

Commit to Your Purpose

Marilyn Tam

You will be happier at work and in life if you are working toward a clearly defined, actionable purpose, said Marilyn Tam, CEO of [her own company](#), at [Leadercast Women](#) 2018.

“Your purpose can help you through really tough times,” said Marilyn, who endured a childhood of neglect, abuse and child labor in China. At age 11, she decided her life purpose was to help others make their lives better and left home to come to America alone.

Marilyn was set on securing a job at the World Health Organization, but when her application was rejected, she was forced to change her course. Even still, she remained determined not to alter her purpose.

“You have to see what you can do in this moment, not wait until the next thing happens,” she explained. **“You have to adjust to the changing environment with your life purpose as the compass.”** Eventually, Marilyn was able to affect positive change in international child labor laws and achieve success as an executive at Aveda Corp, Reebok Apparel and Retail Group, and Nike Inc.

Top Takeaways

- Will you **thrive** or merely **survive**?
- Focus equals creativity **plus** productivity, **not** multitasking.
- What are you holding on to that is **keeping you from being all you can be**?
- What lies have you listened to about **who you should be** and **what you can do**?