

Paul T. P. Wong: My Long-Distance Science Mentor

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It has been about over a year since I have met Dr. Paul Wong. I had started a Publons course about peer review, and they appointed Paul as my supervisor. At first, I was flabbergasted that such an eminent professor would support scientists in the making in developing their peer review skills. Later, I became excited because Paul was very nice, and he taught me a lot about peer review. I could not have wished for a better supervisor, ever.

Paul encouraged me to write an article to enter in the scholarship of the 10th Biennial International Meaning Conference in Vancouver, Canada in 2018. He knew that I was interested in gratitude and that my thesis was about this topic. I did not think I would be good enough to enter such an international scholarship, but Paul persuaded me to start writing. So, I did write an article about second wave positive psychology and gratitude, and I received an honorable mention!

So, I had to go to Vancouver, of course. In August 2018, I went all the way, on my own, from the Netherlands to the west coast of Canada where I met Paul in person for the very first time. He showed to be as warm a person as he appeared through email, and he welcomed me enthusiastically as his friend from the Netherlands. I kept Paul in my heart forever, like all the people who were there that summer.

At the conference, we celebrated Paul's 80th birthday. So many people said so many kind words. I was moved by all of them and sang "Happy Birthday" along with Tim Lomas playing the guitar. Also, the lovely words of the sons of Paul and his wife Lilian—of course!—were wonderful. It was touching to see the warmth of this wonderful family.

Also, Paul and I started working together, and we developed an existential gratitude questionnaire. I like working with Paul very much. He trusts my expertise and gives me freedom to do things my way. He makes suggestions, gives direction, and adds enhancements during the study. We are now in the process of collecting data, but the preliminary data suggests that it will be a very good questionnaire. I am already proud of our work!

My laudation is not that long yet because of the short time I have known Paul. However, I consider Paul as a mentor and a friend, and I am very grateful that I have met him in the first place. His erudition is a great source to draw from, and it would be great if Paul and I could continue our cooperation and friendship for years to come. I wish Paul and his family much warmth, love, and gratitude.