

you never know what they may
be going through.

Mabel Kwong
Writer

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Mabel Kwong is a young twenty-something year old writer from Melbourne. She blogs at MabelKwong.com on all things diversity and culture. Apart from writing, she has volunteered in community radio (SYN 90.7FM, Radio Programming Manager 2012) and loved every single moment of it.

I always ask myself what it means to be an Asian person living in Australia. When I decided to blog, it was natural for me, an Asian Australian of Chinese descent, to write about what matters to me: multiculturalism, Diasporas and diversity.

I put up my first blog post in October 2012. To date, my blog has close to 200,000 page views and over 2,500 comments.

The Highs and Lows of Blogging

When I started blogging, I blogged mainly about stereotypes and racism and actually ran out of things to say on these topics a few months later. Thinking outside the box, I began looking at everyday life from cultural angles, putting together blog posts such as How I'm Inspired To Call Myself Asian Australian, Why Some of Us Wear Shoes At Home and What Is Happiness? Blogging creatively on a range of topics, I feel I've become stronger as a writer.

Connecting with fellow bloggers has been fun. It's exciting reading blog comments from bloggers interstate and around the world, learning from agreeing and disagreeing views I've never thought of within cultural conversations.

On the other hand, sometimes you get trolled by bloggers and comments can get quite nasty. I was trolled on my post Understanding The Asian-Girl-White-Guy Relationship and it wasn't pleasant. There was a point where almost every day readers commented on this post that I held racist feelings towards Asians, based on what I had written on this sensitive topic. Everyone has a right to an opinion, but sometimes words hurt and can dissuade you. But I wasn't discouraged because I pride my blog on being a space for respectful discussion on diversity, and I blog because I want to broaden others' perspectives and open conversations about what we see every day. So I removed those hurtful comments.

Why I Blog

There are several reasons why I blog and chose blogging as a platform to share my thoughts on ethnicities and culture. Firstly, I love writing. That motivates me to blog each week.

Secondly, blogging gives me full creative control over what I publish. There's no editor telling me to write about this or that; I pick my own topics and photos for my blog. I feel I'm able to freely express myself as a multicultural writer here.

Why I Chose To Be A Multicultural Blogger

With blogging comes the flexibility to publish anytime I want. Pitching articles on cultural diversity to both mainstream and niche local magazines and online publications, time and time again I get the demoralising response, 'That's not what we're looking for'. In a predominantly Anglo Australia, most certainly me and other young ethnic Australians have something interesting to say on any topic given our heritage.

It's never easy being part of a minority group in Australia. We tend to be under-represented in the media. Also, we usually face racism or get teased for how we look. This is another reason why I blog, and mostly about diversity. All of us may have our cultural differences, but we are very similar in that we always try to make a positive contribution to our communities. We deserve a voice.

Blogging Advice For Young Writers

For budding writers, blogging is one way to share your craft with the world. Blogging regularly, say once a week, usually sends out the message you're dedicated to writing and it gives readers reason to come back and read what you write.

There's every chance you'll meet new 'blogger-friends' when you check out and comment on other blogs. When you do, there's every chance they'll check out your blog too.

No two people of the same race have the same stories to tell. So don't be afraid of sharing personal stories through blogging because they'll be one of a kind. Be honest with what you blog about too (minding defamation laws). There's always so much contagious energy and enthusiasm within young voices.

Blogging and Beyond

When you blog, you share. You share what you're feeling, what you're thinking or what you're passionate about. For me, I never set out to 'build up a profile' through my blog and blogging isn't a competition. It isn't about gaining views but inspiring others to be comfortable with their heritage and in their own skin.

Last year, a teacher at Kurunjang Secondary College in Melbourne's west read my blog and asked me to talk to her Year 12 class about my experiences growing up Asian in Australia. Flattered, I did and talked about how I grew up feeling too Asian to be Australian and too Australian to be Asian.

When I finished, the multicultural class of students – Anglo, Indian and Vietnamese backgrounds to name a few – kept asking me questions about how I came to accept that I'm 'different' and confidently write about racism today. I guess I've achieved what I wanted with my blog.

Blogging isn't only about sharing, but it's a journey too. Blogging can take you and those around you places - and you never know where we'll go.

Mabel Kwong