

# The Honorable Elaine Chao: 学会观察并自学

(CAPA JRC 记者 Doris Wang)



[作为一位极为重要并且极具影响力的亚裔美国领导人和前政府高官, The Honorable Elaine Chao 无论在私营业界还是非营利组织或是公共部门均是杰出的人物。她是美国历史上首位进入内阁的亚裔女性。Elaine Chao 曾担任美国第二十四任劳工部长, 其后又担任美国第 18 位交通部长。她的职业生涯包括和平队总监、联邦海事委员会主席和联合之路的首席执行官, 在在展现了她引人注目的先锋开拓者精神。...]

问: 您作为年轻的美国移民有什么经历? 您当时能与同龄人良好地交流吗?

很不容易...不仅是因为我不会说英语, 还因为我非常害羞。我不知道如何表达自己。但随着年龄的增长, 你会学会。这是一个非常看重表达的国家, 学习和表达自己很重要。不要害羞, 说出你想说的话。但是说

之前要想一想, 不要像其他人那样随口说话...要学会表达自己。我其实象其他亚裔美国人一样幸运: 我们背后有一个稳定的家庭环境, 有父母的全力支持。

问: 从曾经的害羞女孩成长为现在的领导者, 您是否需要主动采取行动, 让自己处于不舒适的境地?

我从来没有对每一份工作百分之百确信自己能胜任, 但我总是想去尝试。我总是在挑战自己, 我认为这非常好。这一点来自于我的父亲, 他总是鼓励他的六个女儿探索自己的潜力, 看到家外的更广阔世界, 并始终学习、观察和倾听。

问: 能否举一个让您感觉推动了自己并让您成长的工作例子?

每一份工作都是如此。我去了距离家 450 英里的大学。我们以前每天吃中国菜, 可是我上的这所学校, 没有中国人。我得使

用刀叉——我不知道怎么用刀叉! 那些餐具看起来像医院的手术台, 我也不明白你得从外边开始用。所以, 如果你去西餐厅吃饭, 看到所有的餐具, 请记住的基本原则是: 始终从外边开始往里用。然后你只需要观察别人如何使用刀叉...然后学习。

问: 您曾在政府和商业领域担任过多个高层职务。您在银行和国际金融方面的背景是如何为您的公共服务做准备的?

在公共服务中, 您必须倾听。您必须努力理解许多不同的观点。拥有多样化的背景, 非常有帮助, 不仅限于政府。您所做的一切都会对您有所裨益。关键在于如何将它们有机地结合起来为您服务。每种背景在政府中都是有用的。关键在于如何将这些经验转化为当前政府使命。

问: 您会想给从事公共服务的人什么建议?

能够为国家服务是一种特权。我八岁时来到美国, 我非常感激有机会为我的国家服务。政府不是为了掌声, 也不是为了光鲜。它真的是将自己贡献给国家——这才是正确的态度。

问: 在担任美国交通部长期间, 您采取了哪些关键成就和举措来改善国家基础设施, 这些让您印象深刻?

首先: 我们受到 COVID 的打击, 但我们保持了供应链的开放、运转和安全。杂货货架上没有短缺, 人们能够安全地购买物品。其次, 我还促进了创新。我鼓励未来的交通系统发展, 例如自动驾驶车辆、无人机和商业空间。它们将成为未来的交通系统。

问: 作为政治界的有影响力的人物, 您对于希望在政府和商业界追求职业的妇女和少数族裔有何建议?

我认为重要的是做自己, 追求自己喜欢的事情。如果你热爱你所做的事情, 就不会有恐惧。你只是想做, 因为它很有趣。在我

的职业生涯中, 有很多人很刻薄, 但我没有让他们影响我, 因为我热爱自己的工作。我在学习美国和联邦政府的过程中感到非常兴奋。日常的屈辱并没有真正困扰我。另外, 我知道自己有更大的目标: 为国家服务, 为亚裔美国人社区寻求新的机会。

现在回头看看, 这个想法可能有点过了, 我希望我当时不要那样想...这个目标对一个年轻女性来说太严肃、太沉重了, 当时我认为如果我做得不好, 会伤害其他亚裔美国人的机会。我认为这种感受对一个年轻女性来说太过严重, 背负太大的负担...但当时我就是这样感受的。

所以, 我想说的是: 不要害怕, 去探索, 如果你没有导师也没关系。你可以自学, 这就是我的父母教给我的。他们说自学非常重要, 因为我们刚来这里时, 没人注意我们。没有人听我们的...没有人指导我们。我们还不重要, 没人愿意指导我们。那么我们怎么学习呢? 我们观察别人。我们倾听。如果你观察和倾听的足够多, 你就会明白周围的事物, 学会挖掘事物的模式, 你就是这样自教自学的。

Chao 目前担任多个组织的董事会成员, 包括克罗格、史密斯索尼娅亚太美国中心、LA2028 奥林匹克委员会、肯尼迪表演艺术中心、哈佛商学院院长顾问委员会及全球咨询委员会。她最近在《华盛顿邮报》发表了一篇专栏文章, 主张在华盛顿特区建立国家亚太裔美国人博物馆。

