
Rachel Leng

Chinese name: 凌惠颖

Age: 23



With a US education in the bag, Rachel has some interesting thoughts about the world and her approach to the future.

She describes every return trip to Singapore as a new experience. Everything changes she commented so she needs to explore her home city each time and usually starts at MBS by the infinity pool which she explained, gives her a bird's eye view of what's happening. "This city is so beautiful," she says, "When you've been away you look at the city with new eyes and learn to appreciate it fully."

She notices that by comparison with other countries everywhere in Singapore is hectic, crowded, the cost of living is expensive. "The people often look tired out by the pressures and this must affect the home and work life of many women. The stress has zapped their energy and they probably don't feel as good and feel as happy as they should." She also commented local women often have great confidence in their careers but not in their personal lives. Men overseas often compliment their wives and girlfriends and show their appreciation of a good looking woman but Rachel wonders whether Asian men do the same? "Ultimately," she says, "a woman's confidence comes down to the individual and their environment."

As a modern girl why did she enter Miss World Singapore? When she studied overseas the semesters clashed with pageant timeframes and she never thought about it seriously. But now she has graduated with a degree in Public Policy and Asian Studies she has more time at home while she decides on her next step.

Friends were discussing the competition and inspecting the website. Her height was not an issue as it is in some pageants, she was also attracted by the description 'Beauty with a Purpose' and the fact that beauty was not the most important criteria. The idea of inner and outer beauty and having a big heart appeals to her much more. Why? Because Rachel already works with underprivileged children and MWS offers her the same kind of opportunity. Her summation, "Many pageants objectify the girls but this one goes beyond the physical."

She is keen to make the world a better place. “People look to men to improve the poverty cycle but all too often it is women who make the difference. For example in many societies it’s the male children who go to school but girls often get more out of an education if they have the opportunity to learn.” Being put in second place means girls can be surrounded by negativity which affects them badly and is unconsciously incorporated into their sense of self.” Rachel feels her time overseas has changed everything for her and her views of different cultures.

“I am so grateful I made the decision to go study in the USA. It is a bigger place for a start and you quickly become aware of the immense diversity, different opinions and perspectives by interacting with people and their way of life as opposed to the limited exposure you receive in Singapore.” Rachel feels it’s important to see various cultures and understand the way other people think. “My whole personality and values have changed as a result of being in the USA. I notice here people focus on their parents’ values; study, money to buy things, a stable job and the 5 Cs. In Singapore, if you don’t become a doctor, lawyer or accountant it’s considered the end of the world.”

In the USA Rachel says people go for what they want and it’s considered perfectly all right. Here you are told to plan for the next 10 years and people don’t learn to find themselves. She feels no stress about her future and is very independent in the thinking and her ways because she needed to cope alone and did. Not only that, but Rachel says she now appreciates her parents much more. Despite not knowing about her MWS plans in advance both parents were very supportive when they heard.

“Juggling roles is key for the modern Asian woman,” Rachel says. “Women in Singapore are career orientated and hold powerful positions.” She feels it’s vital for them to be independent which means they have more control and can influence their families and bring work values, like people and relationship skills, into the home. “I’ll pursue what I want to do but family is more important. Life is all about relationships. If I have good, lasting family relationships they take it outside and it spreads everywhere. If this is missing many things start to break down.”

And what does Rachel like about her home city? This provoked a rapid response; “family, food, the efficiency and cleanliness. Our skyline is one of the most stunning in the world.” But what does she wish for the future? “To live somewhere that lets me see my parents more often.”

Rachel has challenging ambitions too. She says “I need to find something to do that I’m passionate about, can be happy doing and be really good at it so I can share whatever it is with my family and the people I love.” This is something that defeats most of us but Rachel is sure to give it her best and very determined shot! We are proud she’s chosen entering MWS as part of her strategy.

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