



Claudia Wong
1972, F5
Entrepreneur

Take these wings and learn to fly to the highest mountain in the sky ...

I am a very private person, so I don't usually like to talk about myself. Now that I have turned 60, it is time to give back to the society and to my dear school SPCS. So I talk.

In 1980, I graduated with a master degree in Chemical Engineering from University of California, Santa Barbara. At that time the oil industry was thriving, I could easily take a high paid job and work for companies like Chevron or Exxon. But I decided to explore the frontier and went to work for a semiconductor company in Silicon Valley. At that time, the semiconductor industry was at its infancy, nobody expects the immense impact it would have in the world today. (A semiconductor is the engine for your computer, cellphone, internet, etc.) Silicon Valley is a hotbed for scientific research, biotech development, and computer hardware and software development. It is the birth place of lots of household names of modern technological companies like Apple computer, Google, Intel, WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Genentech, and Amgen.

Armed with insatiable appetite to learn and explore, the first job that I took was with Intel Corporation where the Intel inside logo was invented. Not satisfied with working for somebody, in the mid-nineties, together with my husband we started a couple of high tech companies, finally in 1999 together with two other partners, we bought a modem division from a large company who wanted to spin off unprofitable divisions. In 14 months, we turned around the company to be profitable and thriving and sold it to Intel for a very handsome price. After we sold the company, overjoyed with our success, I took on a few new challenges: 1) become a portfolio manager to manage my new found fortune, 2) become a venture capitalist to fund and coach young companies, and 3) build my own house.

In 2008, with the financial crisis, my fortune was halved within a year. In Hong Kong a lot of innocent folks got sapped by the Lehman Brothers bonds. The country, Iceland, almost went into bankruptcy because of it. It was a wakeup call of the immense impact of the financial industry. Fortunately, I kept my cool and earned back all my losses and more. There have been a lot of blame and theories about the cause of the financial crisis, but at the very core of the crisis, it is due to the misuse of an equation that values the price of derivatives that derive from mortgages. For most people, this sounds like Greek to them. Nonetheless, this is my long winded way of saying how important science, math and technology are to our society. Our everyday life depends heavily on science, math and technology.

SPCS is a girl school; somehow it is believed that science is for the boys. No, it is for everyone.

Here are a few "enabling" books that I'd like to recommend for all to read:

- 1) History of Electricity by Derek Cheung, PhD in Electrical Engineering, Stanford University

- 2) The Ascent of Money by Niall Ferguson, Professor of History, Harvard University; Research Fellow, University of Oxford; Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University
- 3) The Language of Life by Francis Collins, Project Leader of the International Human Genome Project
- 4) Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Laureate, Economics
- 5) 17 Equations that Changed the World by Ian Stewart, Math Professor, University of Warwick