessons I have had have been gained from giving space to listening to the narratives of others. My schooling exposes me to best practices. Individual narratives give context to how those best practices can be adapted to fit through a co-creative process. Nothing is one size fits all, so I cherish experiences.

4) What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment to date (personal and professional)?

Getting a phone call from a principal that my eleven-year-old checked her classroom teacher for shaming a student to tears in front of her peers. Conformity bias is a whole thing! The work I do is intended to help individuals understand that it is always the right time to do the right thing, as Dr. King said. It will never be appropriate to step out in the silence and speak the unspeakable, but it still needs to be done. I was beyond proud to know that my work manifests in my home, with the hope that she will model to her peers this concept called justice.

5) What are the leadership qualities that you believe are necessary in public service?

Along with the two I mentioned earlier, I think humility and courage. Humility to understand that competence is relative and elusive, so always embrace the uncton to learn and grow- valuing that the best teachers are often seen as inconsequential. Courage to do the things that need to be done, not just checking boxes to satisfy metrics while contributing to the oppression of those who have historically been disenfranchised. Public service isn't for the faint of heart, and the reality is often you won't win the popularity contest. But at the end of your service, the goal should be to be able to face yourself and the community with a clear conscience to say you did everything in your power to actualize what is right – not pacifying those who are destitute with gibes.