

*HOW TO TIE A TIE**How to tie a tie*

I got my first tie when I was around 16. It was black with red stripes (or the other way around). I chose that combination of color because it looked punk rock. Also, I would wear it loosely, around 5-10 centimeters from my neck. What I remember at that age was being a young person who cared a lot about what others thought of me and therefore I thought that having my tie in a “relaxed” manner was a pretty cool look.

In my late twenties, I was just as confused as I was when I was 16. I was a bit more aware that a tie should not hang 5-10 centimeters below your neck unless you are Avril Lavigne in the early 2000s. But then again, I didn't even own a tie, and I was a long way from knowing how to tie a tie. At that time, I had spent a long time on getting an education in the natural sciences, which could only lead one way - me becoming a researcher. After finishing my master thesis titled “*Soil water and temperature regulations of heterotrophic respiration and oxidation of CH₄ in heath- and grassland on a global scale*” I knew that I didn't want to become a researcher. Mainly due to my lack of interest in reading scientific articles with just as complex and strange titles as my own master thesis.

So, I left academia. Just to return 4 years later - Now from another perspective, where I was looking at science from a bird's perspective. I had moved home and started working with the local and international scientific community of Greenland. My job being to guide and help international researchers with an interest in conducting research in Greenland. Most important, talking about the value of ethical research and the national wishes for research conducted in Greenland.

Today I would call what I did science diplomacy. A term I didn't know about 3 years ago but a term that sparked a desire to work within a diplomatic career and advocate for Greenland.

Long story, short. That is why I applied for a mentorship program through Arctic Mayors' Forum.

I saw this as an opportunity for my confused mind to try to be guided in the direction that I wanted it to go, but didn't know how to. Lucky for me, I got accepted into the program and got a true diplomat as my mentor - Mr. Joël Plouffe, senior advisor for the Arctic Council Secretariat. From the get-go we connected on geopolitics, the role of Greenland in an uncertain world, the importance of diplomacy and how good cheese goes with wine.

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But more importantly having a mentor meant that my wish to get more into diplomacy could be guided. It opened a new world of networking, learnings and sparring. With tools such as making goals for myself, putting my thoughts into words as well as help to better understand the arena that is Arctic diplomacy.

One of the first things Joël and I worked on was to tell my own story. An exercise that really challenged my otherwise relaxed mind. I strongly believe that one of the worst things you can do is to ask someone to describe themselves - I don't have three words that best describe me... But slowly I got my story down on paper and it helped me to explain what I could do and what I wanted.

And within 6 months I got a new job!

Today I work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Government of Greenland. Working with perhaps the most important diplomatic forum in this current situation that Greenland and the Arctic is in – The Arctic Council.

Suddenly I found myself in a position where I needed to know how to tie a tie. Funnily enough, I was actually given two ties as presents when I got my new position. And at that time, I had not owned a tie since my red and black tie was outdated the moment I wore it the first time. Another thing was that I cut my long hair. Somehow I had convinced myself the ties needed to come with a diplomatic hairstyle — one that could not offend anyone. I regret that decision now. It turns out it was just my 16-year-old self whispering that I still care about how people see me. Some might even say I sold my soul to this new line of work — but I still wear my earring, and I am planning on getting more.

For this mentorship we had to make a deliverable at the end of the program. And for a long time, I didn't know what it should be. But then I figured out that I am living my deliverable. I went into this mentorship with the hope of being guided towards my goal of a more diplomatic career and now I am in the middle of it and doing it every day. In that regard, my deliverable has become this story. A story of how a mentor can truly benefit and guide you.

I would not have gotten to where I am today without being mentored. That person that reminds you that everything is possible and who motivates you to continue working towards your goals. And often overlooked is the need for continuous encouragement and confidence boosts. A mentor that is just a phone call away when you feel lost in a decision.

During the past 18 months there have been some knots on the tie that were harder to loosen, but those have been the things that ended up being personal growth. Some of the things that I have learned being fed to the diplomatic lions is to always believe in

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yourself and your ability to do what is needed. Even if what you can do is the bare minimum. That is still better than doing nothing. And if you feel like the tie is suffocating you, never hesitate to ask for help.

My journey these past 18 months being mentored ended up giving much more than it has taken. Just the fact that I have learned so much, while also feeling that I could give something back. In that way the mentorship has gone both ways.

When I started the mentorship, I would never have guessed that it would be like this and that my path in diplomacy would go as fast as it has. But the world keeps turning even though we are not always keeping our feet steady on the ground. Suddenly I was doing work that involved Arctic Council and its role in a period where nothing was certain. At the same time, I worked with foreign affairs in Greenland at a time where the attention towards Greenland had never been more intense. Some days it was at the level where you would question your own sanity and go to sleep without knowing what the morning would bring.

This experience has shown me the real importance of dialogue and advocacy. The value of diplomacy and education. I have learned that progress does not come from single people, but from respectful relationships. When we talk and listen to each other that is when we are building the foundation to the bridges that we need to continue.

However, it will never cease to amaze me the lack of knowledge that the general population have on the Arctic. And how people with Indigenous backgrounds constantly have to be an encyclopedia for everything that is the Arctic. Not long ago I met a journalist, that did not believe that Greenland had a ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked my superior if working in foreign affairs was a full-time job or perhaps that he owned a bakery on the side. To which my superior answered that he had been working in this field for 30 years.

Looking back on the mentorship program, what I am most proud of is the fact that I now get to work with elevating youth. This mentorship was only possible since I am a young person and I did not expect that elevating youth voices now has become my main purpose. Through my job I work towards making youth more engaged and creating the spaces where young people can meet as well as inviting youth in to the “important” rooms (no room is more important than others). We must reach a level of inclusion where youth are no longer treated as tokens, but are genuinely heard, seen, and engaged as meaningful participants. Today I work with young people that are much more experienced than I am, much more driven and certainly much more confident in their own abilities. But that is what excites me today; being in a position where I can support and learn from amazing people.

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My advice to others considering entering a mentorship program or changing direction is simple: it is never too late. 1 year ago, I had never worked with foreign policy, now I am. Without sounding too cheesy, taking that first step is the hardest. For me that was saying yes to a mentorship and then the rest followed.

I want to give my biggest gratitude to Joël Plouffe for the mentoring and if you want it or not, you are stuck with mentoring me for the rest of your life.

Thank you to Arctic Mayors' Forum and especially the people who work at AMF, which I today see as friends. And thank you to Youth Together for Arctic Futures that has made it all possible.

And just to clarify I still use YouTube whenever I have to tie a tie. So, this piece of paper will not teach you how to tie a tie.



Me with my sister and my first tie.

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Me moderating my first panel at Greenland Science Week



Me being part of the Arctic Council Family

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Disclaimer

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