

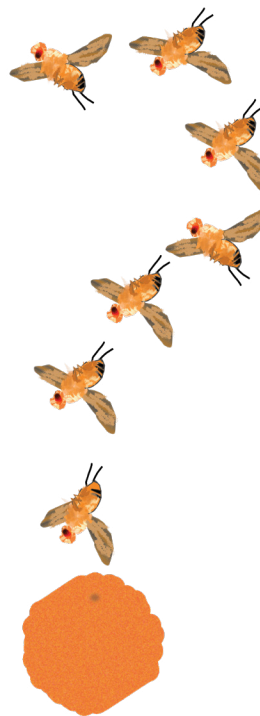
# WHAT HAS HELPED YOU THE MOST IN REACHING WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

Suhita Nadkarni,  
Neurobiologist, IISER Pune

A family that made it possible to realize my interest and provided the framework and a support system to pursue it. A partner who is an equal parent and an equal householder.

Devapriya Chattopadhyay,  
Paleobiologist, IISER Kolkata

It is a combination of my attitude and the environment I grew up. Being an independent person from a very early age helped me a lot to withstand the failures that came in my way and build my confidence. Growing up in a household with two working parents who were in academia instilled the love for knowledge from early on. Teachers and peers helped me to shape my subject interest all the way till PhD. Now it's my students who challenge me everyday and keep me on my toes.



Smitha Hegde,  
Educator, NITTE University Centre  
for Science Education and Research

Support from my mother during the crucial years of childbearing and rearing two children. Those 10 years were hard but were made bearable by the constant support of my family. My father instilled the “anything is possible” attitude, but my mother was the main source of support, she drove me to completion and took upon herself the role of “Mothering” my children in my absence. She was always there, not only for me but also for my children.

Sarah Iqbal,  
Public engagement officer, Wellcome  
Trust/DBT India Alliance

I was always confident that my training as a scientist and the skill set I have acquired will come handy, no matter which career I ended up choosing. This, along with the fact that I have always been unabashed about leaving active research, probably helped me look for opportunities that truly interested me. In addition to these, my parents' unwavering support for whatever I have chosen to do has been invaluable.

Jugnu Jain,  
Entrepreneur, Sapien Biosciences

Persistence and belief that I can do it if I set my mind to it, focusing on the positive, working hard, and doing the right thing – this attitude has helped me a lot. I have had many difficult situations where I have had to reach deep inside me to get strength. I learned by practice to remain calm, organize my thoughts, and not despair. When a problem seems overwhelming, I try to break it down into pieces that I can tackle bit by bit. I learned that I can train the mind like other muscles. I keep a 'diary of happiness' where I write down 3 things every night that made me happy that day. It helps put things in perspective and reinforces gratitude for all that is right, especially on days when a lot seems not right. It

helps that what I have set out to create is much larger than myself, for a good cause, and needed in India. So I remind myself that the troubles along the way are smaller than the vision and should not be allowed to stand in the way. I have support from my co-founder, friends and family to let off steam and get advice when the going gets tough.

P Hemalatha Reddy,  
Educator, Sri Venketeswara College

I have always had a great passion for science right from my early years. Determination and hard work along with perseverance allowed me to follow the path of my heart. It was difficult at each step, right from choosing my course at masters level to pursuing PhD after marriage, and starting to work as a first-generation working woman. But my passion drove me to explore research in order to placate my quest to learn more. There has been no turning back from there.

Sonam Mehrotra,  
Cancer biologist, ACTREC

My training during graduate school and postdoctoral studies in the U.S. has immensely helped me in my career. In addition to research, my experience with grant writing, thinking analytically and most importantly the art of asking questions has benefited me the most.

Bushra Ateeq,  
Molecular oncologist, IIT Kanpur

I think the right attitude, grit and resilience are the three important attributes that helped me going no matter what happened, and I owe it to my mother for instilling these qualities in me. She put herself as a powerful role model, her determination and strong faith encouraged me to follow my dreams no matter what obstacles came my way. She always stood by me, and had confidence in my capabilities even when I doubted myself. Interestingly, after my graduation my first choice was to join the Air Force, which was unexpected coming from an academician's family. Despite the unusual choice she not only supported my decision but accompanied me to the Air Force Selection Board at Varanasi.

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However, that was not to happen, and later she supported me whole heartedly with the same zeal throughout my PhD and a long drawn Postdoctoral tenure.

Dhanashree Paranjpe,  
Ecologist, Abasaheb Garware College

There are several factors which “conspired” to drive me where I am today. The path has been full of twists and detours, gaping holes and bumps so my academic journey seems more like an adventure park ride than a smooth running track. I think my journey has been decided more by interesting questions than by comfort with particular study system. A lot of hard work, self-learning, patience, grit, never-say-die attitude has helped along the way.