

Top 3 Moments: Arpita Judy

1. Choosing Dentistry Over Medical School

Judy says that she was a biology major because, like many students, she had grown up believing that she needed to go to medical school. However, during the first semester of her freshman year, she began questioning whether becoming a doctor was actually what she wanted to do. She had spent her whole life saying she wanted to become a doctor, but now that the decision was becoming real, she realized she needed to think about what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

At the time, there was no Google or internet to easily research different careers, so she picked up the college catalog and looked at what she could do with a biology degree. She considered careers such as pharmacy and dentistry. Judy realized that she preferred work that was more hands-on, so she took a course at Loma Linda University where she was introduced to pre-dentistry. She absolutely loved it.

She also observed a pharmacist and noticed that there was not as much one-on-one interaction with patients. She felt that the days at the pharmacy seemed to drag on, while her time at the dentist seemed to go by in a second. This helped her realize that **dentistry was the career she wanted to pursue**.

2. Her Educational Journey

Judy's educational path was a little different from the traditional route. Instead of spending four years at UC Irvine, she graduated after **three years**. This allowed her to apply to dental school and begin a year earlier than she otherwise would have.

Her education consisted of:

- **3 years** of undergraduate education
- **4 years** of dental school
- **1 year** of hospital residency

In total, she completed **8 years of education and training**, compared with the typical 9 years it would take.

3. A Day in the Life of a Dentist

One of the advantages Judy sees in dentistry is the flexibility. Dentistry can be an **8–5 job**, or dentists can set their own schedules depending on whether they own their practice. Judy currently works from 8–5.

A typical day involves seeing patients for regular checkups and treating problems such as cavities or broken teeth. She works with a hygienist, and patients often see her for their dental examination after their cleaning. For a normal checkup, she may simply examine their teeth and tell them everything looks good before having them return in six months.

When patients need additional treatment, she spends more time taking care of those problems. Depending on the treatment, she may see patients every hour, every hour and a half, or every

two hours. Because of this, she often travels between several rooms throughout the office while treating different patients.

Another part of dentistry that Judy enjoys is the **personal connection with her patients**. She has treated some patients since they were only three years old. Over the years, she has watched them graduate from college, get married, and have children. Because of these long-term relationships, her job is not only about dentistry—it also involves talking with and getting to know her patients.