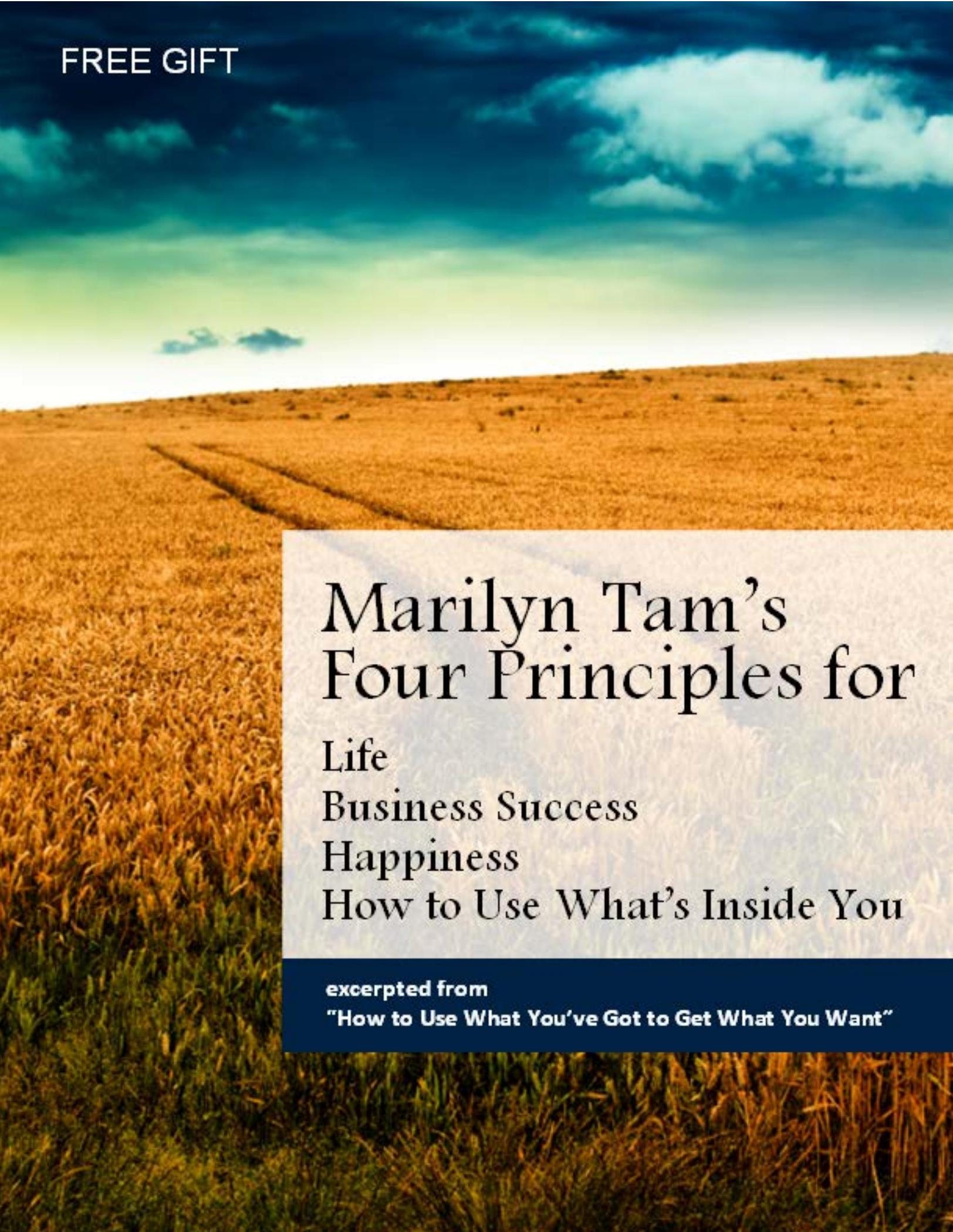


FREE GIFT

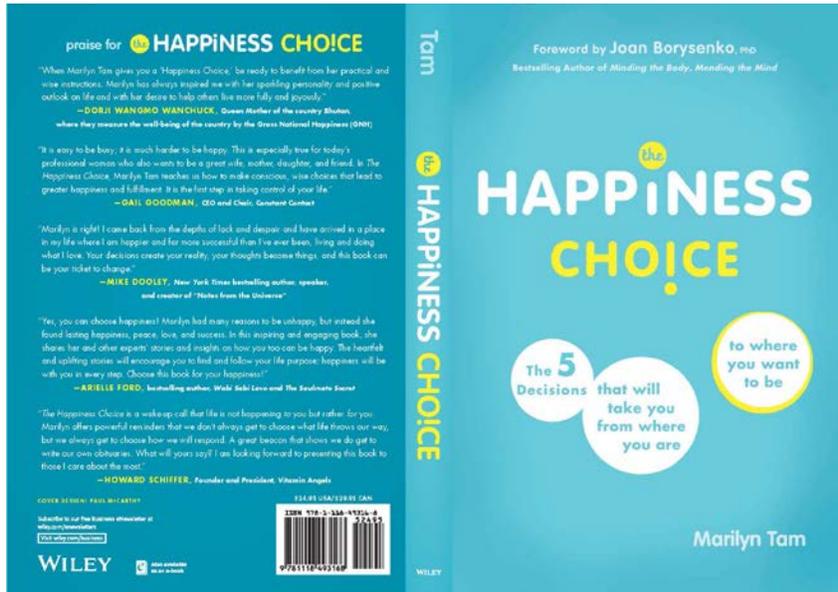
A golden wheat field under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The field is in the foreground, with a path leading into the distance. The sky is a mix of blue and white, with some dark clouds. The overall mood is serene and hopeful.

# Marilyn Tam's Four Principles for Life Business Success Happiness How to Use What's Inside You

excerpted from

**"How to Use What You've Got to Get What You Want"**

## Free Gift



**Don't miss Marilyn Tam's newest book: "The Happiness Choice - the 5 decisions that take you from where you are to where you want to be.**

More info at:  
<http://marilyntam.com/books.html>

As a native from Hong Kong who arrived in America barely speaking English, Marilyn's own

journey provides a fascinating backdrop to these books. This document contains an excerpt from "How to Use What You've Got to get What You Want" with the **Four Principles of life and business success** and how to anchor into the power of following your life purpose.

*The Happiness Choice* is inspirational, engaging and practical; a combination of lyrical storytelling and actionable tools and strategies. The book is filled with stories, tips, and insights on how anyone can live the life they've dreamed of living. It includes personal experiences and advice from experts in the fields of business success, relationships, health and fitness, spiritual and community relations, integrated into relevant chapters to strengthen and broaden the perspective and tools available for readers.

For more information please check out <http://www.marilyntam.com/books.html>

# Preface

In work as in life, I live by four simple principles. These principles keep me on course and facilitate every business and social interaction I have. They free me to be creative and productive. They enable me to see and take advantage of opportunities. They are the first thing I share with my management team in every company I manage and form the basis of our working relationship. When the team follows these practical principles, the flow of communication is smooth; productivity and morale are high.

These four simple principles are the most powerful, readily adoptable tool I've used in my career and in my life. I want to share them with you now.

## 1. Tell the truth all the time.

It's less confusing. You don't have to remember what you said and to whom. And you won't trip over conflicting remarks. This one is very basic and also very hard to do at times. Oftentimes, we say what we think others want to hear to keep them happy. When the truth comes out later, *everyone* is unhappy. More importantly, there is less time to fix whatever you were afraid to say in the first place.

This has been a particularly effective tool for me, since I have a great memory -- but it's very short! Telling the truth all time keeps my mind clear of the clutter and reduces the stress of having to remember the various versions of the "truth."

