



李本嫦  
Sue Tang

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## 逆境中的璀璨人生

逆境，也許會讓人頹廢沉淪，但也會激發強者潛能，使其發出更耀眼的光芒。李本嫦就是後者，她在逆境中成長，活出比一般人更精彩的人生，就好像歷經苦寒綻放的梅花，坎坷磨難都化作沁人芬芳。

### 寒門學子求學路

李本嫦生在香港一個清貧之家，小小年紀便懂得幫雙親分擔家務，還需站在小凳上才夠得到灶台時就開始每天為全家人做飯。上世紀中期香港本地高等教育資源稀少且花費不貲，只有殷實人家的子弟才會考慮在本地讀大學。李本嫦不甘心學業止步於高中，她聽朋友說，到加拿大留學可以靠打工賺夠學費和生活費，便和父母提出願望。

李本嫦的父親固守傳統觀念，認為女孩沒子沒必要讀大學，所以持反對態度。但母親卻支持女兒追求夢想，她省吃儉用湊夠一張飛往加拿大的單程機票錢給李本嫦，對她說：「到了那邊，以後一切就要靠你自己了。」李本嫦在母親充滿期許的目光裡看到了厚望和信任，這也成為她此後內心力量的源泉，支撐她度過所有挫折磨難。

來加不足兩年，李本嫦的父親罹患癌症。那時網絡還沒普及，李本嫦和大洋彼岸的親人聯繫，常常把想說的話錄在磁帶上郵寄給對方。父親臨終前最後一次錄下對她說的話，說他為本嫦驕傲，也很高興本嫦用自己的本事證明父親錯了。回首往

事，李本嫦仍忍不住淚濕眼眶。正是這樣充滿愛的父母，讓本嫦既堅韌，又富有同情心和同理心。

### 意外成為軟件工程師

靠著在餐館、工廠打零工，本嫦完成了滑鐵盧大學經濟系的學業。畢業時，一家名為Datapoint的IT公司到學校招聘。本嫦獲得的是文學士學位，只是輔修過一些商業計算方面的課程，她抱着試試看的心態前去應聘，竟出乎意料地被錄取了。

工作後，李本嫦找到機會問招錄她的上司，當初應聘時有那麼多IT專業畢業生，為何卻選擇了專業背景不太符合的她。上司說，技術方面的知識欠缺可以通過公司培訓彌補，但他在本嫦身上看到優秀的人際溝通能力和積極向上的熱情，這些品質是無法通過培訓獲得的。並且這個職位雖然是軟件工程師，但需要經常和客戶交流溝通，所以他認為本嫦是最適合的人選。

李本嫦用全力以赴的學習和工作態度來回報公司的知遇之恩。經過短短六個月在職培訓，她就掌握了從開發小程序到基礎機器語言編程以及網絡支持等領域的技能，成為名副其實的軟件工程師。但職場的挑戰遠不止專業知識和技能的積累。作為少數族裔，又是工程師團隊中唯一的女性，李本嫦面臨的壓力是多方面的。要克服口音和語言表達不地道方面的欠缺，還要消除團隊及客戶對她的偏見且贏得他們的信任和尊重，她只有加倍努力，建立自己的口碑。

## 憑實力晉階高管

進入管理層後，又有了“辦公室政治”的挑戰，但她始終只專註於在工作中做對自己、對公司正確的事，以業績說話，權力紛爭任由他去。當李本嫦創造記錄成為加拿大IBM公司首位華裔副總裁時，她最感到驕傲和欣慰的是女兒的一番話：“媽媽，你的晉陞實至名歸。你既沒有玩辦公室政治，也不是靠踩着別人上位，你完全是憑自己實力走到這一步的。”

在IBM，李本嫦領導着橫跨南北美洲和印度的六千人團隊，控制高達十億美金的預算。但她保持着質樸風格，靠以誠待人和以身作則贏得團隊支持，帶領大家前行。一路從艱辛困苦中走來，她深知對他人一視同仁的重要性，從不以職業劃分人的高低貴賤。

對於“領導力”，本嫦有自己獨特的見解。她說：“領導力是掙來的，不是靠命令得來的。”她認為領導力的獲得是一個長期積累過程，身為領導者需要和各種成員合作，包括和自己相似的以及互補的人；要幫助團隊成員最大限度發揮他們的長處，也要幫他們彌補不足，而這必須要讓團隊感受到公平和受尊重才能實現，所以當一項決策對部分成員不利時，作為領導者就必須體現出強大的同理心，去贏得他們的理解和支持。

她談到當初為了順應全球化趨勢，IBM必須將一部分業務遷到其他國家和地區，這影響到一些員工的職業前景，很多人對這個話題諱莫如深。但本嫦選擇和團隊坦誠溝通。她充分理解受影響人員的擔憂顧慮，承諾盡最大努力幫助他們渡過難

