

On being a woman in research, a personal view

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Outline

- Why I am here?
- Why I am a successful researcher?
- A few ideas that may be useful to other people

Why I am here?

- Because I have been successful in my research career
- I was appointed full professor in Computer Science at the age of 39
- I was the 2nd female full professor in my engineering school
 - 370 teaching staff
 - 25% female
 - 43 full professors

Why I am here?

- My goal today is to try to say something that can be useful for young researchers starting their career and in particular for female researchers
 - because I think there aren't enough of them and it is something that we need to change

Why I am a successful researcher?

- my family
 - has promoted a culture of learning

Why I am a successful researcher?

- my family
 - my mom is the main role model



Why I am a successful researcher?

- I am very stubborn and don't easily give up
 - I think I learned this attitude for my mom

Why I am a successful researcher?

- I have found my own way of doing things

Why I am a successful researcher?

- Has it always been easy?
- Has it been harder because I am a woman?

Harder for women?

- 1957 my mum is applying for a teaching position at an Engineer school
- 2003 I am going through a national exam for CS full professor habilitation

Harder for women?

- There are almost 50 years between these two stories are still they are too similar
- Having women in every search committee is useful
- We need to work harder to change things. 50 years between these two stories is too long, they are too similar, things should have changed faster

Why I am a successful researcher?



A few ideas that may be useful

- Use role models and mentors

A few ideas that may be useful

- Find your own way of doing things
 - do I need to go to school everyday? do I need to be my office everyday?

A few ideas that may be useful

- Taking responsibilities
 - Learn to say yes to interesting proposals
 - periodically remind yourself of how many administrative tasks you accept and how much time they are going to take
 - If balance is broken and you are spending too much time in community service say no for as long as recovering balance requires

A few ideas that may be useful

- Family conciliation
 - you have to find your own way



A few ideas that may be useful

- Family conciliation
 - you have to find your own way
 - Do I want to quit research for a long period and stay home?

A few ideas that may be useful

- Family conciliation: having a baby
 - You need to slow down in research when you have very young kids, be realistic,
 - Not everybody in your department will understand this
 - Try to find an arrangement that is reasonable and adapt it as many times as needed. Negotiate

A few ideas that may be useful

- Family conciliation: having a baby
 - Get as much help as you can
 - Accept people as they are
 - Don't forget to negotiate travel

Inspiring words

- "Above all, don't fear difficult moments. The best comes from them." Rita Levi-Montalcini (Nobel Prize-winning neurobiologist who co-discovered nerve growth factor)