

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Who You Are Working With Is More Important Than What You Are Working On

Can you tell us a story about an individual who was impacted or helped by your cause?

I remember quite clearly the day I heard about Kajal. My team received news of a patient, 6 years old from Calcutta, India. She lived in one of the worst ghettos in the world. If that wasn't enough, her stepmother intentionally blinded her by pouring acid in her eyes to make her a blind child beggar. Within weeks of this terrible event, she was left to die at a train station but was rescued by religious nuns.

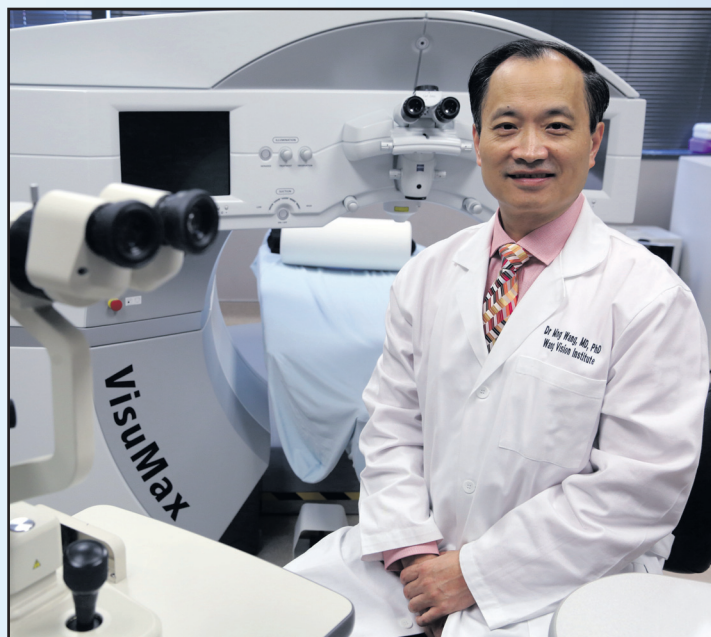
When a doctor receives news like this, we have to manage our emotions. On the one hand, my heart went out to this little girl and I experienced anger toward a world that could do such a thing. On the other hand, I needed to treat this as a strictly medical case. With Kajal, I was pulled into her story immediately and felt a personal connection to help her see again.

Soon, the Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration took over Kajal's case and we brought her to the United States. I remember meeting her and giving her a special music box and introducing her to several host families. She was so frail and timid, but she had a kind of strength in her that was special. I then began to assemble a team of medical professionals to help save her sight.

When I got into the operating room and opened Kajal's eyes, I found that the damage was beyond repair. I was angry. How could an innocent child experience such an unspeakable atrocity? I was also angry at my God, for not having answered my prayer to help this little girl. I felt hopeless.

Then at the Wang Foundation's annual benefit event, the EyeBall, something remarkable happened. While I was on stage introducing Kajal and the generous host families that took care of her during her time in the U.S., I realized something profound. Perhaps my prayers were answered. One after another, people came to the microphone and gave testimony of how Kajal had made a beautiful impact on their lives. She emanated joy and this was infectious. The children that spent time with Kajal experienced joy and certain thankfulness for their own sight. The adults were inspired by her fearless gentle spirit that embraced the pain of her blindness but nevertheless did not lose hope. Kajal showed me that when darkness surrounds us (physically, emotionally and spiritually), light can still emanate from within.

When I handed the microphone to Kajal she broke into a big smile and what she did next surprised everyone present including myself. You see, when she was blinded, her stepmother wanted her to sing on the streets begging for a hand out. But Kajal didn't have a very good voice. So she was abandoned. Ever since she came to America, she wanted to learn how to sing. She wanted to prove that she was worth keeping. So, when she grabbed the microphone, she began to sing a song. And you know what song she chose? The same tune that was playing on that music box so many months earlier. She sang "Jesus Loves Me." Her voice was beautiful and precious. You could hear a pin drop when she finished. Then suddenly, 500 people began to cheer and applaud this special little girl.



Dr. Ming Wang

As is mentioned by the character portraying Dr. Wang at the end of the movie "Sight:" "Kajal has opened my eyes. She is teaching me every day that there is more to life than what we see." The reason that Kajal is able to let go of her tragic past, and embrace the present, is because she sees that there is more to this life than what we see!

What is your "one thing I wish someone told me when I first started" and why.

Who you are working with is more important than what you're working on. With the right business partner, you might be able to do the right thing; but, with the wrong partner, you will never be able to do the right thing.

In my career as a doctor and eye surgeon, I have worked on many difficult cases. I have tackled seemingly impossible situations and have climbed the heights of ingenuity and creativity on many projects. However, I have never been able to do more, effect more people, and personally live a more fulfilled life than when I am working with men and women who share my same vision and passion for life.

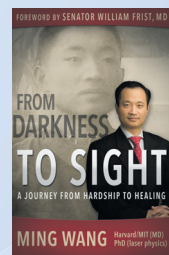
I remember investing in working with a business partner who had an incredible business but we simply did not share a common vision and purpose in life. Our values were different. The business just didn't go anywhere. Since then, I try to focus on my business partners first and the work or opportunities second.

Can you please give us your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"?

"A frog at a bottom of a well."

Each of us is a "frog at a bottom of a well," only seeing a small patch of sky and our judgement (of whether the sky is clear or cloudy) is limited by our limited perspective. Always recognize that limitation and frequently "come up to the ground" and "see the rest of the sky" to be sure! When I look at a situation in my practice, I often ask myself: "Do I have all the facts?" If not, I will gather more info and talk to more people, to make sure that I am indeed "coming up to the ground level," and "seeing the rest of the sky," before I make my assessment.

— Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD



"SIGHT," a movie based on his inspiring true story is slated to release in 2022. Starring Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning Greg Kinnear and Terry Chen, the film chronicles Dr. Wang's rise from poverty and violence growing up in 1960's China, to his migration to the U.S. He overcame racial discrimination to become a leading surgeon and medical entrepreneur who would design new technology to help restore sight in millions of people's lives.