

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

I met Bernard, uh, in his professional capacity at Kaiser Permanente, uh, when I was in our Ohio market, uh, as a practicing general surgeon and, uh, eventually, uh, for 15 years as the executive medical director overseeing our clinical care operations. Uh, and so I first met Bernard in that capacity and what we learned through our dialogue and discussion about the mission and business of Kaiser Permanente is that we had a lot of common points. One was the fact that we were both black men working in the corporate environment. Uh, in this case in healthcare at Kaiser Permanente, we both shared a deep passion for equity inclusion and diversity issues kind of lost any commitment to social justice. Um, we both were men of faith and we both, uh, were committed to improving the lives of, of, uh, the communities that we represented and serve. The fun thing is that we also discovered we had lots of other things in common, like our love of music.

Speaker 3 ([05:08](#)):

And, uh, that was always a point of reference. Uh, we both were very, very competitive, uh, with interest in sports and so on. So I think from the standpoint of a fond memory, one thing I would share is that because of our love of music after I became the senior vice president for equity inclusion, diversity and move from Ohio to our Oakland office. And that was seven years ago when I had my one-on-one meetings with Bernard, the norm was usually that some music wouldn't be playing and the first five or 10 minutes of our meeting was talking about the latest music, what he was listening to, what I was listening to. And so our, our shared love of music, all kinds of gospel, hip hop, jazz, and so on was, was always part of the conversations. And, uh, to make that, you know, again from an a personal basis every year at Kaiser Permanente, we have our national equity inclusion and diversity conference.

Speaker 3 ([06:03](#))

Sure. Well, I think first and foremost, we should recognize that, you know, healthcare as a, as an industry and institution mainstream in the United States of America was formed, uh, during the period where issues of racial discrimination and segregation were the norm. And so healthcare, as, as evolved as an industry has had challenges of moving beyond some of the legacy impact of those times and their policies and their practices and so forth. So Kaiser Permanente is part of the healthcare industry, but a unique part of our history has been a 75 year commitment to taking on the issues of racial segregation, developing a workforce that is as diverse in its makeup, as the communities we serve, and then an ongoing journey that



racism when we see it and particularly to call it out, as it relates to health and healthcare, uh, in this country.

Speaker 4 ([16:05](#)):

And, uh, Bernard was proud to be an African-American man. He was proud of, uh, what he had accomplished, but most importantly, he was proud of the platform that he had, uh, to help others. And he took it seriously. And there were times where, uh, even in the positions and the committees that we would serve on and, uh, that we would talk on a weekends and be sad about how that as hard as we tried and as professionally, as we would try to carry ourselves, uh, that we were still confronted with and still thought of, uh, in many experiences, what we, as, uh, African-American men talk to our sons or daughters about and about being stopped, just to check out if, you know, we should be where we, where we were. But I think, uh, one of the takeaways and one of the things that should never be forgotten about Bernard Tyson is that he was of a heart and have a voice that race would never define him or limit him. So when Bernard was talking about the issue of being a black man in America,

Speaker 3 ([17:50](#)):

about how to engage law enforcement and how law enforcement will likely treat them and how they have to be careful about, about what they need to do and comport themselves when they're stopped by law enforcement, you know, simple things like, uh, ensuring that your hands are seeing all the time when, you know, if you're in your car and, uh, you ask you say yes, sir. And, uh, you make sure that, uh, there's no sudden Mo movements as the police stop you, uh, or even walking in your, in your neighborhood. I mean, you know, we talked about this often, uh, that we talked about the hoodie privilege, that some in our community have the privilege of being able to wear a hoodie whenever they want, and actually put the hood up on their heads and our conversations with our boys about having to look a certain way to ensure that people don't fear you.

Speaker 5 ([21:33](#)):

And the reality that even as a corporate executive, in some of the largest corporations in America, we still have that stigma. We still have that obligation. We still have that fear. It doesn't leave you, it doesn't dissipate just because you move up. The corporate ranks that when you're not within the trappings of corporate America, when you leave your office, when you leave the comforts that these organizations sometimes put on us, we are no different than any person of color African-American in our community, walking the streets. And I think that gives you a profound understanding and connectedness with your community. You may physically leave your community, but your community never leaves you. You're always part of that. And I think that that weighs on black executives, but in a positive way. And I think that it keeps us grounded and Bernard, and I would talk about that experience of grounded-ness and help and use that energy to help inform the decisions that we made and could make to change our communities. Um, so turning it really into a positive

Speaker 2 ([22:54](#)):

Before we end this podcast. Is there anything, any of you would like to add that maybe we haven't yet spoken about in terms of your memories of Bernard Tyson,

Speaker 5 ([23:03](#)):

Um, from the experiences that I've shared with Bernard it's given me not only the motivation, but the enthusiasm and the passion to move forward and champion diversity and inclusion, uh, not only within our company, but also utilizing the vast resources of our company to impact policy changes in America that can change larger communities.

Speaker 2 ([23:28](#)):

So as you all know, the title of this podcast is stories of the relentless. Can you share your thoughts about this sort of concept of being relentless and Bernard Tyson being relentless, specifically as it relates to fighting for dignity? Of course, he was a black man

Speaker 4 ([23:46](#)):

And a proud black brand, and that, you know, he experienced and dealt with and could see and feel, uh, the racism that, uh, many of us continue to deal with, but he would always say, they're never going to defeat me. And they're never going to define who I am and I will never, ever surrender. And in his life up to the last breath in his body, he never ever surrender. I want to thank all of you for your perspective,

Speaker 1 ([24:39](#)):

I used to argue early on that it was about equality that everybody has to be treated equally. And I later discovered that's not the right framework. That's not the right narrative is about equity. Everybody gets what they need to get the same outcome. Thanks for being a part of the American heart associations, relentless stories. Learn more about the Bernard J Tyson impact fund@heart.org Ford slash BJT impact fund. And if you enjoyed what you just heard, please press share, tell a friend and leave us a review. Your next episode is on the way stay tuned. As we discuss Bernard's impact on how equity impacts heart health.