

DECEMBER 2021 / ISSUE 01 /

# *With Courage*



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE COMMUNITY OF  
**WOMEN OF COURAGE ASIA, CLASS LIVING AND HER COURAGE BIZ NETWORK**

# Hello there,

Courage – a word the dictionary defines as ‘a quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear i.e. bravery’.



This very first issue of With Courage was created with difficulty, pain, and with fear of the unknown, criticisms, all with a healthy dose of doubts; far from being brave. Truth be told; writing this preface was an afterthought. If not for a prompt from the talented Karen Boey, who designed the look and feel of this publication, it would have missed the BIG reason and purpose why this e-zine is being launched.

It all started with a vision from Lilian Ong, she established **Class Living**, then an interior design company. Following a call to empower women, she started **Connecting Mothers**; a Facebook community, a support group for mothers to share and navigate the trials and tribulations of motherhood.

As things developed, Lilian then founded **Women Of Courage Asia**, a self-funded, nonprofit community, with co-founder, Brenda Lim. Together with community leaders; Anita Kaur, Hellen Lie, Jacqueline Low, Karen Boey, Lisa Chong, Nicole Tay, Teresa Chong, Wendy Teo and me to run monthly empowerment meetings to support women who are going through a tough time, for women who are looking to be inspired, to seek courage and confidence to take charge of their lives. Women Of Courage Asia has been going on strong the past 2 years. Come March 2022, we will be celebrating our third anniversary.

Consecutively, Anita Kaur joined Class Living as managing partner. With her at the helm in operations along with Lilian, the company now coaches, trains and facilitates personal development programs.

Recognising a need and gap in the market for female entrepreneurs, **HER Courage Biz Network** was formed to connect, nurture and develop opportunities for lady bosses who operate their businesses with Honour, Empathy and Responsibility. The core team members are Anita Kaur, Brenda Lim, Karen Boey, Lilian Ong and me. Joining us as mentors and founding member Gloria Soo, a multi-million dollar business creator. Onboard as a partner is SEED Ventures, venture capitalist that invests in start-ups as well as mentorship to grow or save their business.

This e-zine is a juxtaposition of the various support groups - Connecting Mothers, Women Of Courage Asia, HER Courage Biz Network that forms the ecosystem under the Class Living umbrella. It's actualized, as much as a natural progression towards the work that we do; a purposeful place where your views can be shared, your ideas bounced and your voices heard.

A publication to bring to you, fellow women, mothers and lady bosses; additional resources, information, stories and showcases so you can cruise your way through womanhood with beauty, confidence, dignity, grace, style and With Courage.



Love,  
*Carol Gockel*

Confidence Coach, Founder of The Wandel Group  
Community Team Leader, Women of Courage Asia

# Mental Health AWARENESS MONTH

October is Depression and Mental Health Awareness month. This is a topic close to our hearts because at some point in our lives we experience mental and emotional wellness challenges.

To commemorate the significant month, we started with a Forest Walk campaign and ended with a City Night Walk challenge. More details on the next few pages.



## WOMEN OF COURAGE ASIA, DEC 2021 MONTHLY EMPOWERMENT MEETING RECAP

BY CAROL GOCKEL

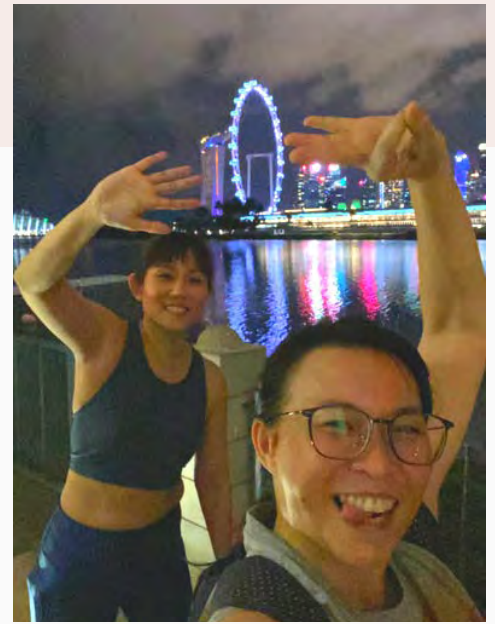
Women of Courage Asia's monthly empowerment meeting is held every last Tuesday of the month. November marks the last empowerment meeting for the year.

