

# THE INSPIRATIONAL STORY OF GIULIA

## Conversation with Giulia Brisighelli | Pediatric Surgeon

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[Point of view, pediatric surgeon, Giulia Brisighelli]

[Giulia Brisighelli, Pediatric surgeon, Johannesburg, South Africa]

So, my name is Giulia. I am a pediatric surgeon, and I work in Johannesburg, South Africa, at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. It is the third largest hospital in the world. And at Baragwanath hospital, I take care of patients with colorectal issues. We have a very big colorectal unit and we see 30 to 50 patients as outpatients every week, and we perform five to ten colorectal surgeries a week.

So, I met Marc in 2011, in Rome, for a conference. And after that I joined him for one year from 2012 to 2013 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital for a research fellowship in colorectal surgery. And then after that he supported me all through the years. And at that point when I initiated my experience in Johannesburg, and I didn't have any funding because I went there completely for free, he managed to help me to find some funding through Columbus Children's Hospital, and he provided one year of salary. And after that I managed to finally become permanent in South Africa. So now I have found a post but only thanks to Marc, because I was about to go back to Italy.

So, I think what happened is, I had spent some clinical time in South Africa during my training, and I fell in love with the country. But after that, I went back to Italy to practice as a pediatric surgeon, but I felt like I had no reason, no purpose. I felt like I was not making any progress and I was not making any difference especially. And then I decided to use all my leave to go to South Africa for a month, and there I found a meaning again. And on the very last day I was there, my previous boss said, "I can't offer you any money, but I can offer for you to become an amazing colorectal surgeon". So, I decided to stay. But unfortunately, I did have a meaning, but I had no means to get to the meaning, and that's when Marc found me, and helped me. So, Marc is my mentor. I worked with him for one year as a research fellow and he taught me a lot from a research point of view, and in the past few years, he has taught me a lot from a clinical point of view, and by joining him on these missions, I'm learning a lot from a surgical perspective as well.

He is an outstanding colorectal surgeon and has the best and the biggest insight, I think, in the world about colorectal pathology in children. But that's not the thing. He is a rock star because he has created this opportunity that has no comparison, you know. It's an opportunity for everybody. So, he has created this reality in which surgeons and nurses and administrators

from all over the world dedicate their free time to go to a foreign country to work, basically, and still consider that an amazing opportunity, and allows the children with colorectal issues to have the best care in the world. So, he has orchestrated an amazing entity and nobody else could have conceptualized anything like that in the brain, only Marc Levitt.