

# THE POWER GRADIENT

## Inspiring Future Entrepreneurs

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### Key Takeaways

#### Openness Drives Trust

Learning from hiring missteps taught her to build trust through openness and team feedback.

#### Her Philosophy

Bold experimentation and self-forgiveness are central to her entrepreneurial philosophy.

#### Own the Chaos

Yichan sees early business challenges as a cosmic mess- creative, necessary, and full of potential.

#### Curiosity is a Superpower

Her interest in everything from aetiology to the cosmos fuelled unconventional thinking.

#### Start Before You're Ready

She wishes she had started younger but insists it's never too late to begin.

#### Become an Authentic Leader

Her style is rooted in vulnerability, continuous learning, and curiosity.



Connect with Yichan Cai:

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## Meet Yichan Cai

Welcome to this week's edition of The Power Gradient. In this issue, we delve into the story of Yichan, an entrepreneur whose journey is rooted in both family legacy and diverse mentorship. Growing up in a business-oriented family, entrepreneurship always felt like a natural path for her. But what truly helped shape her approach was the guidance she received from a wide range of mentors, including Jack Welch, Jo Malone CBE, Ray Dalio, Adam Grant, Christine Lagarde, and Warren Buffet. Their honesty in sharing success and failure gave Yichan the confidence to lead with authenticity and curiosity. Read on for her advice and lessons on navigating challenges and achieving success in your ventures.

## Pain + Reflection = Progress

One of the biggest lessons in Yichan's journey came through managing people and making mistakes along the way. Hiring the wrong person, she says, is one of the hardest parts of leadership, especially when it affects the rest of the team. But rather than avoiding these missteps, she leaned into them. Inspired by Ray Dalio's idea that pain and reflection are equal to progress, Yichan chose to reflect openly and invite feedback from her team. This not only helped her grow as a leader but also built a culture of shared learning and trust within the company.

## No Fear Only Growth

Yichan's message to those starting their journey pinpoints how "success is the last thing you need to worry about." In her view, the journey matters far more than the destination, and mistakes which are often feared, should be embraced as pivotal learning opportunities. Yichan encourages one to experiment boldly and to forgive quickly. She also highlights the importance of finding role models who can serve as anchors during uncertain times. Whether through personal mentorship or reading the works of established thinkers, having guiding principles can keep your focus sharp and your purpose clear. Most importantly, she urges entrepreneurs not to go at it alone. "Always ask for support when you need it,". "You'll be amazed by how many professionals want to help, just because they believe in paying it forward." Her reminder that it truly does take a village to raise an entrepreneur.



## To All Fellow Dreamers

Looking back, Yichan wishes she had started even earlier, maybe in her early teens so she'd have more time to learn and make mistakes. Regardless, she's a firm believer that it's never too late to start. To those standing at the edge of their entrepreneurial journey, she offers this bold encouragement from Jack Welch: "Go be an entrepreneur! The world is under your bottom." For Yichan, that quote sums up the fearless mindset every entrepreneur needs: the world is full of opportunity you just have to go for it.



## Chaos. Owned.

Her approach to building a business is far from conventional. She sees it as a living experiment, informed not only by her academic background in business and engineering, but also by her curiosity about history, aetiology, and even the cosmos. These diverse interests give her a unique lens through which to view entrepreneurship. She compares the early stages of a business to the chaotic formation of a new system, much like how the universe began: messy, energetic and undefined. This perspective helped her embrace the chaos rather than fear it. To Yichan, failure and confusion aren't signs of trouble, they're signs of life. Like a seed quietly transforming beneath the soil, much of the early growth happens beneath the surface. By giving her ventures space to evolve naturally, while staying attentive to patterns and signals, she learned to navigate unpredictability with curiosity and composure.