



International Women's Day 2022
#BreakTheBias

The Conversation

with Ung Yiu Lin

Board of Director
Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau

International Women's Day (IWD) is an annual event to celebrate women's achievements and spread the message of female empowerment and gender equality across the world. It has been recognised for over a century and continues to grow every year.

IWD 2022 is time for all of us to reflect and celebrate the strides made in women's empowerment globally. Together, we can take it further and make progress in supporting women's rights socially, economically, culturally, and politically.

In celebration of International Women's Day 2022, we spoke to Ung Yiu Lin, the Board of Directors of Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB).

Appointed as MyCEB's Board of Director in 2020, Ung Yiu Lin is a mother of three and play her role as a prominent fashion entrepreneur in Malaysia.

She possesses more than a decade's worth of experience in the fashion industry, as the founder and designer of footwear and accessories brands, ShoesShoesShoes and KLutched, which are both recognised in regional and international retail presence. Ung's flair for entrepreneurship came to the fore at a young age. Her acquired skills accessing strategies and business from a top-down perspective exposed her to dealing with top management in multinational companies.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Best Emerging Brand Award
KL Fashion Week (KLFW) 2011
- Women on The Rise Award 2013
Malaysia Tatler
- Malaysia Tatler 300 List (2016 – 2019)
- Malaysia's 300 list for most influential business leaders, entrepreneurs, royals and philanthropists
- 40 Asian Women Making Waves in the Fashion World
Thailand Tatler

As a businesswoman and a mother of three, what does International Women's Day-themed "Break the Bias" mean to you?

It resonates with me as we need to prioritise gender equality, and I think we have been harping about this for years now. This needs to be taken seriously because a woman's place and role in society is not just at home. Not just in general life, but also in businesses, in corporations, and in governments.

We have really risen over the years, and we have to continue because we have a lot that we bring to the table. We are very different from men. I think that is why balance and harmony are very important. We bring a certain EQ to the table, and we look at things very differently. I think men and women are created very differently and that is why we need two different perspectives on the table, in society in general.

As a mother of three and two young girls, it is very important to raise the importance of gender equality even at home. Everything starts at home and the role models that parents play in shaping children's future and the outlook of young little girls, in forming their dreams, their characters, and their resilience. I feel that we need to start now where this will hopefully pave ways for a future that is going to be a lot brighter for women out there.

The importance of education and constantly being on the path of improving ourselves through learning and enrichment. You know when people think of education they think of universities or going to college. Besides that, there are lots of other ways for us to enrich ourselves through short courses, and there are so many courses available nowadays thanks to the internet. So, I think for us to be consciously aware that there are many ways for us to improve ourselves and help us out in whatever situation we are in.



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In order to have more substance, key messages, facts in our daily professional convention at work, what would be your advice for people out there and especially to the younger generation?

What would be my advice for the young people out there, especially to the younger generations does not only go towards girls but also to boys. I think we both genders play a big part, and where boys are being groomed into men that are aware of how they need to treat women in society and even in the workplace. They will be the future champions for eliminating gender bias. My advice for all young women out there to be fiercely chasing their dreams and knowing that there is no ceiling that can hold them down.

I think when I was younger, and I come from a generation where it was very typical where we as girls should follow what has been laid for us. You do what your parents tell you to do. My parents were grooming me to be a chartered accountant, which is a very safe professional path that most Asian parents laid out for their kids. Also, for young women starting off my career path, it was kind of set-in stone. The idea of even breaking away and doing something different, which from my shoes was leaving my very prestigious job at Boston Consulting. I was a management consultant there and leaving that very

great job where I was doing important things and at the same time, my peers were Ivy League graduates. I was interacting with people from around the world that were from many various industries. But I decided to leave that job to pursue my own business at the tender age of 26 without having much support from home and also my peers

Also, it was unheard of for a 26-year-old girl to believe that, to face all the uncertainties, and to plunge into entrepreneurship. Most of the time, 99% fails right? I had a lot of resistance but thankfully as a young girl, I had my mother, who is a very strong role model that supports me. I was very lucky for that, and she shaped me into being a very fierce independent thinker and to really go for what I wanted.

