

# Ozgun Erdogan

**Born:** Turkey

**Currently:** Duke University, Durham, North Carolina



My father has always been an inspiration for me. He grew up in a poor family in eastern Turkey, but he managed to get two bachelor's degrees - although the second took until he was 45!

In Turkey, young kids are always asked "What will you be when you grow up?" but I never knew what to say.

My dad saw my struggle and suggested science to encourage me to explore more non-traditional career options. The idea opened up new horizons for me. I never thought a career in science was possible, I had never seen a scientist in real life and thought they only existed in science fiction. It was a surreal idea, especially for girls in 1980s Turkey.

Young women in Turkey have to demand equal opportunities and build a strong community of smart educated women. And men have to help them - like my dad helped me.