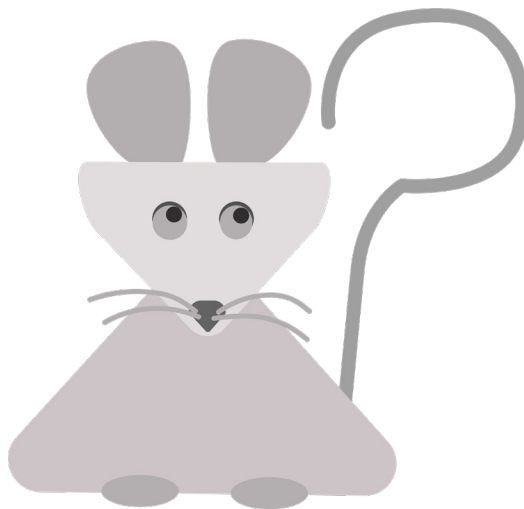


## WHO ARE SOME OF THE FEMALE ROLE MODELS OR MENTORS THAT YOU HAVE LOOKED UP TO?



Bushra Ateeq,  
Molecular oncologist, IIT Kanpur

My mother is my first female role model that I always looked up to. But then at every phase of my life starting from my childhood, I was fortunate to have crosspaths with many strong, compassionate and confident women from numerous disciplines, be it my nursery class teacher, or favourite Biology teacher, University professors, first postdoctoral supervisor and so many others. Personally, I believe that one can have more than one mentor at a given point in one's career, and truthfully their gender does not matter, if at all one would only benefit from the different perspectives that they would provide. Basically, I believe it all narrows down in what context you need help or guidance.

Devapriya Chattopadhyay,  
Paleobiologist, IISER Kolkata

Unfortunately, I did not have any female role models whom I wanted to follow. Instead I looked up to successful people around me and wondered why don't I see anyone of my gender. This significant absence probably inspired me to become an adventurer to define my own path and follow it without any hesitation.

Jugnu Jain,  
Entrepreneur, Sapien Biosciences

I have had many role models. I was born in Jhansi – Rani Laxmibai has been a deep inspiration. I know the famous poem by Subhadra Kumari

Chauhan by heart – ‘khoob ladi mardaani voh to Jhansi vaali rani thi’. She was brave and fought like a man in a war with legendary horsemanship. So I try to emulate her by being strong, and not expecting concessions just because I am a woman. I love reading biographies. Professionally, Marie Curie’s was one I read as a young teenager. Her dedication to and excellence in science, fetching her 2 Nobels in 2 different areas of science, have been inspiring. It’s interesting how equal the relationship between Pierre and Marie Curie was. As I embraced genetics, I read the work of Barbara McClintock who discovered ‘jumping genes’. She was so good in cytogenetics that she had an intuition about her maize chromosomes and genes. On my personal front, I have many strong women in my family and friends circle. My nani, maternal grandmother, taught me that one’s axis must always be determined by oneself, and not by others. One can be happy and create happiness even in unhappy circumstances.

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

I always dread this question because I am unable to share only a few names. There have been many in the past and there are so many out there today who inspire me in different ways. There

are women who have shown me the power of kindness and selflessness (a rare quality to find these days which is often looked down upon as a weakness), the importance of persistence and patience, standing your ground – believing in yourself, not taking yourself too seriously, and pursuing, against all odds, what you absolutely love. I know so many women who embody these qualities, their stories and practice serve as a source of unending inspiration for me. I would also like to use this opportunity to say that there is a fine line between blind reverence towards someone and being inspired by them. Let’s try to stay away from the former.

Suhita Nadkarni,  
Neurobiologist, IISER Pune

I have fortunately been surrounded by independent thinking women at most stages of my life and career. These women never faltered from speaking their mind and were deeply committed to equality, practiced it and were passionate about their work. I also had the sense of the long-term happiness and fulfilment these women were enjoying through their work. That alone was inspiring. The list includes my grandmother, my mother and several of my teachers.

Lipika Sahoo,  
Intellectual Property Professional,  
Lifeintellect consultancy Pvt Ltd

My mother and scientists like Marie Curie, Barbara McClintock, Katherine Johnson and many more. More importantly, I am continuously inspired by every woman I meet, who with family, jobs, challenges trying to holding on to her ground and making a difference in people around her

Sonam Mehrotra,  
Cancer biologist, ACTREC

My Aunt who is a scientist and a Professor from NEHU Shillong really inspired me to study Life Sciences. My mother and both grandmothers have all been very strong women in their own right. They taught me how to balance family and still not give up on my dreams.

Meenakshi Munshi,  
Scientist 'G'/Adviser,  
Department of Biotechnology, Govt.  
of India

My role model in early life was my grandmother and later my friend's mother Mrs. Shirley Sharma who was not only a motherly figure but a friend with whom I could discuss anything under the sun, with a wonderful lively person around, I considered myself lucky to meet her and still I am in touch with her.

Dhanashree Paranjpe,  
Ecologist, Abasaheb Garware College

My first and foremost inspiration and role model is my mother- a retired university professor, who planted the seeds of curiosity about natural world in my mind. She is a statistician who carved out her career in ecological statistics, when only handful of people cared about statistical analysis in the field of ecology. From early childhood I was enthralled with stories about her field trips with ecologists working on plants, wasps, microbes, tigers, birds, elephants, even humans. I heard and saw how scientists collected data, struggled with making sense out of the numbers, excitement of new discovery, and satisfaction in doing good science. So from early on, I couldn't visualize myself doing anything other than- teaching and doing research in ecology! My mother has mentored me from the early years of my scientific journey. She has taught me to look at the data from different perspectives, the best use(s) as well as pitfalls in using statistical methods for understanding biological phenomena and so many other "tricks of the trade" –at no charge at all!! Although it almost sounds like a cliché, I have to mention this - She is the best mentor and the best critique of my work.

P Hemalatha Reddy,  
Educator, Sri Venketeswara College

I am fortunate to have many people who have made me what I am today at different stages. It started with my science teacher at undergraduate level who identified my passion towards science at an early age and guided me to choose my Masters programme. In this journey I met some wonderful people at the beginning of my career who mentored me in undergraduate teaching and research and further to contribute in quality science teaching at the national and international level.

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Savita Ayyar  
Research Management Consultant,  
Jaquaranda Tree

I have been extremely fortunate to have had some great mentors along my career path. It is vital to pick one's mentors wisely. Your mentor does not need to be a woman because you are one. Your mentor does not need to be a scientist because you are one. Rather, your mentor needs to have a sustained interest in your development as it makes a useful contribution to the bigger picture.