

# IS THERE ANY MESSAGE THAT YOU WANT TO PASS ON TO THE YOUNG WOMEN OF TOMORROW?

Jugnu Jain,  
Entrepreneur, Sapien Biosciences

Women need to come together to help themselves and future generations. It's important to build professional networks where women can share problems and seek help with solutions in a comfortable zone. It's also important for women to contribute time and resources to their alma mater and alumni association to nurture young talent, because without this, the next generation will not have the benefit of their experience and connections. I strongly advise women to be economically independent and financially literate in managing your basic finances so you are never dependent on anyone. Having



personal 'rocks and shoulders' whom you can depend on, come what may, are necessary. Things will go wrong sometimes if you choose to create your own path. In those times when most people around you are questioning or criticizing you, it's critical to have people you trust that you can turn to. Women tend to take on everyone's problems. But they need to guard and reserve some 'me' time too to deal with them. Don't be afraid of the unknown. Make change your friend and think how best to use the opportunity that each change brings.

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

I would simply pass on the message I have received over the years – pursue what you are truly interested in, don't get distracted by other people's opinions about you or your capabilities. And most importantly, be the change you want to see.

P Hemalatha Reddy,  
Educator, Sri Venketeswara College

This is a golden age for women working in science. Women of today come from the second generation of working women in the family. They are more bold, confident and open to new ideas and opportunities. And there are ample opportunities because India has established its position at the global forum. They just have to make the right move at the right time. So, my message to young women is never to lose hope and utilise your time wisely and constructively. Balance work with family time. And most of all, reserve some time for your own self. If you are healthy and happy, everything else will follow suit.

Lipika Sahoo,  
Intellectual Property Professional  
Lifeintellect consultancy Pvt Ltd

Believe in your dreams. Be resilient.  
Accept yourself as you are.

Devapriya Chattopadhyay,  
Paleobiologist, IISER Kolkata

Don't let others define you or your path. Take pride in your sense of logic, compassion and hard work. Be fiercely independent. This means that you have to struggle through your failures, probably alone. This, however, also ensures that your eventual success would be truly yours.

Suhita Nadkarni,  
Neurobiologist, IISER Pune

My personal experience has led me to understand that you don't always have to make a choice between a career in science and home and other duties and joy associated with being a homemaker. If you are able to cultivate an environment of support at home and at work, choose a domestic partner who is able to contribute equally at home and who understands the nature of your work as much as you are able to reciprocate that support, you can very much be a part of the playing field in science. Also remember to be the mentor that you have had or you would have liked to have had. Set an example. Change the levels of acceptability at every given opportunity that undermine the capability of the female gender, stereotypes them and discriminate against them. Young people are always keenly observing.

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

Success is a scale you can draw for yourself and do not allow anyone else to define it for you, because you are the best judge of your assets and capacities

Sonam Mehrotra,  
Cancer biologist, ACTREC

Give priority to yourself (mental and physical health) and your successful career. A successful career in science requires passion, a lot of hard work and perseverance. Be aware of this while choosing science/research as a career.

Dhanashree Paranjpe,  
Ecologist, Abasaheb Garware College,

If women internalise the message that they have to choose only one thing- career in science or personal relationships/responsibilities, there is little chance of following one's passion for science. Don't focus on naysayers, don't doubt your ability to contribute to science just because you are a woman. We may have to make a thousand other adjustments to follow our dreams. I have learned it the hard way- believe in yourself, speak up about your struggles, be a role model to others in whatever field you choose. Blaze the trail for others to follow.

Bushra Ateeq,  
Molecular oncologist, IIT Kanpur

I want every young woman to believe in themselves. They all have enormous potential and competence, they just need to discover it, don't be afraid in attempting something new and don't get disheartened if you fail. Remember, each failure teaches you something new which contributes towards your success.

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

Stay away from negative people, very few people in life will encourage you to believe in your own self. Take life as it comes because one doesn't know how destiny unfolds, so go with the flow. Don't give up till it is over. Above all, what counts in life is peace within self, so work towards it.

Savita Ayyar  
Research Management Consultant,  
Jaquaranda Tree

Being successful is important, but so is having a good work-life balance. As Richard Feynman said, "Nobody ever figures out what life is all about, and it doesn't matter. Explore the world. Nearly everything is really interesting if you go into it deeply

enough!” Build a fulfilling career and also savour all that life has to offer!

Farah Ishtiaq,  
Ecologist, Indian Institute of Science,

Do what you are interested in and are good at - it's good to give priority to home but there is also a part of you that you need to explore, develop and nurture. Don't lose your focus.

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## Shubha Tole

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Shubha Tole is a Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. Her research interests lie in understanding how highly specialized brain structures form during development. She has previously written about how societal norms work against women choosing STEM careers, and on the need for gender sensitization in academic workspaces.



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Sreelaja Nair is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai. She was an Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance intermediate fellow and her research interests lie in understanding maternal contributions to the mechanisms driving the development of a single cell zygote into a multicellular embryo.



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Sunil Mukhi is a theoretical physicist and Coordinator/Head of the Physics Programme at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune. He has been vocal about the issue of ethics in scientific research and writes a light-hearted blog called tantu-jaal that addresses general aspects of science.



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Vaishnavi Ananthanarayanan is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Biosystems Science and Engineering in the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. A Wellcome Trust/DBT-India Alliance Intermediate Fellow and an EMBO Young Investigator, her lab studies cytoskeleton and associated proteins during various cellular processes.