Lilian Ong shared about how life at crossroads is an opportunity to change the direction of your life and to fulfil your purpose.

Whereas, first time Story of Courage sharer, Karen Boey, showed us what moving forward after a traumatic experience looks like and how we can channel our strength to take the next step. We wished we can summarise their stories here but it would not do you any justice to hear it second hand.

Sign up for your spot at the next meeting on **25 January 2022** here: [www.womenofcourage.asia](http://www.womenofcourage.asia)





## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CITY NIGHT WALK CHALLENGE

The walk was scheduled to be done as a group activity to encourage dialogues on mental and emotional wellness.

However, the governmental Safety Management Measures (SMM) changed and we had to act fast to change from the initial small group allocation of 5 pax to 2 pax. Instead of postponing the event, we decided to make it a virtual challenge of groups of 2 pax over a period of 7 days.

Lead by Women of Courage Asia's volunteers, Reiko Ang, she mapped out the route, liaised with our design extraordinaire, Karen Boey for an easy to follow graphics with landmarks the groups have to document during the whole 8km journey. (Take a look at the graphics and try it out yourself, with a friend and family!)

Some of the ladies decided to start on the same day kept in groups of 2 pax and communicated along the way with Whatsapp chat. They egged each other on throughout the journey, sharing pictures and texts along the way.

A challenge won't be completed without prizes. They are:

- **Best Caption**
- **Post with the most likes**

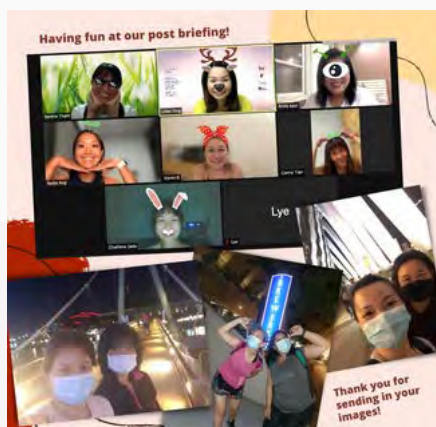
**Heartiest congratulations to the winners!**

Log on to Facebook and Instagram, look for these hashtags to take a look at all the entries:

**#walkwithwoca & #wocacitynightwalk2021**

Sign up for our future events here at

**[www.womenofcourage.asia/wocaevents](http://www.womenofcourage.asia/wocaevents)**





CONNECTING MOTHERS

# THE STORY OF US

**“Mama. There’s a new teacher at school today and my teachers are training her. Do you need training to be a Mama?” quipped my then 5 year old as she looked coyly at me. I twitched my eyebrows while asking, “Of course I do! I am learning everyday.”**

This is the usual chirpy banter after school and it has become a habit, our open communication that I pray we always have; the one without any filter.

It is not always like this. We have disagreements too. We bicker at least once a day. And we learn about compromise and forgiveness. I holler at least once a day. And I learn to pause and be patient. Growing up, my daughter can sometimes be impatient, headstrong and adamant when she insists on having things done her way. When she was younger and we were still learning about communication, I often had to play the “bad cop” role and not indulge her and her impulsive whims and tantrums. People had a lot to say about that. Some agreed with me. Some said I was too harsh. All the noise hit me like a cannonball. I realised that it is easy for people to give comments if they are bystanders who do not live your life and it is not your job to make everyone happy with the choices you make. So, I had to render the noise powerless against me by taking ownership of the decisions I make as a parent. I learned that parenting is trial and error. I practised being kind to myself. As parents, we need to remind ourselves that we do what is best at that time of every teachable parenting moment and we stop beating ourselves up when the situation does not go according to plan. In doing so, I make mistakes and improvise from them.

**BY NATSHA TAN**

Got a story to share?  
Send your story to us at  
[hello@womenofcourage.asia](mailto:hello@womenofcourage.asia)

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Then came an assessment of parenthood in our narrative-- the global pandemic and the Circuit Breaker in Singapore. Parents had to take on the role of a teacher and if I must say, a juggler in the household. We did not just have to manage our careers from home and household affairs and to top it off, we had to manage our children’s home based learning (HBL).



