

Swinburne Commons

Title: Sarah Maddison (Swinburne Story)

Author(s): Sarah Maddison

Year: 2014

Audio/video available from: <http://commons.swinburne.edu.au>



I'm Sarah Maddison and this is my Swinburne story.

There was never really a definition of a planet. And yet, kids always know what a planet is, because they know the planets in our solar system.

I'm Sarah Maddison. I'm a Professor of Astrophysics at Swinburne University, and I lead the Planets group here at the Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing.

My mother always encouraged all of us kids to do whatever we wanted to do. And she really instilled in us that passion to follow your dreams.

In school, I was always very interested in mathematics and science. I was really amazed to discover that basically all elements are made inside of stars.

This is incredibly powerful thing to tell a young person - that we are stars. So that was really great.

The problem that I'm working on is to really try and understand how planets form. So I'm involved in a range of projects that are using telescopes, and we're studying the dust content of disks around young stars.

We basically have access to our own supercomputer, which is fantastic.

Because men and women do have different views of the world, just because of the way we're brought up, the schemas we carry around in our heads, women will bring a different focus or a different flavour to leadership.

It's not necessarily better than the leadership style of men, it's just different.

And the whole point is I think we need diversity amongst our leaders, since we have diversity amongst our population.

Follow your dreams and know that you can do anything. There are no barriers. Sometimes there are barriers, but the idea that there are not barriers means that you can find a way around them, if they are in front of you.