關，同時也曉之以理，告訴他們唯有大家齊心協力支持公司的戰略，才有可能讓公司立於不敗之地，也才能為大家創造更好條件。

## 投身慈善事業

然而命運帶給本嫦的磨難並未就此停止。就在她事業有成，可以和家人享受順遂生活之時，丈夫於2004年因癌症辭世。再次痛失至親對本嫦的打擊巨大，她陷入人生低谷，一度非常消沉。此時，一間名為“黃磚房”的公益組織邀請她加入董事會。這間組織致力於為受虐待的婦女兒童提供居所和各類服務。在這裡，李本嫦發揮她的管理和組織能力，領導了該組織的首次大型慈善募捐晚會並大獲成功。

這場活動令李本嫦與社區的舞者結緣，她開始學習交誼舞，並再次煥發出學習新技能的熱情和毅力，將舞蹈作為一項新的人生目標。在幫助他人的過程中本嫦也重新找到生活的意義。退休后，李本嫦更是全身心投入慈善事業。她奉行“生命不息，奉獻不停”的信條，堅持每周至少做15小時義工。頤康中心和頤康基金會、多倫多病童醫院、康福心理健康基金會等慈善機構的活動中常常都有她的策劃和參與。

李本嫦也樂於地將自己的經驗分享給年輕人。她多次應邀擔任諸如“展望青年領袖培訓計劃”、加拿大中國專業人士協會、工程師之戒授命儀式及約克大學MBA俱樂部等機構舉辦的活動演講嘉賓，向年輕人傳授提升自己實力、拓展職業道路的經驗。

## 舞出璀璨人生

從2013年至2020年李本嫦連續七年在“華麗炫”委員會任職，這是為多倫多病童醫院舉辦的年度標誌性籌款活動。2017年，李本嫦與頤康中心及Dance DNA 舞蹈工作室合作，共同發起“舞蹈無限”課程，為帕金森患者提供支持。後來這個課程擴展到支持所有患慢性疾病的長者。李本嫦不僅身兼項目管理者和舞蹈教師的職責，還領導每年的“銀光月影舞年華”活動為舞蹈課程籌集善款。如今這一活動已步入第六個年頭。

在被問到為何對舞蹈情有獨鍾時，李本嫦說，跳舞不僅可以令身心健康，更有特別的意義。在她看來，人生就像舞蹈，有高低起伏。我們會遇到困難挫折，也會迎來成功時刻。就像舞者將挑戰化為優美舞姿一樣，強者會把困境轉化為磨礪機會，在人生舞台上展現出璀璨光芒。

2008年李本嫦曾接受一家媒體採訪，那篇專門介紹她的文章以“逆風飛揚”為標題。後來李本嫦應邀在青年領導力培訓活動講述自己的經歷，她又加了四個字，以“鏗而不捨，逆風飛揚”作為演講題目。她告訴年輕人：“不要讓人生中的挫折困難把你打倒，當你鏗而不捨、逆風飛揚起來時，你會變得更強大。”



早年的家庭照  
Family Photo in 1972



年輕時的李本嫻  
Young Sue



大學畢業照  
University Graduation



與先夫及女兒的合照  
With late husband and Monica



郵輪上的家庭照  
Family Trip - Disney Cruise



家庭合照  
Tang's Family



於辦公室  
At office



龍宴主席  
Dragon Ball Co-Chair



與表演舞者合照  
Silver Ball with I Can Dance Performer



銀光月影舞年華主席  
Silver Ball Chair



病童醫院籌款演出  
Sick Kids Gala Performance



龍宴演出  
Dragon Ball show



獲女王鑽禧紀念獎  
Receiving Diamond Jubilee Award



超級食物課程  
Superfood Workshop



黃磚屋籌款晚宴主席  
Yellow Brick House Gala Chair



於德國參加舞蹈比賽  
At German Open Championship



## **Sue Tang**

### **A Brilliant Life in Adversity**

*Adversity can bring a person down, or it can inspire one to realize their potential. Sue Tang is a prime example of the latter. She grew up in adversity and has carved out an exciting life for herself, as a plum blossom might bloom after enduring a bitter cold winter.*

#### **Seeking Education**

Growing up in a poor family, Sue started helping out with chores at a young age. She remembers standing on a stool to reach the stove to make dinner for the family every day. Post secondary education was scarce and costly in mid twentieth century Hong Kong. Only the affluent had the opportunity to go to university there. Sue wanted to pursue higher education and learned from friends that in Canada, one could work part time while attending university, so she told her parents about her dream.

However, Sue's father felt that girls didn't need university education and opposed the idea. Luckily her mother supported her, and saved enough money to buy her a one way plane ticket to Canada. She told Sue "Once you get there, you're on your own." Sue remembers seeing the hope and trust in her mother's eyes, and her mother's faith in her gives her the confidence and strength to get through hard times.

