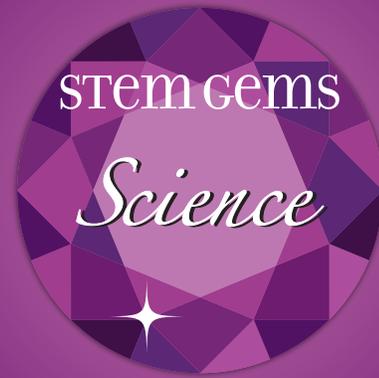


STEM Gem Career:  
**PLANETARY SCIENTIST**

STEM Gem:  
**CAROLYN PORCO**

*"...When I'm old and looking back on my life,  
I will feel that I did the coolest thing anyone  
could ever possibly do with their life."*



Is a career in Planetary Science in your future? Are you fascinated with life beyond Earth? STEM Gem Carolyn Porco admits to being space-obsessed and, as a girl, loved to view planets via her friend's telescope. Read her story and digest. Watch one of her online videos. Then, with your STEM Gems Tribe, **discuss, explore, reflect,** and **act.**

## **DISCUSS**

1. How do Planetary Scientists like Dr. Porco make a difference in the world?
2. What experiences did Dr. Porco have growing up that led to her pursuit of a career as a Planetary Scientist?
3. What is Dr. Porco's educational background?
4. What are some of the challenges that Dr. Porco faced along her journey and in her career?
5. What are some of Dr. Porco's key accomplishments?
6. What inspired you most about Dr. Porco's story?
7. Dr. Porco says: "... When I am old and looking back on my life, I will feel that I did the coolest thing anyone could ever possibly do with their life." What about Dr. Porco's career as a Planetary Scientist do you find super cool?

## EXPLORE

1. To pursue a career as a Planetary Scientist, what college majors should you consider?
2. What colleges and universities have programs in these areas?
3. What types of jobs are available for Planetary Scientists? What companies/organizations hire Planetary Scientists?
4. What classes should you take in middle and high school to prepare for a career as a Planetary Scientist?
5. Name at least two other women Planetary Scientists. How are they similar to Dr. Porco? How are they different?
6. Including NASA, what professional organizations support women in Planetary Science? Do they have programs established for middle and high school students to learn more about this career?

## REFLECT

Dr. Porco emphasizes that traits like drive, persistence, focus, confidence, insightfulness, emotional intelligence, ability to rebound from setbacks, ability to accept criticism, enjoyment of solitude, and an abiding intense desire to know are critically important. Which of these traits do you possess? Which do you need to work on?

## ACT

It's time to step outside your comfort zone. Name one concrete thing you will do before your next meeting that will have you one step closer to becoming a STEM Gem. Blog about it. Include it in your written or photo journal. Hold yourself accountable.

***Work hard. Be brave. Stay curious.***

**BE A GEM!**

*Stephanie Espy*

P.S. I'd love to hear about your journey. Share on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and tag @STEMGemsBook #STEMGemsTribe, or email me at [tribe@STEMGemsBook.com](mailto:tribe@STEMGemsBook.com).