

My credentials: Master's degree, information systems, Pace University; Bachelor's & Master's (combined) degrees, physics and math, Belarusian State Pedagogical University

My work location: Clinton, New Jersey

Words I live by: "People may not remember what you said, or what you did, but they always remember how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

My personal philosophy: Treat people the way you want to be treated. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

What I'm reading now: Rereading *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Harari

My first job: Summer camp counselor

My favorite charity: Animal rescue and medical research charities

My interests: Travel, architecture, photography, and cooking

My family: Husband, and a grown son

Company: New York Life

Industry: Insurance

Company Headquarters: New York, New York

Number of employees: 11,000

CEO: Ted Mathas



Closing the STEM Gender Gap

There are many barriers we need to overcome as a society to close the gender gap in STEM. I believe the most critical barrier is the gender stereotypes that society often encourages. Stereotypical gendered behaviors often begin with societal, community, and family expectations, and form these norms, which can lead to gender-based role expectations in boys and girls beginning at an early age.

To close the gender gap, we will have to start chipping away at these perceived norms in small incremental steps. Our society must reflect on how decisions and policies being made today help to perpetuate this issue.

Moving Women Forward in STEM

We need to have more women in positions of leadership! Representation is key to others feeling as though they can achieve leadership roles themselves. Having female role models to look up to and female mentors to share experiences with is invaluable for building a career in STEM.

Movies, books, and social media also have an important role to play in encouraging women to pursue careers in STEM. Movies like *Hidden Figures* or *On a Basis of Sex* are likely to inspire generations of women to choose careers in male-dominated professions, challenge the status quo, advocate for themselves, and rise to leadership positions in their fields.

I vividly remember reading *Lean*

In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg. Every word of the book resonated, inspired, and helped me to advance my career. Don't be afraid, seek and speak your truth, be assertive, find mentors, get a seat at the table, and make opportunistic lateral moves are all pieces of advice that I often give to other women.

Women in STEM 5 Years down the Road

I am hopeful that in 5 years, we will start seeing more women move into leadership roles in male-dominated fields like STEM. I suspect that women CIOs and CEOs will no longer be rare or unusual. I am certain that the steps we are taking today to challenge gender biases will help to get us there.