

Rejection as Redirection



Dr Anu Obaro BSc FRCR PhD

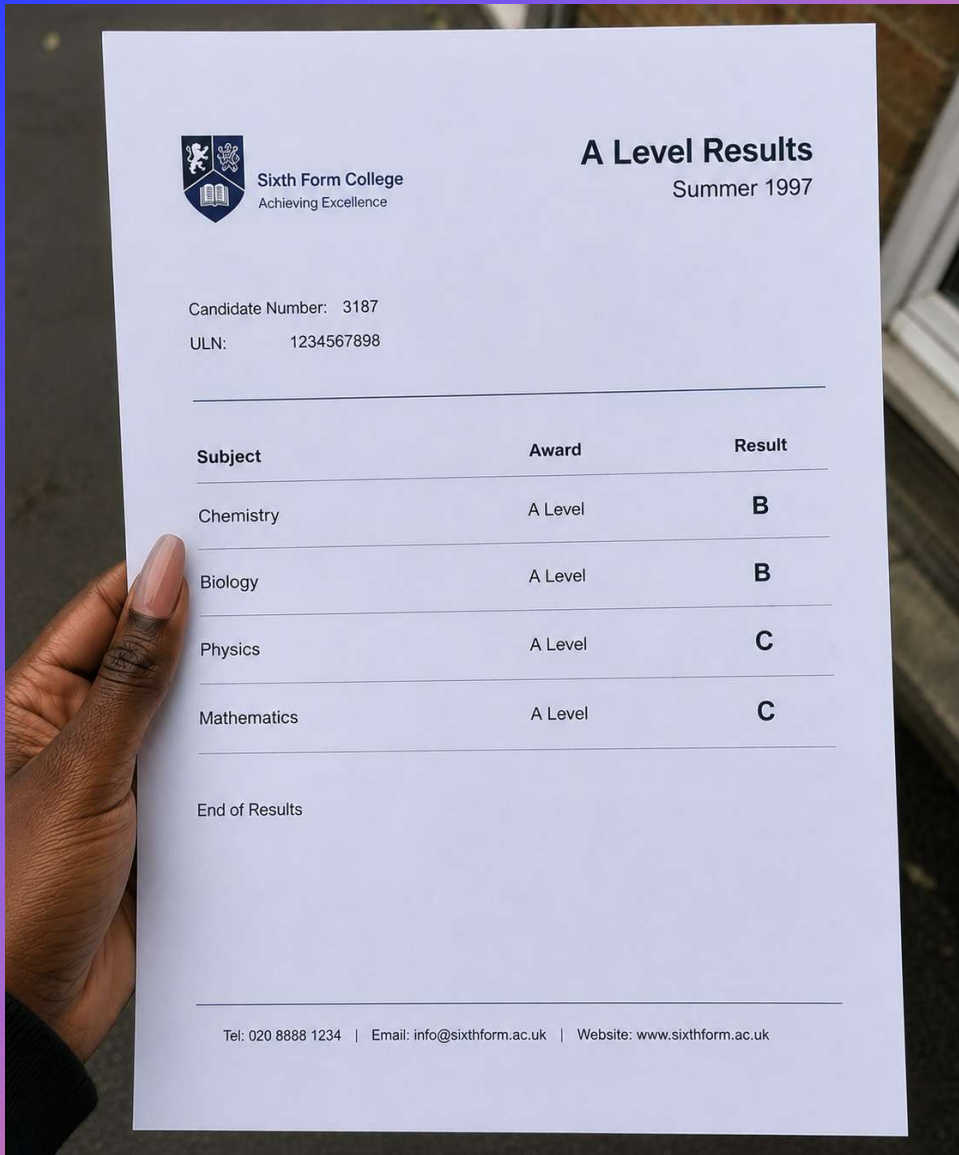
PRUH, King's College London

Director of Online Training & Development, National CT Colonography Academy

- We don't talk enough about rejection in medicine.
- We celebrate the wins — the fellowships, the consultant posts, the publications, the leadership roles.
- But we rarely stand on stages and say:
 - *“Here's the thing I didn't get. Here's the door that closed.”*
 - And yet, if you map out any meaningful career — especially as a woman in radiology — it's not a straight line.
 - It's a series of pivots. Some chosen. Some forced. But rejection is perceived as failure, and framed in terms of lack
- When I think about the major watershed moments in my career and journey, they've all been preceded by a rejection, so I want to share 3 with you



Tone down
your ambition



My first major rejection.

