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POESY LIANG, 32, DESIGNER

Poesy Liang's first job ever was at the age of 14 when she did the Levi's 501 television commercial. When she grew older, Poesy had a different vision of what she wanted to be. Today, she has made a name for herself as an inventive designer. "I studied architecture because I love design. My early years of exposure in the television industry also led me to many exciting odd jobs. When it was time to quit that scene, I went to do my MBA and then later attempted a law degree. I finally started my design practise in 2003. It brought me to great many things and now I occupy my time designing for interior design projects, a jewellery collection and some random products. On the side, I am still studying and will always continue to learn from every opportunity I can get," she says.

At the moment, she is designing buildings, spaces, homes, offices, shops, restaurants, carpets, fabric, furniture, helmets, rings, pendants, cufflinks and champagne flutes. "Basically, I design and reinvent. I was trying to find a job that would combine my artistic, creative and corporate skills. It was illogical for me to do a no-salaried low security job, with all the philanthropic plans I had brewing under my sleeves. My MBA economics lecturer told me to create that job for myself," says Poesy. Although she was clueless about her career direction, she threw herself into the deep-end and took up reading law. But soon, her enthusiasm dwindled into a lack of interest for the subject. But before she quit, she asked a friend for a placement attachment student in his law firm.

"The whole idea was so I could find out if dropping out was the best thing to do," she smiles. Halfway through the job, Poesy and a few of her friends started to discuss very seriously about setting up an ID business because amongst the four of them, they had the right combination of resources and knowledge. The stars were shining on her as she immediately got a project to work on. It was one of the partners of the firm who gave her a kitchen to design. "That was how it kind of snowballed. Funny thing was, my original group of partners bailed out soon after that and I was left to do it all on my own, so I worked doubly hard to salvage the situation. Strange how life backs you into a corner and opens up new avenues you could not see at first. I have learnt a lot and will continue to learn," she says.

As for whether she thinks she's made it in life, Poesy believes she has only reached half of her life. "Everything is relative. To some people I might have done lots and I do not dispute that. But I do not think I am anywhere close to my real potentials. Poesy has met many inspiring people along the way. "I learnt to adopt their best attitudes and also their biggest mistakes when they were willing to share them with me. And of course, my own mistakes are also my best teachers! However, I never really noticed setbacks. If being small and penniless is a setback, then I had many. In every successful endeavour, nothing will ever come easy. One other setback which I totally did not enjoy was having to do everything on my own, by myself. It can be tiring being independent. Fear is another great setback too. Fear of expansion, fear of overheads, fear of having mouths to feed. All these cramp my style and creativity. So, I learnt to ignore them. Surprisingly, with all that, success has slowly but surely crept my way," she says. *

TOP THREE TIPS

- * Be humble.
- * Be patient.
- * Do not let your ego take over.