

## The ACT Tutor Known Around The World



Dr. Gordon Chiu after an interview done in Hong Kong about his work with dermatology and his several companies

photo courtesy of Gordon Chiu

by: Lleyton Beinhaker

He's been acknowledged as one of the highest recommended SAT tutors throughout Westfield as well as neighboring towns such as Chatham, Edison and Scotch Plains. Dr. Gordon Chiu graduated top of his class from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as a biology and chemistry major. After college, he became an intern for

***'I want everyone to know that there is room for mistakes, everyone makes them, but you can change your story around and become the person you aspire to be. Just work hard and the rest will come.'***

**-Gordon Chiu**

NASA and an important figure for dermatology throughout China before he had even graduated medical school. He even went on to do several TED talks. Yet, surprisingly he was not always the super focused student his parents hoped he would be.

Our interview had taken place over Skype with an occasional squeak from his two young daughters in the back seat. He was on his way into New York City, to take his family to see Frozen on Broadway. With his extremely busy schedule beginning at 5 or 6 AM and not ending till 10 or 11, one would assume Dr. Chiu wouldn't have much time for family events such as this one.

Yet, that couldn't be farther from

the truth. "My hobby is my family. I'm always with them and every activity I do is with them. When I bought my second piece of real estate [a six million dollar purchase], where did I put it? Next to Hershey, so I had an excuse to go [to Hershey park] with my daughters."

Chiu explained how important the role of being a father was to him as growing up. This was mainly due to his own father rarely being around. "I was an American born Chinese raised in the suburbs of New Jersey. My parents were always working, my mother as a pharmacist and my father as an electrical engineer. Therefore, there were never really at home."

When asked how education played a role in fathering his children he said he didn't care what career path they chose as long as they were happy. Growing up in his home though, the pressure was on - education wise.

Chiu's parents put a lot of emphasis on his studies, wanting him to score as high as possible and go to the best college. Yet, Chiu had other plans. "I graduated 28th in my class even though my father wanted me to be number 1. I didn't work hard and kind of partied a lot. I also fooled around more than I should have. I became the laughing stalk of our Chinese church. Let's just say my parents weren't beaming with pride at the time."

Chiu chuckled, explaining that he's been getting in trouble since Kindergarten, needing to eventually be moved to a private school. As for college, Chiu explained, "My sister went to Yale and my brother went to Johns Hopkins. I applied for an all black school [Howard University] so that it would sound like I applied to Harvard to be able to lie to my parents."

Although he didn't work as hard

as his parents had hoped he would in high school, Chiu switched his mentality in college. "I ended up going to RPI, graduating first in my class. I decided to really buckle down and be serious about my studies. That helped me to graduate as a bio-chem major."

After graduating, Chiu went on to do a fellowship with NASA and was paid to attend medical school at Mount Sinai. He was accepted into Harvard but since it was paid for him at Mount Sinai he figured that was the better option. Chiu became the face of dermatology throughout China before even graduating, improving his living situation greatly.

During this time, Chiu also gave many Ted Talks and received his masters degree. Talk about turning your life around!

One common theme seemed to light a fire in Chiu: his biggest influences in life. His grandparents had a huge influence on him. "They always told me I wasn't poor. Compared to the people in Hong Kong, I was lucky and should never think of myself as poor," Chiu said. Chiu's grandparents were the reason he went to Hong Kong in the early years of his career.

His professor from RPI, Larry Reid, was also one of Chiu's biggest supporters throughout college. "He was there for me through everything. Not just school, but all of the hard things as well."

Chiu explained he had a girlfriend who had passed away in the 9/11 attack, explaining that Reid was one of the people who got him through it. After this horrific event in his life, Chiu experienced depression, leading to his decision later on to hold a conference in Chinatown about his journey.

"Professor Larry inspired me to be the tutor and father I am today. He's one of the reasons I maintain such strong relationships with my students." It was true that Chiu had good relations with each of his students, being invited to visit them at college or

high school graduations. One of his students, WHS junior Emma Hanley said, "He was always supportive through the whole process of the ACT/SAT. Dr. Chiu really just wants everyone to succeed in life. I know I, as well as others, can feel that during our sessions together."

Along with his students, Chiu makes it a point to have good relationships with people in the business world as well. Specifically, one of his co-workers, Mitchell Beinhaker, a New Jersey lawyer explained, "Dr. Chiu is a very hard working man. He sees something he wants and goes for it with no hesitation. He also always makes it a point to ask about my family and check in on how everything is. He's just a nice guy to talk to."

Chiu said that his experiences in life really helped him to become the relatable teacher, businessman and father that he is today. "I understand life sometimes gets hard. There is a lot of pressure to succeed and get the highest scores [on everything] nowadays. I also know what it's like to want to fool around and not work as hard as [you] should, so being able to help the students that do work harder than I did is really a great thing to see." With the stress that highschool and life in general brings, it was comforting to here how understanding Dr. Chiu was about everything.

Chiu concluded our Skype with some very touching words that will inspire many: "Even though I made mistakes in life and I reflect on them often, I've chosen to live in the present and the future. I focus on my family and the now instead of draining myself with what could have been. I think that is what has led to the amount of success I've had throughout my life. I want everyone to know that there is room for mistakes, everyone makes them, but you can change your story around and become the person you aspire to be. Just work hard and the rest will come."



Chiu speaking at a TED Talk in January, 2018

photo courtesy of Gordon Chiu