

Speech for the doctoral conferment ceremony

Respected Aalto University president, honorary doctors, fellow conferred doctors, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to start by sharing a short story. When I was a little girl, I was known for asking many questions. These included questions about stars, the sky, vehicles and the machines operating in my father's factory. I asked so many questions that I was given the nickname "Miss why". My inquiries and persistence apparently made others uncomfortable because I began to notice that elders took steps to avoid me and my questions.

As an undergraduate, I became acquainted with a book titled, 'The PhD application handbook'. In the very opening pages was the question "Why do a PhD?" In answer the book clearly gave the impression that one needs to be a little strange or even crazy to pursue a doctorate. As a doctoral student one gives up the chance to earn real money from a steady job. One loses the simplicity of regular working hours and having a boss who tells you what you should be doing. Instead, as a doctoral student one must be willing to accept the complications of less money, setting an agenda and planning one's own work.

The book did not scare me, but it did convince me that I needed to have a clear understanding about why I would like to start a doctorate. Thankfully, I was able to identify some very good reasons. I knew that I was ambitious and that I wished to challenge myself and push myself to new heights. I knew that I was willing to sacrifice both the labor and time to earn a degree. I also realized that I had a passionate thirst for knowledge that I didn't see in many of my other friends and classmates.

Having completed my doctorate in late 2016, I see that the process of doing this degree has improved my ability to formulate questions and it has given me new capabilities.

Completing the doctorate has increased my confidence and I believe that it has made me a better communicator. I am confident that this training period has given me skills to approach my future. At this stage, all who have today be conferred with the degree Doctor of Science in Technology are free to head in our individual directions. Each of our paths will be different.

I love research. Accomplishing a doctorate at Aalto University was perfect for me. It has been a great pleasure to work in the good-natured and supportive atmosphere of the Solid Mechanics group during my degree and more recently in the Marine Technology group as a post-doctoral researcher.

Aalto University has provided me with an ideal multicultural scientific society. It has been easy for me to work without experiencing prejudice or discrimination. It has been important for me that I have been evaluated only on my performance and abilities.

Living, studying, and working in Finland for 6 years has been full of ups and downs, fears and hopes. I have never been disappointed or sad about my decision to come here. Even though I am thousands of kilometers away from my home country and family, I feel that I am living in the secure place in the midst of kind and reliable people. I now feel Finland is my second home and I really like this country.

On behalf of all the newly conferred doctors, I would like to thank Aalto University and all its professors for the opportunity to learn and be part of this community.

I hope that none of us will ever lose our childlike curiosity of the world. This is the driving force pushing us to explore and learn new things.

Thank you.