

The Sperm Bank of California

2115 Milvia Street
2nd Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704

phone 510-841-1858
fax 510-841-0332
e-mail: info@thespermbankofca.org
website: www.thespermbankofca.org

Donor # 4132 Interview Notes

I have to admit that I expected Donor 4132 to be in the mold of a stereotypical math dork. As a chemical engineer who went straight to graduate school after graduating from his undergraduate program (and who has already worked in his field), I expected him to be determined and extremely intelligent- but socially awkward. Donor 4132 immediately challenged that assumption. On first meeting me, he appeared at ease and engaged. He was quick to make eye-contact and seemed very comfortable speaking with me about subjects ranging from his family life to the minutia of the work he does in his field. (He even noticed that my earrings matched my shirt!)

Donor 4132 is undoubtedly smart and he appears secure in that without coming across as arrogant. He described himself as much more outgoing than his parents. His brother is similarly outgoing and we discussed the potential of this being a generational difference. His parents emigrated from Thailand before he was born and although their family is close. His parents have been happily married for many years and they are very supportive of his brother and himself, they have always given their children space to be independent and explore the world for themselves. Donor 4132 expressed his gratitude for this freedom, as he feels it has helped him be successful. He is also close with his brother, who is one year younger. Although when they were both kids they had a strong sibling rivalry, they have since learned to appreciate each other and now both work in Engineering.

Donor 4132 is funny, joking that all the biking he does (he bikes to school everyday and uses his bicycle as his main mode of transportation) has given him killer legs. He also used humor to explain his work to me. He explained that an application of Chemical Engineering was the candy blown up to giant size, a la *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. Although this was funny, it was also a great way to explain the components and commercial applications of his work in a way that was accessible to me as a layman. His brain seems to be always moving, thinking up new inventions even while he is kept busy by school. I found him engaging and very easy to be around.

Interviewer: Alex Holding

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