



## Honoring the Contributions of Women on International Women's Day

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By Bridget Collins, CIO & Executive Sponsor of Cerence's Women in Tech

At Cerence, I have the honor of serving as Executive Sponsor of our recently formed Women in Tech group, a cross-functional, global team of women within our organization who are committed to creating space for women in technology to share their unique experiences and connect with others for ideas, advice and knowledge. Our vision? To grow the group into a platform that creates multiple avenues for knowledge sharing, enabling growth and empowerment for all women in the network.

The group and its mission are near and dear to my heart. As a woman who's made her career in IT – and as a mother of three girls, wife, daughter, sister, and friend – I've experienced some of the challenges women in and outside of the technology industry face firsthand. But I've always found that knowledge really is power – the more we can inform, engage, and support each other, the closer we get to a more equitable future for all women.

So, in honor of [International Women's Day](#) today, I asked our Women in Tech group to share about the women who inspire them, lessons learned, and their hopes for the future. For me, that woman is my grandmother, who opened her own business – a dance studio – during the Great Depression and raised and put four children through college alone as a young widow. She ran her dance studio for more than 70 years, rising to become a leader in her community as she started programs for people with disabilities, offered scholarships for families falling on hard times so their children could continue dancing, and more. She was an incredible woman.

Here's what I heard from others in our Women in Tech group:

"Living in an era with so many great female leaders around the world and in our own day-to-day professional lives, I have many examples as to what an empowering woman should be. But a person who has always served as an example for me is my mother. Being a teacher with more than 35 years of experience, her mission is to help and empower the young generations of tomorrow. Her students are spread across the globe working in a variety of industries: scientists, innovators, health, art, IT, and many more. One of the greatest powers all teachers like her have is to help all young individuals to grow into those successful adults that we meet every day and are part of companies like Cerence. My vision of International Women's Day – teachers help us grow and become the change we want to see in this world!" – *Mina, Senior Project Manager*

"Thanks to the female colleagues who work with me. In addition to the common progress in technology, I also experienced the unique talents of women, which make our products more outstanding and our lives more colorful." – *Zemei, Software Developer*

"Many women have been inspiring to me in different capacities and roles. Among them I wish to share the story of a strong, genius, and relentless Iranian woman who became an iconic scientist to the world as well. Growing up in Iran after 1979 with the thick glass of gender inequality above her head, moving to the US after her bachelor's degree to pursue her studies and becoming a renowned professor at Stanford University, Maryam Mirzakhani turned out to be the first woman ever to have obtained the Fields Medal in Mathematics, while being a wife, a mother, and a good swimmer. Without a doubt, she's a true inspiration to any woman in science." – *Elmira, Senior Product R&D Developer*

"Whenever I think of strong, empowering woman, I feel I have the best one to myself: my mother! Between unconditional love and tireless support, she has given us everything that she might not have always received. Because that's how my mom engraved the image of an amazing woman in my mind: assertive, fierce, magnanimous, kind, tenacious, loving, and giving! Even after being pulled down by hundreds of things, she taught me how empowering others, especially other women, is so important. If only I am able to bring half of that substance to my life and others around me, I would still be quite incredible. And as they say 'Here's to good women. May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them!'" – *Harman, UX Designer*

"The female I really admire is my mom! Growing up in a patriarchal society, she has taught me that women should pursue education as high as possible, as far as possible, and be able to stand by their own. She's working as a gender consultant, fighting for women's rights and equality, working on cases such as child marriage, violence against women, and violence against housemaids. Also, she has a black belt 3rd Dan in Shorinji Kempo!" – *Dala, Senior Software Quality Assurance Engineer*

"Ever since being introduced to her at President Biden's inauguration, I have been fascinated with and inspired by poet and activist Amanda Gorman. Her talent, poise, and activism for what she believes in is incredible – these are qualities I'm looking to emulate this year both personally and professionally. I'm excited to watch Amanda's star continue to rise!" – *Kate, Director, Marketing*

On this international day of recognition, I encourage all of you to celebrate the women you've met along the way and #ChooseToChallenge the status quo. I can't wait to continue to learn from our Women in Tech group and the many women leading technology, innovation, and more at Cerence.