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Inspiring the Next Generation of Women in STEM

How have you used innovation to overcome a challenge in your field?

I use innovative ingredients to solve problems every day, from clean label preservatives to increase microbial stability to emulsifiers which stabilize and increase the shelf life of many different types of foods.

What did you want to be when you grew up? Are there any parallels to the work you do now?

It changed while I was growing up, but I gravitated towards scientific fields such as veterinary medicine. I grew up on a farm, and we still do some hobby farming today, so agriculture, cooking, and baking have always been part of my life.

Who is a woman who inspires you and why?

I can't narrow it to just one; but the most inspiring women are the ones who have encouraged me to take on new things. It is tempting to stay inside our comfort zones. And while it is important for us to identify our strengths, it is also important to continually learn, grow, and take-on new challenges. Maybe we have a strength that we haven't discovered yet.

What three characteristics do you think are most important for women in STEM to have and why?

1. Integrity – Science shouldn't be political; search for truth and be honest about the results.
2. Perseverance – You must persevere through challenging courses in college and use problem-solving skills on the job.
3. Empathy – Empathy helps you be a more compassionate person and communicator, and you can't get far without having good communication skills.

How are you working to inspire the next generation of women in STEM?

I include food science terminology when I talk to my kids about food. Leave it to a food scientist to tell their kids that reducing lipid oxidation is why we buy milk in opaque bags instead of clear jugs.

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