## ABOUT NATSHA

I remember a 4 year old Poppy sustaining a foot fracture in the midst of the pandemic and it happened on my watch. We were at the hospital and my brave little one put me before herself and was more concerned about my spine, from a spine fracture I had sustained a year before, when she said this despite her pain, “I don’t want Mama back pain. Can I hold your back for you when you carry me?”

I teared and she wistfully said, “Mama please don’t cry. I’m okay. You can use my shirt to wipe your tears.” She was being brave for me. That was one of the times I learned from my little one that love induces courage that we never knew we had. Because of that, I learned to be strong not because I am but because I did not have a choice. Sometimes, love shapes us to be the person we can become rather than being the person that we think we are. Love is powerful because it takes away all the self-limiting beliefs that we have.

Over time, I stopped worrying about issues beyond my control, to look at the bigger picture and do what is important first. I practised the pause and tackled “one obstacle at a time”. I stopped wanting to do everything all at once. Dirty dishes could wait a bit, phone messages and emails could be left unread and attended to later. What is truly important is to schedule time for these things, remind ourselves to give our kids a hug, be present with who we are with, communicate and talk about feelings and practise active listening. I am a mother who is always present.

Natsha is a mother, an educator, a mentor and a network marketing professional. She became a teacher after graduating with a Bachelor of Psychology & Sociology with a minor in Criminology and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA).

She aspires to inspire, uplift and empower. Friends call her the problem solver. She laughs at her own jokes and with people, she celebrates peoples' wins and successes as well as being their hand to hold in times of darkness.

Her mission is to improve the quality of lives of others.

Sometimes, love shapes us to be the person we can become rather than being the person that we think we are. Love is powerful because it takes away all the self-limiting beliefs that we have.



# "Mama, I need some space from you."

We drove one another up the wall during the Circuit Breaker. However, we learned to adapt. Subsequently, we discussed, compromised and agreed on a routine of working out our schedules together everyday. We used a calendar to colour code our time slots for "reading", "HBL", "cooking", "meals", "Zoom meetings" and "video calls" etc.

Contrary to what I believed that we needed to be with one another throughout the day to be close-knitted, we worked out the things we could do together and apart. She would share what she learned from books, friends whom she video-called and interacted with, movies we watched together and from running around the playground while I watched from afar. Morning before school and before bedtime is our time together. There is wonderment in how her mind absorbs new experiences and the priceless teachable moments I have whilst she shares them with me.

I learned to let go. It is a conscious effort to not be the smothering mother who is always breathing down her neck, but the mama who has her back whilst she empowers herself to learn through observation and experiential learning. I used to think that as parents we have to practise what we preach, so our kids can copy us. That changed. The sooner I learned to preach what I practise, the faster Poppy was able to emulate what I do. I stopped throwing expectations onto her; rather, I showed her how something can be done first. I show her that it is okay to fail, to make mistakes and to fall; and still, I have her back. A mother she can run to for help when she is in trouble, not a mother whom she hides from in the same situation, is the kind of parent I envision to become.

Parenthood can be all things into one, nerve wrecking, mentally draining and at times I feel like I am doing everything wrong. Despite my imperfections, I am grateful that I am raising an empowered child with the kindest of hearts and her relentless curiosity about the world around her. To her, I am a mama who is not perfect but a work in progress. And that is enough for me.

Got a story to share? Send your story to us at [hello@womenofcourage.asia](mailto:hello@womenofcourage.asia)



## JOIN US AT OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

### **HER Courage Biz Network**

4 Jan 2022, 6:30pm on-site and via ZOOM

Reserve your spot at

[www.hercouragebiznetwork.com](http://www.hercouragebiznetwork.com)

### **Women of Courage Asia**

#### **Monthly Empowerment Meeting**

25 Jan 2022, 6:30pm via ZOOM

Register at [www.womenofcourage.asia](http://www.womenofcourage.asia)





# A SETBACK IS A SET UP FOR A COMEBACK

BY JUCELYN ONG

***“I’ll be back”***... this famous one liner uttered by Arnold Schwarzenegger is widely recognised, so much so that it has become his trademark. He delivered it with so much certainty and gusto. How many of us can say it with the same conviction when we are faced with setbacks in our lives?