The moment I opened my results I felt like my life was over and I was an utter failure. My teachers were right; I wasn't good enough.

That was the moment my confidence dipped, and I started rewriting my own narrative:

Maybe I'm not ready.

Maybe I'm not good enough.

Maybe I misjudged this completely.

But with a little distance, something shifted. Because what that rejection did — almost forcefully — was create space.

I had to ask myself: *"What do I actually want?"*



First failure

**BSc
Physiology**



First burnout

FRCR

First baby



**A
Levels**

First Class



**Med
School**

- Second rejection. Got my FRCR, came back from maternity leave – no job. Rejected value and potential *again*
- And that's where redirection begins.
- Not as a silver lining, we paste onto disappointment, but as an **intentional recalibration**.
- Because rejection, in its rawest form, is feedback.
- **Not always fair. Not always accurate. But always informative.**
- It tells you something about fit. About timing. About alignment.
- I wasn't meant to stay where I trained. So I applied for a research job and became an accidental academic. Somehow, I managed to complete a PhD, with a first author publication in Radiology (after 3 rejections – of course).



First failure

**BSc
Physiology**



First burnout

FRCR



First author

**A
Levels**

First Class

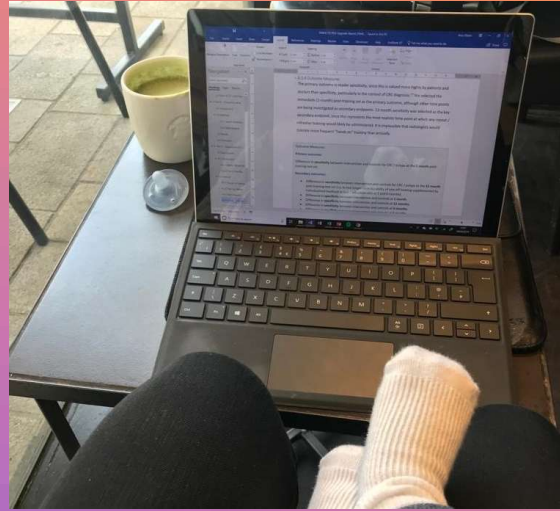
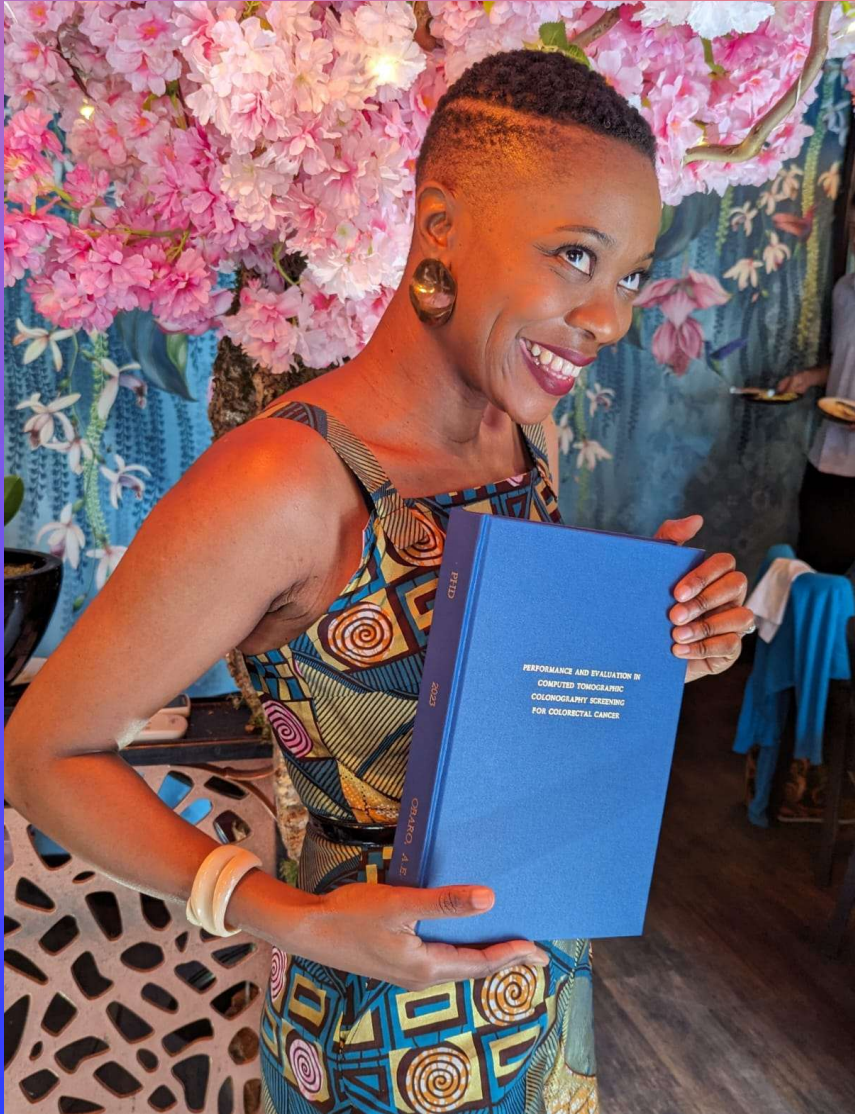