And the truth eventually comes out anyway! Remember Watergate? Enron? Telling the truth is much less painful and takes less effort. Whatever problem you're trying to avoid will be resolved much sooner if you tell the truth and deal with it immediately. Letting the skeletons multiply in the closet only makes things worse.

The reach of technology today means that sooner or later, whether it is the audiotapes or, deleted computer files, the truth will out. Deal with the issue when it appears and you'll not only sleep better, but you'll learn more quickly and insure that you keep moving up.

## **2. Make me your partner.**

If you don't talk to me, I can't help you. It's that simple. If you don't enlist your colleagues, supervisors, family and friends in your goals, they can't support you in your mission.

In any interaction, there are always two sides: a buyer and a seller. All parties are there because they want the transaction to occur. Find the common ground and engage the others in seeing the mutual benefit. Once all parties have ownership on the outcome, they will be pulling for a positive outcome. From that common ground, you can all work toward the same outcome – if you make them your partner.

## **3. Make big mistakes.**

Small mistakes are the thoughtless things we all do when we're not paying attention. They are a waste of time and resources, and are neither instructive nor constructive.

On the other hand, big, planned, highly organized mistakes are valuable. They usually turn out to be productive in the end. Big mistakes are sometimes the result when you take calculated risks. Making big mistakes is the occasional byproduct of making big strides.

Big mistakes can only occur when you've planned and thought things through. If your carefully laid plan turns out to be a mistake, it may cost you. But it will also give you exactly the information you need to modify your strategy or change your course. You learn, you adjust, and you come back with a stronger, more impactful strategy that works. In the long run, big mistakes are the best feedback we ever get. The most successful people in life are those who make the best use of their mistakes.

## **4. Die by your own sword.**

Fight for your ideas. If you are committed to your idea after diligent work and research, pursue it. Your supervisor may have spent an hour listening to your presentation. And you have spent three months working on it. If you're right and you give in, you'll regret it forever. Whether you do it their way or yours, you'll be held responsible anyway – so what have you got to lose? You'll have more conviction and understanding following through on what you have spent months developing than on the quick detour that your supervisor just threw in. If the project was to fail, wouldn't you rather get in trouble for something you did than for something someone else made you do?

To live by these guidelines requires integrity, courage and collaboration. It's how I run my business and it's how I run my life. It works.

# **Part I**

# **What You've Got**

# Chapter 1: Inside You

The common wisdom is that in order to be a success, you have to have certain advantages: knowing the right people, going to the right schools, belonging to the right clubs, looking the right way -- I am here to tell you that you can use what you've got to get what you want.

My own life has been extraordinarily diverse. I grew up in a traditional Chinese family in Hong Kong as the lowest person on the totem pole: a second daughter who was quickly followed by three sons. My childhood was an all-too familiar litany of abuse and neglect. If the common wisdom were true, I should have been a miserable failure in life, struggling to overcome a low sense of self-esteem and fighting a losing battle to win the affection of parents who are never going to give me the acknowledgement I crave.

And yet I managed to rise through the executive ranks of the international business world and become an influential corporate leader, speaker, consultant, author and philanthropist.

According to the common wisdom, I didn't have the advantages you need to get to the top. Instead of having connections or running with the in-crowd, I grew up in a foreign country where English was my second language. Instead of getting an Ivy League education, I went to a State University. Instead of being one of the guys' in a man's world, I'm a woman.

The lesson is this: If I can use what I've got to get what I want, you can too.

I know this isn't how the psychologists, philosophers and rescue workers think it's supposed to be, but I believe that the struggles of my childhood – all the misery, loneliness and grief – are responsible for my success. When I stood at the edge of my future, looking toward the uncharted terrain of my career, the skills I learned in childhood were all I had.

My life has proven that what I had was enough.

Merely surviving in my family gave me the skills and the inner knowing that guided my career and my success in life. I built on those early traits through trial and error with the help of Spirit and many teachers as I journeyed through life.

