



## Dr. Erin Burke

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### Inspiring the Next Generation of Women in STEM

#### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I have access to one of the most extensive product lines in the chemical industry, so my chemical sandbox is enormous. Every day, I have the opportunity to learn about the types of chemicals and ingredients that go into everyday products that I use as well as people all over the world, in addition to interacting with the suppliers that make those chemicals and ingredients. I also enjoy working with our customers and helping them solve problems and overcome their product formulation and chemical ingredient challenges.

#### Who is a woman who inspires you and why?

Marie Curie—the first woman to win two Nobel Prizes—was the first female chemist to inspire me. Amazing STEM women are out there, but unfortunately are not recognized often enough for the work that they do, and that's why we need more women in STEM.

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

1. Strategic thinking – Always think of new ways to improve current methods.
2. Persistence – Don't be easily discouraged if you fail at your work or when your work is criticized and scrutinized.
3. Well-rounded – While it's great to have talent and skill in a STEM area, it's essential to have skills in other areas, like communication and interpersonal skills to work with others who may not have a technical background.

#### What advice would you give to the next generation of women in STEM?

You will encounter countless naysayers and societal pressures, but you must learn how to tune out all of the noise and pursue your passions. If you feel driven to pursue a career in a STEM field, then go for it and don't doubt or downplay your capabilities.

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