

WHY I WANT TO BE A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER.

Sara Bailey

At the beginning of the year when people asked me what I wanted to be when “I grew up” I still wasn’t sure. “Growing up” had always seemed like such a long way away and I was content enjoying my carefree life at high school. However, in reality, I no longer relied on my parents to spoon feed me and I was becoming remarkably skilled at walking, talking and other aspects of life, that I had to face, I was “grown up”. I had narrowed my options down to either completing a first year Health Science or a first year engineering course and it was an open day at the University of Auckland that helped me to make up my mind. One of the lecturers running the day opened their spiel by stating the fact that many people choose to become doctors because they want to help people. He then went on to say that these people were wrong in doing so, they should become engineers. “Engineers change the future”. In becoming an engineer, I would have the potential to change not just one life, but populations of lives.

Engineering is a very diverse career and contributes to just about everything we do. Just looking around me now, I can identify how engineers have shaped my world. It has been engineers who have developed new technologies that we are almost fully reliant on. It has been engineers who have made our homes almost indestructible in an earthquake, engineers who develop new foods and engineers who design new medical procedures. Engineers will continue to shape the future and I want to be a part of this.

When I think about the future, cartoons such as the Jetsons and other futuristic television series come to mind. Will we all be darting around in flying spaceships and magically vaporising into a cloud of dust only to appear again at our desired destination? Maybe we will...or maybe these are wild possibilities that will only be a reality in our dreams and on children’s television. Whatever the future holds, it can be certain that engineers will be leading the way.

In particular, the field of Biomedical Engineering specifically interests me. This will enable me to fulfil my dream of improving the quality of life of many people. It is comforting to know that in studying Engineering I will not be giving up the dream that initially directed me to a first year Health Science course. Biomedical Engineering incorporates everything that I could want in a career. It gives me the opportunity to further my knowledge in biology as well as working to my strengths in maths and physics. It also allows me to fulfil a goal of making a difference in people’s lives as well as working with the development of groundbreaking technology.

I was fortunate as a child to learn many instruments, play numerous sports and just generally fit in well with the other kids around me. This gave me perspective and I realised that not everybody has life so good. While working at a holiday job I met a woman who had both arms and a leg amputated. She relied on others to complete such mundane tasks I had always complained about (such as doing the dishes, or tidying my room). This really opened my eyes to how many people are plagued by disabilities and disease that can potentially be remedied by the work of biomedical engineers. Essentially, it is these experiences and many inspirational discussions in chemistry that have fuelled my desire to become a professional Biomedical Engineer.

When awarded the foundation trophy for dux of Havelock North High School for 2009 I was asked, “What is the key to success?” My reply – “challenging yourself and never giving up”. It is this attitude that will help me to succeed as an engineer. I can foresee that in such a career, there will be many failed attempts at finding the solution to a problem. However with these failures, there will always be a success, and the final solution would not have been possible without all the lessons learnt in failing.

The main reason that I have chosen to study Engineering is straightforward. I think I will enjoy it. I could never work in a job that is monotonous or requires me to sit in a room full of desks each day. This type of work may be attractive to some, but it is not in my nature. Statistics show that the average person changes careers 7 times in their lifetime. I do not want to be like this and in choosing engineering; I am confident that this is a job I can grow with and stay in for the rest of my life. The field of engineering is forever changing and I will be able to constantly challenge myself as new discoveries are made. We only get to live life once, so I try to make the best of my opportunities. I believe that the challenges of being an engineer will present me with many opportunities to continuously increase my knowledge and ultimately be the best I can be.

I know I want to be there when advances are made which will improve the quality of so many lives, I want to make that difference, I want to change lives. I want to be a professional engineer

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