**“Remember to bottle the grand feelings”**

Name: Magnus Wetterhall

Did PhD at: Uppsala University

Current position: Senior Scientist at GE Healthcare

Interviewed by: Filip Bergqvist

**Magnus Wetterhall was hooked on mass spectrometry during his master’s thesis and went on to conduct a PhD in analytical chemistry at Uppsala University.**

“I started my PhD in the late 90s when mass spectrometry was far from as developed as it is today. We were working on technical solutions and methods to enhance the analysis. This new field of research was very exciting, and I was eager to make new discoveries.”

**HIGHLIGHT AND PHD PHASES**

During this period, there were many PhD students enrolled at the same time, which meant a lot of exchange and helping each other out. Magnus’ time as a PhD student became better than he expected.

“The highlight during my PhD studies was one day when we finished experiments that later were to become three separate publications. We knew it already that day, and we went out for a beer to celebrate. You need to remember to bottle the grand feelings for challenging times.”

Indeed, there is a large portion of dealing with disappointments during a PhD.

“I picture it as different phases. The beginning is always thrilling and then you experience that many experiments fail, which makes you frustrated. However, it is important to never take research failure personally and instead learn from failure. Things get brighter towards the end of your PhD, and this is when you are the most productive.”

Magnus has supervised many students and he points out that the phases are part of the personal development.

“It is important to remember that doing a PhD is primarily an education with the aim to educate independent researchers.”

He adds that a PhD is rewarding since what you give is what you get, but there has to be a balance between work and private life.

“You can love a job but it won’t love you back.”

**NO REGRETS**

Magnus says that pursuing a PhD was a strategic choice as it opens up for a more interesting job market. There is little that he would have liked to do differently.

“Perhaps I would have focused more on writing grants and planned for an academic post-doc.”

After earning his degree, Magnus went on to work at a company in Australia for two years, a position he got via his supervisor. He then took on a researcher position in his old group at Uppsala University – a move that he concludes was not the best if considering an academic career.

“The lab had secured large funding for a 10 years project to investigate biomarkers in neurodegenerative diseases. It was a great opportunity to work with exciting research and to manage projects. However, as you need to show independency and gain your own funding to build an academic career, this decision was academic suicide.”

**THE IDEAL POSITION**

The academic position gave Magnus great experiences and enabled him to apply for senior positions in the industry. He described his current position as ideal.

“I get to do basic research at a company. It is the best of both worlds! Industrial research is stricter, as the goal is to generate new products. On the other hand, this comes with clearer objectives. There is no other job for me”