

WERULE

AAPI Heritage Month Spotlight: How Dr. Kimberly Lee is Redefining Success Through Culture and Care

May 30, 2025



AAPI Heritage Month is a celebration of identity, resilience, and representation — all of which are central to the story of this Korean American surgeon and entrepreneur.

For her, building a private practice wasn't just a career move — it was a tribute to the grit and values passed down through generations. Growing up in a hardworking immigrant household, she witnessed the quiet strength of her family's perseverance, and those lessons now shape everything from how she leads her team to how she shows up for her community.

In this conversation, she reflects on the cultural roots that influence her approach to business, the power of representation through figures like Sandra Oh, and why the next generation of AAPI entrepreneurs should never underestimate the value of their own story.

What inspired you to start your business, and how did your cultural background influence that decision?

As a Korean American surgeon and entrepreneur, my journey into private practice was deeply shaped by both the challenges and strengths of my cultural heritage. I grew up watching my family work incredibly hard — whether it was running a small business, cooking traditional meals, or navigating new opportunities in a new country. That spirit of perseverance and self-reliance stayed with me.

Starting my practice wasn't just about providing a service; it was about honoring the sacrifices my family made and bringing forward the values they instilled in me — respect, humility, and community. My cultural background gave me a unique perspective that's reflected in everything I do, from how I lead my team to how I connect with customers.

During AAPI Heritage Month, I'm reminded that representation matters — not just in stories and screens, but in leadership, innovation, and ownership. I'm proud to be part of a generation of Korean-American entrepreneurs who are turning heritage into impact.

Can you share a specific AAPI leader that inspires you and why? It could be an author, writer, musician, friend, family member, co worker, celebrity, etc.

A deeply inspiring Korean American figure is Sandra Oh—not only for her exceptional talent as an actress, but also the way she's navigated her career with integrity, purpose, and advocacy for representation.

Sandra Oh broke barriers in an industry that long marginalized Asian actors. From her early work in *Arliss* to her groundbreaking roles in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Killing Eve*, she consistently chose complex, nuanced characters that defied stereotypes. She wasn't just looking for roles—she was looking for roles that mattered, that reflected real people and stories often overlooked in mainstream media.

Sandra Oh's journey is powerful because it reminds Korean American entrepreneurs and creatives alike: you don't have to compromise who you are to succeed. In fact, embracing your identity and pushing for change can be a source of strength—and a catalyst for something much bigger than yourself.

What message would you give to the next generation of AAPI entrepreneurs?

Your journey carries a powerful legacy and an even greater potential. As you build your journey, remember that your voice, perspective, and culture are vital assets—not just to your community

but to the broader world of innovation and leadership. Your heritage holds lessons in resilience, creativity, and adaptability—traits every great entrepreneur needs. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. Break molds, create new ones, and build spaces where others can thrive. Seek mentorship, uplift each other, and push for visibility-- in business, boardrooms, investment firms, and leadership roles. Most importantly, know that success isn't just about profit—it's about impact. Use your platform to open doors for others, and never underestimate the power of your story.

<https://we-rule.com/blog/linda-du-how-an-adventurer-investor-and-entrepreneur-is-shaping-the-future-of-fintech-and-impact-investing-nw4ks-6tf4g-2g464-6axra>