Setbacks are events that occur in our lives that do not go according to our plans. They can come in various forms, shapes and sizes. For example, business failures, failed relationships or a devastating divorce, betrayals and the list goes on. The question is, do we allow these setbacks to be speed bumps that slow us down temporarily or to become insurmountable dead ends?

I am reminded that we have to experience the upsets in order to fully appreciate our successes. I am going to challenge your belief and paradigm that setbacks are not really failures but rather they are a part of our journey.





What if I tell you that setbacks are one of the greatest teachers in life? Setbacks and failures teach us many precious life lessons that are learnt only by going through the journey of pain and walking towards the light at the end of the tunnel. Setbacks teach us perseverance, tenacity, resilience and force us to discover a part of ourselves which we might not even know existed. We learn, improve and become a stronger and better version 2.0 of our former self. As the saying goes, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. There is much truth that tough times don't last but tough people do.

From my personal experience, when my 20 years marriage crashed and burned and as I stood at the crossroad of my life when I left the shared business of ten years, this major setback took on a life of its own. It took the shape of a terrifying and gigantic monster with fangs of self-doubts and fear, which threatened to shred me to pieces and swallow me alive.

"Standing Tall Overcoming All" was written as a reflection of my journey of overcoming decades of self-limiting beliefs, my fear of rejection, of staying stuck in an unhealthy relationship. I allowed my boundaries to be crossed because of self-doubts and subtle threats that I am incapable of surviving if I was to leave my comfort zone and stand up for myself.

**Be an overcomer of setbacks and ARISE, stronger and an improved version of yourself.**

**A**

Acknowledge the setback that has happened. The only way to move on is to first acknowledge the failure and setback for what it is. Denial or rushing to the next step without processing the setback will only result in it coming back to haunt you if the root cause remains unresolved.

**R**

Reflect on your role or what caused or resulted in the setback/failure. Very often, our first instinct is to play the blame game or have a self-pity party. I have learnt to look and reflect and take ownership of the part I could have played. For example, I allowed myself to be a doormat. I handed the key of my life over to another person so easily, who never took into account my feelings. I realised that I had a choice, I simply made many poor choices. With this reflection in mind, it leads me to the next step - which is, how do I improve?

**I**

Identify areas of improvement and use the setback as a regrouping and re-evaluating opportunity. Sometimes, we need to go back to the drawing board to relook at areas in our lives that need an upgrade. Did the business fail because we lacked certain knowledge? If so, go search out mentors and coaches to learn from them. To improve on our relationships, go for self-awareness or development course to improve our personal and professional lives.

**S**

Step forward with boldness and courage. Take that first step. Little steps are great. Usually the first steps are the hardest but once you do it, you will gain momentum and soon your steps will turn into a little run and before you know it, you are soaring. Just make sure you are moving every day. Break down big tasks into smaller more manageable parts and put one foot after the other and begin your journey towards bigger achievements.

**E**

Embrace the new found confidence, exhale positivity and express gratitude daily. Enjoy the more confident you, allowing the challenges to change you and be proud of those changes, of who you are and be excited about who you are becoming in the process.

### What setbacks are you facing right now?

Take courage, take the first step to overcome the obstacles and ARISE! Let your journey of overcoming be a story and inspirational survival guide for someone else who is currently walking through a similar journey to yours!

**Standing Tall Overcoming All**  
Visit [www.jucelynong.com](http://www.jucelynong.com)



# HOW YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE AFFECTS YOUR MOOD

*Every woman will have a different date so do track your own cycle to take advantage of the ups and downs of our mood.*



**Do you question yourself for not being motivated enough or even feeling lazy and tired?**

**It is your hormones taking over.**

**BY HELLEN LIE**

Recently I came across a podcast of a clinical psychologist talking about women's hormonal cycle of 28 days in comparison to men's hormonal cycle of just a day.

It shed a light, on why women are often branded as too emotional and unpredictable by our dear male counterparts because it's in biology.

As a woman, our mood could be affected negatively by our hormones but yet, we often blame ourselves when it comes. We questioned ourselves for not being motivated enough or even feeling lazy and tired, but in fact, it is our hormones taking over.

It lead me to research more about this menstrual cycle and investigate based on my own experience. There were days where I felt more energized and feel like a million bucks, and there are days where I just felt down and unmotivated.