本文由美国华人家长协会少年记者俱乐部(CAPA JRC)会员采访、录音、撰写、翻译和录像提供。CAPA JRC 有 25 名蒙哥马利县初高中学生。他们创建了一个提供新闻和服务社区的双语平台。

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA0gy1W1ZCcgDvDiLayObba>  
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## The Honorable Elaine Chao: Learn to see patterns and teach yourself

By: CAPA JRC reporter Doris Wang

[One of the most consequential and influential Asian American leader and former government official, the Honorable Elaine Chao has been a remarkable figure in private, nonprofit, and public sectors. The first Asian American woman ever appointed to a President's cabinet in history, Secretary Chao served as the 24th U.S. Secretary of Labor, and later as the 18th U. S. Secretary of Transportation. . With an impressive career list, including Director of the Peace Corps, Chair of the Federal Maritime Commission, and CEO of United Way, Chao has a notable pioneer and trailblazer.]

Q: What were your experiences as a young immigrant in America? Were you able to communicate well with your peers?

It was not easy...not only because I couldn't speak English, but because I was very shy. I didn't know how to express myself. So you learn. You grow older, and you learn. This is a country in which it is very important to learn and express yourself. Don't be shy, say what you want to say. [Though you want to] think about it; don't say whatever comes out of your mouth like some other people do...learn to express yourself. I was also very fortunate like most Asian Americans in having a stable family environment, supported by loving parents.

Q: To have become the leader you are now from the shy girl you once were, did you have to proactively take initiative to put yourself in uncomfortable situations?

Every single job I've had, I wasn't 100% sure that I could do the job, but I wanted to try. I always push myself, challenging myself, and I think that's very good. It came from my father, who always encouraged his daughters - six daughters - to explore our own potential, to look at the bigger world outside of our home,

and to always learn, to observe, and to listen.

Q: What's an example of a job that you think pushed you and made you grow more as a person?

Every single one of them. I went to college, 450 miles away. We used to have Chinese food every day, and now I was at this school with no Chinese people. I have to use forks and knives - I don't know how to use forks and knives! It was like a surgery tray when I went in for dinner, and I didn't understand that you have to go from the outside in. So if you ever go to a Western meal and you see all these utensils, keep in mind the guiding principle is: always use the utensils from the outside in. Then you just watch other people, see what knife or folk they use...and learn.

Q: You've held various high-profile positions in government and business. How did your background in banking and international finance prepare you for public service?

Being in public service means you have to listen. You have to try to understand a lot of different points of views. Having a varied background, not just in government, is very useful. Everything you do is going to be useful to you. It's how you thread them together to be useful to you. Every kind of background is helpful in government. It's how you take those experiences and translate them into the government mission at hand.

Q: What advice would you give someone looking to go into public service?

It is a privilege to serve. I came to America when I was eight years old. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to serve my country. Government is not about the applause, it's not about the glamour. It's really about contributing yourself to your country - that's the proper attitude.

Q: During your tenure as the US Secretary of Transportation, what were some key achievements and initiatives you took to improve the country's infrastructure that really stand out to you?

Number one: we were hit with COVID, and we kept the supply chain open, moving, and safe. There were no shortages on grocery shelves, and people were able to buy things safely. Secondly, I also promoted innovation. I encouraged the development of the transportation system of the future, such as autonomous vehicles, drones, and commercial space. They're going to be the transportation system of the future.

Q: As an influential figure in politics, do you have any advice that you want to leave for women and minorities seeking to pursue careers in government and business?

I think it's very important to be yourself and pursue what you love. If you love what you're doing, there's no fear. You just want to do it because it's so interesting. In my career, there were lots of people who were very mean, but I didn't let them affect me, because I loved what I was doing. I was learning about America and the federal government. It was so exciting to be doing, every day, what I was doing. The daily indignities didn't really bother me. Also...I knew I had a bigger goal: serving the country. I was blazing new opportunities for the Asian American community.

On another note, looking back, this is a little bit too much and I wish I didn't think that way - it was too serious a burden to place on myself - but when I was advancing in my career, there were so few Asian Americans that I felt if I didn't do a good job, I would hurt the opportunities of other Asian Americans. I think that was too serious and too heavy a

burden for a young woman to carry...but that's how I felt at the time.

So what I want to say is: Don't be afraid, explore, and if you don't have a mentor, it doesn't matter. You can learn on your own, which is what my parents taught me. They said it was really important to learn on our own because when we first came here, nobody paid us any attention. Nobody listened to us...nobody mentored us. We weren't important enough to be mentored. So how did we learn? We watched other people. We listened. If you watch enough and you listen enough, you learn to pick up things. You learn to see patterns, and that's how you teach yourself.

She currently serves as a member of the board of directors in multiple organizations including Kroger, the Smithsonian Institute Asian Pacific American Center; LA2028 (the Olympics Committee); Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Harvard Business School Board of Dean's Advisors and Global Advisory Committee. She recently wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post advocating for the establishment of a National Asian Pacific American Museum in Washington, D. C.

This article was provided by Chinese American Parents Association Junior Reporter Club (CAPA JRC) with members who interviewed, audio recorded, wrote, translated, and video recorded. CAPA JRC has 25 Montgomery County middle to high school students. They have created a bilingual platform delivering news and serving the community.

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