**Med
School**

First baby



PhD



Dear Dr Obaro,

I am pleased to inform you that your examiners have confirmed that you have been successful in your recent examination for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.




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+ • **ADAPTABILITY**
– rejection as redirection





George Floyd (1973 – 2020)

- 
- I spoke to the Headteacher of my son's school – BLM and George Floyd's murder were teachable moments for our children.
 - She shut me down – the third major rejection.
 - A rejection of my voice, of my pain and of the reality of my Black son and his experience in her school

'We're not here
to politicise the
children...'



"It makes me feel
like, because I'm
Black, I'm not the
same as
everyone else"

My son, Age 8

- Some of the most meaningful parts of my career didn't come from the paths I meticulously planned.
- They came from the detours. That conversation and that rejection became the biggest pivot I've ever done.
- It led me to projects I care deeply about.
- To spaces where I felt aligned, not just accomplished.
- To work that was impactful, not just impressive on paper.
- And perhaps most importantly, they helped me redefine success.
- Not as *getting everything I aim for*, but as *building a career that actually fits my values, my energy, and my life*.



Tweet



The Royal College... · 03/06/2020

In light of current racial tensions, documented [#BAME](#) health inequalities and raised [#COVID19](#) risk, the RCR wishes to make it clear that [#BlackLivesMatter](#).

We stand with our BAME colleagues and are fully committed to helping to eradicate inequalities and institutional racism.