I keep track of those days. Turns out the awareness of my own menstrual cycle helps me anticipate the bad days. On my first day, I can be gentle with myself and plan on lesser things to do. While the days where my estrogen is high, I could plan my podcast, my content creation work or creative works.



## Here is the cheat sheet on women's cycles.

Every woman will have a different date so do track your own cycle to take advantage of the ups and downs of our mood. *This cycle is using a 28-day calendar, but it's completely normal for your menstrual cycle to last anywhere from 21 to 35 days.*

**Day 1 - 6** of your period marks the first day of your menstrual cycle. Many women believe their cycle starts at the end of their period, but this is not the case. On Day 1 of your cycle, estrogen levels are at an all-time low. Estrogen is a good thing; it's associated with increased activity of serotonin, a feel-good chemical in the brain. So you might feel lethargic or down

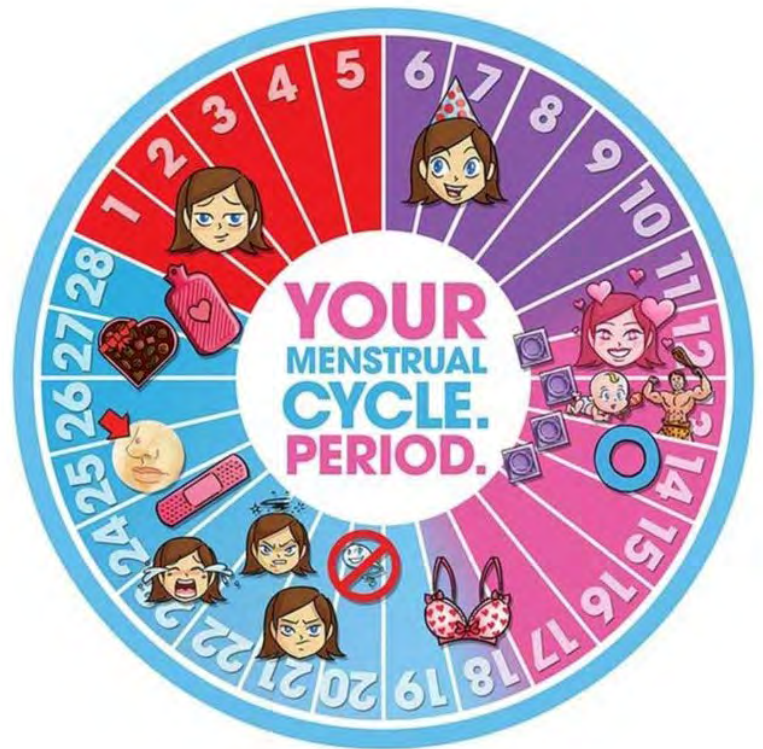
The average period lasts about five days — although anywhere from two to seven days is considered normal — and yields about 35 millilitres or just over an ounce of liquid.

As your estrogen levels slowly increase, you **may feel more relaxed** than you have over the last few days when PMS symptoms may have been wreaking havoc with your emotions.

By **Day 7**, your period is probably gone, and your mood should have returned to normal. In fact, you may be feeling a surge of energy as your ovaries release more and more estrogen. Higher levels of estrogen also make you feel more sociable, optimistic, and motivated.

**Day 8-14** Estrogen levels will continue to rise from Days 8-11, and by **Days 12-13**, they're at an all-time high. These high levels of estrogen give you more confidence, make your skin glow, and **probably make you feel flirtier**. It isn't a coincidence: These high estrogen levels set off a surge of hormones that result in ovulation on Day 14.

So during this time, your mood might be off the chart and you are feeling more confident than ever!



**Day 27 Hungry?** At this point in your cycle, your estrogen — and therefore serotonin — levels are bottoming out. That means you're craving carbohydrates, which increase serotonin. Luckily, your metabolism is working a little faster leading up to your period, which means you **may consume 100 to 200 more calories guilt-free — but don't overdo it.**

**Day 28 Ouch!** Many women experience menstrual cramps a day or two before their period begins. Your body has begun producing prostaglandins, which help your uterus contract. Over-the-counter meds like ibuprofen can really help as can heating pads and hot water bottles.