Less than 2 years after she came to Canada, Sue's father was diagnosed with cancer. In the days before the internet, Sue kept in touch with her family via cassette tapes. In his last tape to her, Sue's father told her how proud he was of her accomplishments, and happy that she had proven him wrong. Sue still tears up recalling this. It is this love from her parents that has given Sue strength, compassion and empathy.

### **Accidental Software Engineer**

Supporting herself with restaurant and factory work, Sue completed her Economics degree at the University of Waterloo. In her final year, she interviewed with an information technology firm called Datapoint that was recruiting on campus. Sue's degree was a Bachelor of Arts, with mainly finance and business management courses. She went to the interview to see what might happen, and to her surprise she was offered a job.

After she joined the company, Sue asked her manager why he chose her among so many IT graduates. He said technical skills can be developed through on-the-job training but soft skills like interpersonal communication and initiative cannot be easily trained. Since the software engineer position required interaction with clients, he felt Sue was the right candidate.

Sue repaid this trust by giving it her all. Within six months, she learned skills like writing applications, low level machine language

computing programs and network support to become a full-fledged software engineer. As a visible minority and the only woman in the engineering group, Sue faced much pressure. From working on her accent, developing language skills to clearly express herself, as well as earning the trust and respect of her colleagues and clients, she had to work doubly hard in order to build her reputation.

### **Advancing on Merit**

After joining the management ranks, there was office politics to contend with. Sue focused on doing the right thing for herself and for her employer and letting results speak for themselves.

When Sue made history by becoming the first Asian vice president at IBM, she was most pleased and proud of what her daughter told her. “Mom, your promotion is well deserved. You didn’t play office politics and you didn’t step on anyone to get to where you are. You did it from your own strength.”

At IBM, Sue led an international team of 6000 that spanned North and South America and India, with a budget of \$1 billion. She remained down-to-earth and authentic, earning the support and respect of her team through her own hard work and dedication. From her own experience, she fully appreciated the importance of fairness and equality regardless of job title.

Sue has her own take on leadership. She said “leadership is earned, not commanded.” She feels that leadership is earned in a long term,

cumulative process. A leader must work with all team members, including those with either similar or those with complementary qualities like hers. A leader fosters team members' strengths while supporting their developments in a fair, respectful and equitable manner. When a decision is seen as unfavourable to some team members, a leader must show empathy to gain the team's understanding and support.

Sue spoke about the beginning of globalization when IBM had to relocate some departments to other countries, affecting job security of some employees. While some people avoided the topic, Sue chose to be transparent with her team. She understood the concerns of those people affected and pledged to do her utmost to support them through the transition. At the same time, she was frank about the need for the team to support the company's strategy to ensure the company's success, which in turn would benefit all employees.

### **Venturing in Philanthropy**

Life gave Sue a tough blow in 2004. Just as her career was at its pinnacle, her husband lost his battle to cancer. Losing a loved one was a big setback and Sue felt she hit rock bottom. At the time when she was feeling deeply depressed, she was invited to join the Board of Yellow Brick House, a charitable organization that serves battered women and children who need housing and other support services. Sue leveraged her management and organizational skills to lead the organization's first, highly successful fundraising gala.

At this gala, Sue met dancers in the community and began taking ballroom dancing lessons. This reignited Sue's passion to learn new skills, making dance a new life goal for her. In helping others, Sue found new meaning in life. In retirement, Sue devotes her time to charity work. She believes that 'we stop living when we stop giving', spending at least 15 hours a week on volunteer work. Yee Hong Centre, Yee Hong Foundation, Toronto Sick Kids Hospital, Hong Fook Mental Health Association are some of the organizations that have benefitted from Sue's planning efforts and participation.

Sue is happy to share her own experience with young people. She has participated many times in activities with organizations like Youth Vision Leadership Program, Chinese Canadian Professionals Association, P. Eng. Iron Ring Ceremony and York University MBA Club as a speaker or a mentor to help young people starting out in their own careers.

### **Dancing to a Bright Life**

From 2013 to 2020 Sue was part of the committee of "Glitter", a signature fundraising event for Sick Kids Hospital. In 2017, Sue partnered with Yee Hong Centre and DNA Dance Workshop to develop the "I can dance" curriculum for Parkinson's patients. Later the program expanded to include seniors with chronic diseases. Sue manages the program, works as a dance instructor and also leads the annual Silver Ball, a fundraiser for dance programs. This year is the sixth year of the Silver Ball.

When asked why she loves dance, Sue says that dance is not only good for our health, it also has special meanings. She sees life as dance, with ups and downs. In life, we face trials and tribulations, just as the dancer would struggle to perfect a dance move. A strong person would overcome life's challenges to shine on the stage of life.

In 2008, Sue was interviewed for an article titled "Rising Against the Wind". Subsequently, when Sue delivered a speech to mentor young leaders, she added "Never give up" to the title. Her message was "Never give up, don't let challenges in life knock you down. When you persevere and rise against the wind, you'll become even stronger."