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What inspired you to become an engineer?
My dad was my role model. He is a senior engineer, who designed several hydroelectric power stations in China. When I was at primary school, I spent summer holidays with him at hydroelectric power stations and observed the ‘miracle’ of engineering. I remember the blueprint paper my dad used at work, and I was fascinated by his little keyboard-alike computer (with a tiny black and white screen, and an on-board printer). In an engineer’s mind, ‘everything’ is possible.

What is your research area?
My research focuses on using artificial intelligence to help doctors and patients with healthcare monitoring and guide medical intervention. The ultimate goal is to provide early diagnosis, improve clinical outcome, and to assist patients with a better quality of life using state of the art digital health technologies.

Have you faced any gender-related challenges?
Yes, I had difficulties with my line-manager during my pregnancy. After careful consideration, I followed the instructions given by the doctor and rested in bed for two weeks, until the bleeding stopped. Sometimes, we have to be brave to say “no” and prepare for the consequence.

What attributes/skills do you think help you in your role?
One thing I learned in my journey is to be brave enough to ask ‘why’ and propose a solution. Teamwork and networking are also critical skills. Same as almost any job, a resilience to failure and criticism is a nutrient to grow stronger. In this journey, we need to treat every failure as the ‘mother’ of success.

What’s your top tip for girls considering engineering?
Engineering is where curiosity meets practice.
The magical word “AND” should be used when you consider your career. For example, you can be an engineer and entrepreneur.

What is the best thing about your job?
I love my job. It is challenging (no challenge, no improvement), fast-paced (polish time-management skills), and impactful (feel like superwomen, occasionally).

Why should young women choose engineering as a career?
Most importantly, follow your heart! If you love to create or build things (furniture, clothes, buildings, power station, etc.), or to explore the unknown (time, space and rules) in the universe, or to have the power to make a change using your intercultural ability and women-power, then engineering is an exciting choice.

What is an average day on the job like?
In the morning, I will firstly spend an hour to review my meeting schedule and task list, as well as reply to urgent emails. I will then concentrate on writing programming code or writing a research paper or proposal before lunch.

Most of the time, a group of colleagues at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering will take lunch together to share news, thoughts, and challenges. This is the most mindfulness and inspirational time of the day; the diversity of minds are beautiful.

In the early afternoon, I will spend another hour or two on non-urgent tasks or emails before a short tea break. I will visit the cafe to buy a cup of coffee (occasionally with a slice of cake), and carry on with coding, reading or writing research papers until the end of the day.

How did you start your career in engineering?
After finishing my undergraduate in computer science, I chose to carry on my PhD study in signal processing in the Engineering Science Department.

When I graduated, I received a research associate position and then started my career as a biomedical engineer. I believe the STEM knowledge provides me with wings to fly and can help to make my dream to come true.

What has been your proudest moment or highest achievement?
I was very proud to present my research work at the House of Commons.

Equally, I was very proud to receive my Fellowship status at the Higher Education Academy – I love teaching.

But I believe the best is yet to come.

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