

The stereotype of the sheltered Asian is something of a running cliché – they work behind boring desk jobs and travel in group tours to familiar destinations – but it is a truism that has historical basis. In the latter half of the 20th century, post-war, post-colonial Asia had to catch up with the West and began industrialising herself at breakneck speed. In many ways, the Asian Miracle was made possible by a generation of Asians who pursued economic growth to settle their deep-seated anxiety over financial security. But now that the region is arguably developed, challenging even the economic supremacy of the West, many Asians are turning to filling a gap they feel inside themselves when it comes to their personal development.

The American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, theorised that people are subjected to a hierarchy of needs. Once physiological needs have been met, people ensure their safety needs – personal and financial security – through stable and predictable means. At the top of the hierarchy, following social and esteem needs, Maslow believes people are driven towards self-actualisation, the need to realise their own potential and possibilities. Individuals who are at this stage of motivation are characterised by an adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit. We speak to five Malaysians, who made radical decisions – whether forgoing corporate careers for fulfilling jobs, or taking the road less travelled in search of new experiences – and discover how taking a gamble led to more rewarding lives.

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CINDY LIM: A CHANCE ON FASHION



Cindy Lim's father once told her, "How else can you get better living and satisfaction in life, other than working for your own passion". So it became her childhood ambition to have a business of her own. She would not realise that dream until much later after living the life of an employee, albeit as a successful one in both the corporate and consumer banking sectors. While she gained much experience, her biggest obstacle to entrepreneurship was apprehension. "It took a lot of courage to take the first step into this very own business of mine," she admits, but step she did.

Last year, Cindy started an online ladies wear boutique called THREESIXTY[®], and due to positive response and demand for an outlet, she opened a THREESIXTY[®] flagship store in Jaya One. She says, "What makes THREESIXTY[®] different is we not only sell our products at a value-for-money price, but we also offer customers a fashion consultation service, and we never say 'no', trying our very best to satisfy customer requests within our

limits." But with the pride of being an entrepreneur comes a lot of hard work. She is always coming up with ways to build her THREESIXTY[®] brand and awareness of it like holding fashion shows.

And the work means Cindy faces a level of stress and worry that was minimal when she was working for someone else. "And even if you succeed, you still worry and stress about how to sustain it at that level and achieve a higher level," she relates. But every time a customer returns satisfied with her clothes and recommends THREESIXTY[®] to their friends, she is reassured that she took the right path. People, she believes, should "first, determine their objective in life, and second, where their passion is. You need a lot of courage, self-determination, pushing yourself to do better every day, and never give up when times are tough." ■

For more about THREESIXTY[®], log on to www.360degree.com.my



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