7 replies · 186 retweets · 384 likes



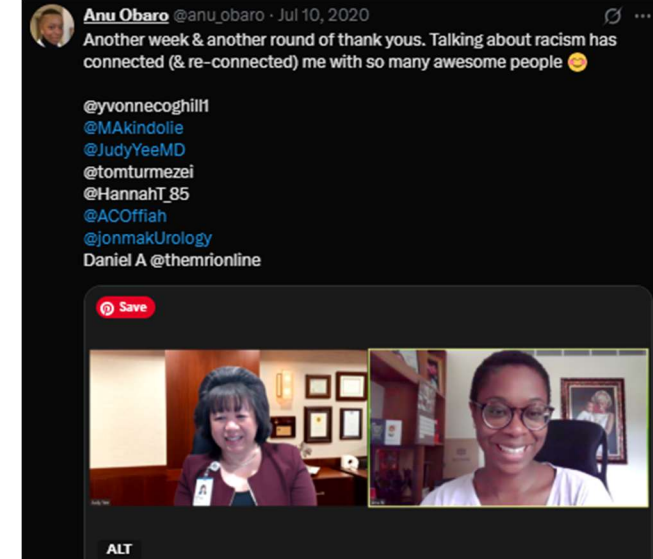
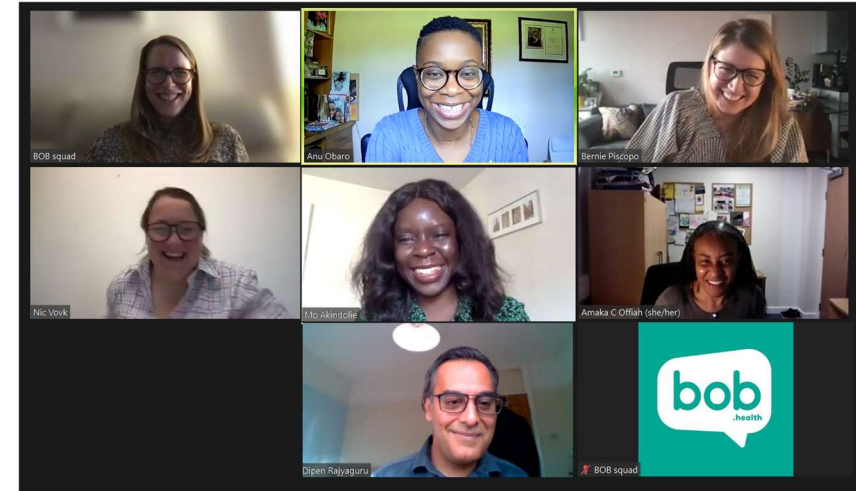
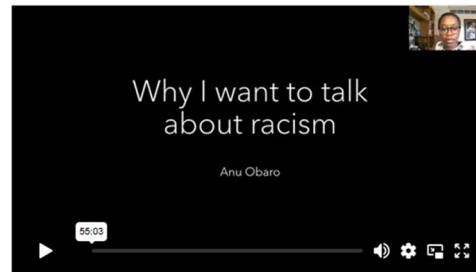
Anu Obaro
@anu_obaro

I'd like to help evaluate representation among our radiology trainees and workforce, highlight successes & identify any issues related to racial inequality. Is this already being done? Who can I talk to?

09:22 · 07/07/2020

Home > Resources > Grand Rounds > Grand Round Special: Anu Obaro – Why I want to talk about racism 25/06/2020

Grand Round Special: Anu Obaro – Why I want to talk about racism 25/06/2020





RadReach

“I've just **accepted an offer for a radiology training** post in my region! I can't thank you both enough for empowering me and getting me here.

Your help with interview prep and your guidance over the past few months has been invaluable in getting me where I never thought I'd even come close to.”

+ .