Even when I had to face a lot of resistance and I was basically swimming against the currents, but I did not do that blindly. I was also armed with an education and with the years of developing my thought process and making sure that I have actually assessed the business properly, thoroughly. Knowing that I have laid all the paths out, I have assessed the business model and it was time to take the plunge. However, I will not take the plunge without knowing its risk. So, it was very well calculated, and doing that at 26, I guess you needed a set of balls as men would say it.

So, I just want to say to the young people out there, for the younger generations. Chase your dreams but do not be naive about it. It comes with a lot of hard work, blood, sweat, and tears, and you should rise up to that occasion. Even when you are facing challenges, when you are in self-doubt which is very common nowadays because we have so much external noise around us right? Social media and whatnot, and people with a lot of opinions. You need to fiercely believe in what you are doing and chase it. So do not believe that there is a ceiling out there above you. You should see that your opportunities are limitless. As long as you have the right attitude, and that ambitions, drive and tenacity.

One important thing for the younger generation is that, please surround yourself with people who lift you up and enrich you not in a material sense. In a sense that you are growing to be a stronger person, a smarter person, a compassionate person, and empathic person. So, it is more like you need that right role model. Whether they are people in the business world, in the government, or in society that you don't know personally or even people that are around you. Whether it is an uncle or a parent, or just a friend. That person could be your mentor to be a better person in all senses. It is always important to remember that you need to surround yourself with people that lift u up and pick the role models that makes you want to be a better person.



Can you share with us how do you keep the work-life balance between family and professional career?

Keeping the work-life balance between family and professional careers is never easy. It is not science, but it is much more of an art. That balance literally changes and shifts throughout the day, throughout the weeks, and throughout the years. It is something that I have always consciously put at the back of my mind because it is never going to be that perfect balance that you picture in your head. It is something that you must come to be at peace with. So, for me I think that it is very important to lay down your short term and long-term goals. Whether it is in a couple of months or in 5 or 10 years' time, you work towards those goals because nothing ever comes immediately. It is the foundation that you need to lay, and you work towards it. So sometimes in the short term, there are times when you do not have a lot of time at home and you're focusing on something you're chasing at work, meeting a KPI, meeting a goal and that is what you need to focus on in that moment. That is what you do, but then there are always ways to catch up with the family. Whether it be after 3 months or 9 months of working, you take a good holiday with your family and you spend quality time with your family. Doing something new, living your life, building new memories and experiences together. Or in within a day where you just spend 5 gem moments which is our genuine emotional moments with your children and that is what really matters. Not the hours, but literally the moments, and the moments could also be short moments. But these are the moments that the kids will remember you being present and being present is very important.



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How do we use and utilise social media as a platform to spread women's empowerment and equality?

Social media is definitely a very powerful tool, but it also needs to be used in the right way. We can very much easily get consumed by social media and all the negatives around it, but we need to use social media as a platform to spread all the right messages. So being a responsible users on social media is very important by imparting the right messages, and being a bit more conscious about what you portrays. So, for me with my social media, I'm definitely very careful and I'm constantly reminding myself to keep it very real. You know not to paint a perfect picture that everything is easy, work is easy, life is easy. It is not, right? There are so many ups and downs, and being an entrepreneur is never a walk in a park. You know you are always on your toes; you are always trying to keep ahead of the curve. At the same time, you got so many people you got to take care of. At the same time, you want to make sure that you are also inspiring people and to inspire people to be a better version of themselves.

It is very important to keep it real. Painting the tough times, painting the good times, and sending the right messages that things do not come easily, and they do not just fall on your lap. So, you need to get rid of that sense of entitlement. Good things come to people who work hard, and good things come to good people with the right intentions and meaning. I think for us as women in the older generation, we can push key messages about empowerment and equality and how it is actually so important, not only to the consciousness of us women out there but also to men in general. I think that is vital for men to be the champion for women, and to empower women as much as possible. To constantly ensure they are creating an equal workspace or even in society. I personally think that it is key to create an environment that is equal, and does not tolerate such biases between gender and a place where you can lift a woman up and let her shine.



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today by sharing your love to the
women around you.*

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