What I did was this:

- listen and trust my inner voice,
- envision what I wanted,
- plan and anticipate the challenges,
- learn and practice the skills needed to carry out my vision,
- confidently proceed as the situation develops
- keep trying different ways to achieve my goals until I succeeded.

And what I learned is this: What's inside of each of us is powerful enough to help us achieve anything we want.

## **You're Good Enough Just as You Are.**

You are good enough now. You don't have to wait for anything, anyone or any situation before you can start making a positive change in your life. You don't have wait until you get a new job, lose fifteen pounds, move to a new house, get a new relationship, wait until an existing situation improves or hold out for any other reason. The time and place to begin working toward your goals is here and now.

Believe in yourself and hold onto evidence that you are good enough.

*"Think you can, think you can't; either way, you'll be right."*

*-- Henry Ford*

My family was devastated when I was born. They'd already had a girl and were desperate for a boy. When my younger brother was born soon after me and two more boys followed him, I was made completely superfluous. My brothers inadvertently cemented my position as the unnecessary and bothersome child. As a result, I was alternatively ignored or punished for reasons that were mostly unrelated to anything I did.

It was a situation that had great potential for being a training ground for me to go through life as an insecure victim. If things had been different, I might have fallen into that role without realizing it. But I had a secret weapon: my grandfather, Ah Yeh. The spark of belief he had in me gave me a sense of self worth that kept me going when others were doubting me.

It was Grandfather Ah Yeh who gave me my Chinese name, Hay Lit. Hay and Lit are the names of two of the Emperors in China; one was known for his intellect and wisdom and the other for his prowess in military strategy. It was a most unusual name for a Chinese girl, but it registered with me like a permanent vote of confidence from a man I deeply admired.

I never spent much time with my grandfather. He died when I was about seven. I didn't see him but a few times a year even when he was alive. But the powerful name he gave me made me feel he must really have believed I was strong and thought I was something special.

That little kernel of hope and inspiration held me in good stead when the world around me told me otherwise. That kernel of hope and my own inner knowing always kept me going and gave me hope when I didn't know how I was going to survive the situation at hand.

You can do the same thing by holding onto any time in your life when you felt the approval or support of someone who believed in you. Dive into that feeling of acceptance. Let it sink into your bones. Cherish it as you go forth and deal with the world. You'll find your interactions much more successful when you have confidence and self-worth.

## **Trust in Something Bigger than Yourself**

Throughout time, people have searched for the meaning of life. Countless religions, philosophies, and books are dedicated to answering that perennial question: What is the meaning of life? Do we enter this world from nothing for a certain number of years and then disappear forever? Is this all there is? Is this sixty, seventy, eighty or ninety or so years on planet earth all there is for us? What are we here to do?

I started discovering the meaning of life early in my childhood. I found that there was something more powerful than what met my eye. I found the power and comfort from a deeper source than the everyday reality; I found the power of Spirit.

As a child, I treasured my alone time, spending much time up in the trees where people couldn't get to me. I found a sense of calm and security in the trees which meant much more to me than just physical safety. I felt the presence of a greater power than what I can see with my eyes.

This power which I call Spirit -- and you may call God or the Universal Power -- was very nourishing to me. I sensed that I was taken care of and that there was a greater plan for my life than what I could envision then. I felt that Someone was taking care of the big picture and that if I did the best I could, I could trust that somehow the overall story would turn out good in the end.

This inner knowing gave me great comfort and courage to take steps and risks to forge ahead. This inner knowing of my connection to a greater power sustained me when the outside circumstances seemed hopeless or unbearable.

What Spirit means to you may vary from what it means to me. The key to tapping into that sense of peace and wisdom is to trust that you are part of a bigger picture. You are not just a bobbing cork in a stormy ocean. You have a reason for being on earth and you have a mission and purpose. You are unique and have a gift for the world that only you can share. As Martha Graham said:

*"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost."*

You are here for a reason. You have a unique gift to offer the world. Once you find your special talents and pursue it, whether it is to be the best carpenter, accountant, singer, mother or nuclear physicist that you can be, you will have a sense of inner peace. You will feel that you have found your reason for being. You may have several talents and you have the choice to follow one or a combination of them. What an exciting adventure!