COMMUNITY

– mentors & allies

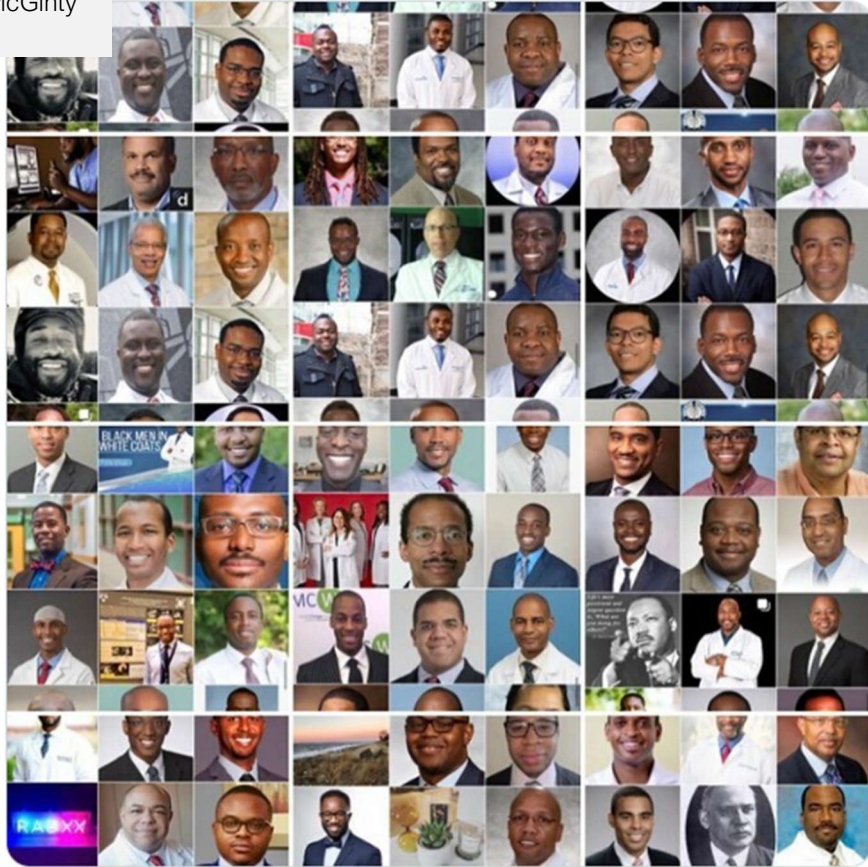
None of this journey would have been possible without a network of safety, allyship and advocacy



And that's a wrap. I said to myself that I'd use this @radleaders feed to highlight 100 #blackmeninradiology I've learned so much about the luminaries that went before (Rudolph Fisher is my absolute favorite), the inspiring colleagues, mentors and teachers in practice and t...



Prof Geraldine McGinty @DrGMcGinty



Richard Farrow Memorial Lecture

The Need for Diversity in Radiology



Judy Yee, MD, FACR

Professor and University Chair
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Montefiore Medical Center



Prof Judy Yee @JudyYeeMD

Our @ClinRadiology paper on #Equity, #Diversity & #Inclusion is out today #IWD2023

Join us .@BSGAR_UK in promoting #EDI in #Radiology!

clinicalradiologyonline.net/article/S0009-...



Dr Cindy Chew @ShiYunZhao

clinical RADIOLOGY

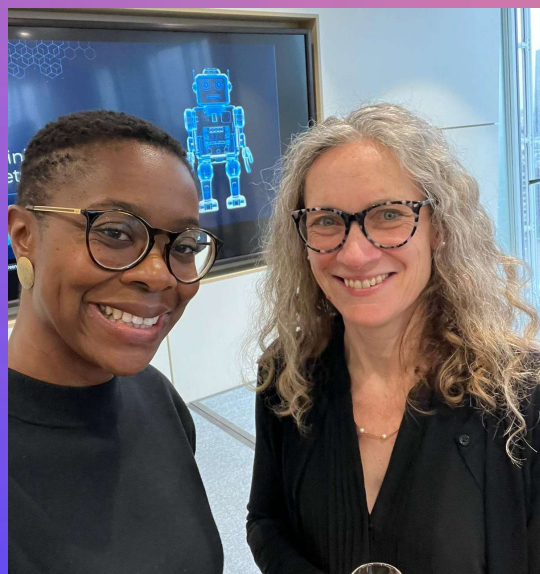
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MARCH 2023

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Diversity and equity: a radiology society's update



+ •

REFRAME

the rejection



Redefining success



What is this rejection making space for?



Who's in my corner that I can lean on?



Where can I redirect my focus?

+



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THANK YOU

Rejection is not the opposite of success
It's part of its architecture