

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/choose-to-see-beauty>

Jane Marie Chen, co-founder and CEO of Embrace Innovations, points out the freedom we have to focus either on the negative or the positive, and how choosing the latter can carry you through tough times. Immersed in grinding poverty as she sought to supply India and other developing nations with low-cost infant warmers, Chen says her inspiration came from seeing mothers with very little do whatever it takes to save their babies.



Transcript

- Choose to see the world through the lens of beauty because we get to choose the perspective by which we see the world.. After living in India for a few years, I could see myself becoming jaded and really pessimistic.. I was dealing with some of the most vulnerable populations in the world and saw so many sad things.. I was working in a very corrupt and broken system.. And then at some point I caught myself and I realized that for every horrible thing that I saw, I saw something equally as beautiful.. All of the wonderful people who would come together to help us in this cause, all of the noble doctors I met who stayed up all night in these villages to see patients.. The most beautiful thing I got to see in my work was the love a parent has for their child.. It's the purest and most selfless form of love in the world.. And I realized that a mother, no matter how poor or uneducated or impoverished, will do anything to save her child.. And that's the beauty I got to see every day in my work..

So I encourage you to see the world through the lens of beauty because that will give you the optimism to keep changing the world.. And I wanted to leave you with one last thought.. So this is the Milan Cathedral.. The great cathedrals of Europe were built over centuries.. This one, the construction began in 1385, it wasn't finished until 1965.. What I meant is often times the people who spent their whole lives working on these cathedrals never live to see the fruits of their labor, nor did their children, nor did their grandchildren.. So why did they dedicate themselves so tirelessly to building these monuments? I believe it's because they believed in a cause that was far greater than themselves.. So I ask each of you to think about, what is the cathedral that you wanna build? And what is the legacy that you wanna leave? My cathedral is a place where no baby dies from being cold, it's a place where every parent is empowered to save their child, and it's a place where the brightest minds come together to change the world for the better, one baby step at a time...