Source :

<https://www.cbc.ca/stevenandchris/health/your-time-of-the-month> | <https://tnp.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/health/how-your-menstrual-cycle-affects-your-mental-health>





# HER COURAGE BIZ NETWORK



## Biz Showcase 4 Jan 2022

**We are looking to start a prosperous New Year to hear about Gloria Soo's showcase on increasing sales.**

Gloria is a Business & Sales Coach. Her clients are multimillion generating organisations. You won't want to miss this feature.

Register for your exclusive seat at [www.HERCourageBizNetwork.com](http://www.HERCourageBizNetwork.com)



**Brand – This Germanic origin means ‘to mark’. A term typically associated with leaving a mark on animals.**

In marketing terms, a brand is described as distinctive wording or design used to identify a particular product or company. As a business, your brand identity is what makes you stand out from the crowd.

We were given insights to building our business brand identity by Karen Boey, founder of Collective Goodness and co-founder of HER Courage Biz Network; at our meet up on 7 December at MindChamps HeadQuarters, Marina Square.

We learned that our brand isn't just a logo, it is building a brand asset. We left the session wanting more. And more is what we will be getting. **As Karen will be holding a mentoring session on 14th December 2021 at a private zoom session at 8pm.** You can register to attend at [www.classliving.com.sg/hcbtnmentoring](http://www.classliving.com.sg/hcbtnmentoring).

We also connected on site with many amazing female entrepreneurs and learned about each other's businesses. We are so pleased and encouraged to know that one of HER Courage Biz Network's members; **Sheryl Boquiren**, will be submitting a pitch to Seed Ventures, our venture capitalist partner, for funding to expand her business.

HER Courage Biz Network was created specifically for providing support and nurturing the growth of female entrepreneurs. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month, we learn together with a mentoring session the following week. What's more, as a HER Courage Biz Network member, she gets to be featured on our social channels, including this publication.

December can't be more exciting! We learned we connect and we keep pushing boundaries. We wish Sheryl the best as she gets to finish the end of the year with a high.

**JOIN US! 4 JAN 2022, 6:30PM, MINDCHAMPS HQ, MARINA SQUARE OR ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

Register at [www.hercouragebiznetwork.com](http://www.hercouragebiznetwork.com)





# LESSONS FROM

## A FALLEN HEEL TIP

By Carol Gockel

**As the year draws to a close, a “mandatory” clearing out of the home in preparation to welcome the new year is an annual ritual for many. A tradition observed; out with the old, in with the new.**

Besides clearing out the wardrobe, I found myself clearing out the shoe cabinets this year. My shoes didn't see the light of day for 20 months, and had disintegrated from being kept in the dark (humid).

When my husband and I decided to have a date night with dinner at a nice restaurant, I found myself doing the walk of shame from the restaurant entrance to our table... the supposedly sexy click-clacking of my strappy high heels on the wooden floor was replaced with a click, followed by an annoyingly loud and embarrassing nail hammering on the floor as I strode, all the while trying hard to keep my head up while secretly wishing I was invisible to the other diners.

Needless to say I made a run for the exit as soon as we were done.

That's how life sometimes throws you unexpected curveballs. It brought to mind that I could have checked my shoes before I left, knowing full well at the back of my mind my heels may have met the same demise as the others yet my refusal to face the situation put me in an unfavourable situation.





*How many times in your life when you knew something wasn't right but you went ahead and did it anyway. That wasn't courage, it would be a case of fail to plan, plan to fail.*

What has checking your heels before leaving the house had anything to do with planning? *Oh plenty, sisters.*

First off, a heel giving way risks twisting your ankles out causing devastating and potentially lifelong injuries. Solid shoes provide support for your entire weight. How stable you are walking in your shoes can determine your state of mind. You can say the foundation of your overall being starts with your feet (and shoes).

### **With 2022 approaching, how would you like to step into the new year?**

#### **Here's 3 powerful steps to get you started:**

- Establish a system to utilise your time effectively.
- Figure out what your distractions are and devise a way to minimise them.
- Identify your strengths. Take an inventory of what they are then play to these strengths and structure your goals accordingly.

You will be sashaying your way to new heights. We will discuss what are the best shoes to showcase your image and style that you can choose to be wearing to the top at another time. Watch this space.

#### **Keep up to date with us!**

Subscribe on [www.womenofcourage.asia](http://www.womenofcourage.asia)

#### **Connect with us:**

[hello@womenofcourage.asia](mailto:hello@womenofcourage.asia)