

SIGNIFICANCE OF ROLE MODELS



ISAIA SEGUINOT
Master student, ISIS

Role models helped me overcome a lot of challenges when I thought it was not my place to speak up but then I still did

I probably admire my supervisor much more for actually caring and asking how it is going and being interested in you than just the product you are working on

Being a role model is helping people to develop their potential, even when they don't see it themselves yet

Power relationships play an incredibly important role in academic systems. With power comes responsibility, we are in the position of power especially as senior staff members



LUCA CONSOLI
Associate professor, ISIS

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KATINKA COENEN
Bachelor student, Science

In academia I had fewer people relating to me and it made me feel that people like me don't typically grow up being in academia ... we don't belong here

Those types of people [reverse role models] helped me as much or even more than [regular] role models

I only understood the influence of role models much later, when I knew what a role model was

I look up to both women and men that managed to advance their career and be happy with what they are doing

If there is at least one diverse spark among that normal, that might help you



SIMONA SAMARDJISKA
Assistant professor, ICIS

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COLIN LOGIE
Associate professor, RIMLS

Role models tend to be people who I can mirror with, who I can recognize a little bit myself in. Then I also see what they do I don't do yet, and then I feel a little bit more empowered, or inspired

Role models are not mentors. A mentor is someone who really helps you, a role model is more an example

We are all role models to each other. I think we should embrace it; we never know who is watching and needs inspiration, motivation or support

Especially when you want to do something that has never been done before, you would not find that person that is doing exactly that, then you have to get inspired by different people doing different chunks of what you want to do



VICTORIA LUNA VELEZ
Postdoctoral scientist, RIMLS

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RENS WATERS
Full professor, IMAPP/IMM/FELIX

When you have a leadership function, a very visible function in an institute, then you are naturally a role model. Because everybody is looking at you, and you are setting the example for how you think that one should interact with others in a respectful way, and making sure that everyone feels respected and valued

I don't want to achieve something if I'm not doing it in an honest way (..) I wouldn't want to do work anywhere if I couldn't do that. So, in that regard I try to be a role model, but more for myself

In academia I see a lot of people that inspire me, but I think in academia there is also some kind of work-life balance mentality that doesn't really resonate with me that much



ROB BAKKER
PhD candidate, IMM

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ANNEMIK SLOOTBEEK
PhD candidate, IMM

Looking back, I might have missed some role models. If my mum and dad wouldn't have cheered me on, I don't think I would have gotten here

When I was younger, pretty much all role models in my field were men. It also felt like women scientists could not have a family, but that is getting better now

I sought strong confident characteristics in a role model when I was younger. But now, I look more to people that show their doubts and openly discuss them while still being good leaders

More diverse people in leadership positions would enhance diversity



RALPH JASPERS
Managing director, IMM

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ANNEGRET BURTSCHER
Assistant professor, Mathematics

What I actually need in a role model is someone who understands the kind of challenges I am facing, so strictly speaking I am looking for a person that had to overcome similar challenges

It helps to see someone ahead of you, the confidence that they have to deal with that situation, in a sense this helps to be that yourself

You need to recognize something of yourself in a role model, for me that they have accomplished things that I would like to accomplish

The lack of role models is causing me to have challenges that I otherwise would not have

Just from the reaction I get from people I know I am not what people expect from me. At these moments I am challenging their ideas



RENÉE JOOSTEN
Master student, Medical biology

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HERMA CUPPEN
Full professor, IMM

I was told I was a role model, because I could combine both science and also having a family

Being seen as a role model made me more conscious about how I act, in a good way

I was lucky to have role models who were both good scientists and were also aware that there was a person behind the scientist

My role models usually are women, but there are not enough women in astrophysics to have a role model in science

Career isn't everything, the way you behave in life is more important

As my values changed, my role models changed



HYERIN JANG
PhD candidate, IMAPP

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FREYJA ÓLAFSDÓTTIR
Assistant professor, DCN

I guess it's the idea that someone like you can exist in that field. And that gives you a sense of security, that you belong there

Particularly if you see yourself as a minority somewhere I think it is important to feel like there is someone else that's like you. Even though it shouldn't matter, gender, race or nationality or whatever, it can create artificial barriers

I think my comfort level of being me took a longer time because I really had to feel, in the absence of anyone else looking like me or being like me, that it was okay to be me in this setting

I really would like to support people who previously were disadvantaged, or currently are disadvantaged. And for me that transcends whether people have a particular race or gender, whether they are economically disadvantaged. That's a strong mission for me



MUSA MHLANGA
Full professor, RIMLS & RUMC