## Follow your Passion

I found my life passion and mission in fifth grade. It was my first upfront experience of the inequalities in life. I found out that the entire family of my schoolmate, Rebecca, lived in one rented room. It was all they could afford. Her family shared a bathroom with another family and the kitchen with two other families. I was shocked by the unfairness of life. My family lived in a comfortable house with a beautiful garden. I shared a large bedroom with my sister. Rebecca's entire family lived in a 150 square foot room. She and her siblings did their home work sitting on small wooden stools, using their bunk bed as the writing table. For them, luxury meant eating three meals a day. I was profoundly shaken by this disparity. She was no different than the rest of us, yet her home situation was so grim. Why should some people have so much wealth and others have to scrape by and survive on such meager terms?

This was no National Geographic magazine article or some far-away news story about nameless faces. This was someone I saw everyday and had shared experiences with. Yet she lived in a world that was so different from mine. I was inspired to make a difference in the world for people like Rebecca and her family. I was going to help other unfortunate people survive and grow from their misfortunes. I intuitively felt that everyone had value and I was going to prove it.

When I first told my family I was going to work in Africa as an anthropologist and help the Africans create a thriving society so that they could live healthier and happier lives, they ridiculed me – "What are you going to do -- go over there and dig up chamber pots?" they laughed. I just bit my tongue and kept pursuing my dream. Although it took longer than I had ever imagined, I did ultimately have a chance to work with the United Nations' Habitat II to create sustainable settlements around the world.

I agree with George Bernard Shaw, who said:

*People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.*

You know what your passions are. Sometimes they are buried deep because you felt you didn't deserve to follow them or because someone you trusted told you that they weren't practical or you weren't good enough. But if you tap into your inner resources and listen to what your heart really calls for you to do, you can find ways of making it happen. You've already got what it takes. What you've got is all you need.

## **Follow Your Passion and be Flexible**

Once you find your passion, follow it. But be alert to the feedback you are getting. Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux system, the phenomenally successful operating system, started Linux as a personal passion to improve on the existing operating systems.

But Linus was not fixated on exactly what the new system was going to be like. In fact, he offered his work free on the internet so that others could add their input and modify what he was creating. What resulted was a system which is constantly evolving and is used by millions of people in the world. Today Linux is still growing and developing and Linus is a legend in the computer world.

In Torvalds' book, *Just For Fun, The Story of An Accidental Revolutionary*, he speaks about how his passion was so consuming that he didn't care about anything else. Food, sleep and social interactions were all secondary. He worked diligently for years and also benefited from others' wisdom and expertise. In the end he succeeded, and in the process he also acquired fame and fortune beyond his wildest dreams.

Torvalds followed his passion but remained flexible and open. It is the best way to fulfill your dreams.

In summary, hold firmly onto these inside insights to get what you want:

1. You're Good Enough Just as You Are.
2. Believe in yourself and hold onto evidence that you are good enough.
3. Trust in Something Bigger than Yourself
4. Follow your Passion
5. Pursue Your Passion and be Flexible

As you can see you don't have to conform to the common wisdom to get what you want. Many successful people have achieved more with less.

For more information about Marilyn Tam and her remarkable life and work, please go to [www.MarilynTam.com](http://www.MarilynTam.com) You will find more valuable free resources and gifts to support your personal, professional and spiritual growth.

Marilyn is an Author, Speaker, Consultant, and Founder and Executive Director of Us Foundation. She was formerly the CEO of Aveda Corp., President of Reebok Apparel and Retail Group; Vice President of Nike Inc. She is also a successful entrepreneur who has developed and built several global companies. [www.MarilynTam.com](http://www.MarilynTam.com)

