



Eunice, Sydney, Australia

I was born in Hong Kong, bred in Canada, did a stint in Sweden and now live in Australia.

My experiences in these various places have given me connections to the land, people, and culture of these places. Being born Chinese means I always carry its values with me, giving me a different perspective when I try to navigate the Western world. Growing up in Canada has affected who I am immensely - how I dress, what I sound like, and how I act have all been influenced by my upbringing in Canada. Being married to a Swede has also opened up a world that was unfamiliar to me before and I now carry my experiences from these 3 very different cultures with me wherever I go.

I currently live in Sydney, Australia working as a researcher and designer, trying to make people's lives better through human-centred design. On my free time, I enjoy what Australia has to offer by spending a lot of my time outdoors. This includes surfing, hiking, camping and rock climbing.

I grew up not spending much time outdoors, and had never properly camped until I was in my 20's. I grew up in a family that fed on Vogue magazines

and spent most of my weekends in shopping malls. Although I personally never really enjoyed shopping, I was sucked into the world of consumerism and adored city life in my late teens and early 20's. It was no surprise that I decided to leave my Cultural Studies degree to study Fashion Communications.

The summer before I started studying fashion, I moved to a small coastal town in British Columbia, Canada called Ucluelet. I lived there for two months with my friends and that summer changed my whole worldview.

It was a summer of firsts - the first time I was properly on my own, the first time I embraced the outdoors, the first time I relied on the support of my friends instead of my family, and the first time I really fell in love. Having all these experiences made me realise that there was more to life than consumerism and that a simple life can be much more fulfilling.

I was never quite happy before because I was always chasing a status that I could never achieve. In the fall when I moved home, I had changed and there was no going back. I became in love with

being in nature and started to understand that living in harmony with the planet led to happiness.

I've been curious about Australia since I met a bunch of Australians that summer in Ucluelet. When I finally found myself in Australia 4 years later, I met a nice Swedish boy who later became my husband and partner in crime.

We eventually moved to Sweden a year after we decided to settle into adulthood. There, I was lucky enough to land an internship turned job at a United Nations organisation. Through all this time, I wasn't very aware or committed to being sustainable. It may have been age, but I never really thought of anything outside of my immediate surroundings.

However, when I moved to Sydney to study my Masters degree, my collective experiences of my travels combined with my time working at the UN manifested into a desire to be a better person, and to use my abilities to help others. School also taught me about human-centred design and how design can be used to help solve some of the world's major problems.

It was when I was doing one of my design projects for school that I learned all about sustainability. From there, I became very conscious of our collective environmental footprint and how my lifestyle played a role in it.

At that time, I was working as a graphic designer for a marketing department. I found myself designing so many things that were unnecessarily wasteful. I was also tired of being at the end of the design process, not being able to solve problems at the root. I yearned to be a proper problem solver, solving problems that mattered.

When I finished school I decided that I had to change fields and started looking at companies that focused on human-centred design, companies like IDEO but in Australia. I was lucky enough to meet a mentor who helped me start my new career by teaching me about User Experience Design, Service Design and Design Research, among many other things. I've been working with him and others at *Tobias* now for over two years and have been lucky to work on meaningful projects with great people that also aspire to make the world a better place.

I define living sustainably as having gratitude to the environment that we live in and treating it with as much respect as possible. It means not exploiting things to get what you need by using the natural environment respectfully during our lifetime. Although I enjoy all the benefits of human progress, it saddens me to think that we no longer live in harmony with the world's natural order.

In terms of how it applies to my choices and actions, I make positive changes where I can. This includes influencing those around me to be more sustainable. I also try to be as informed as possible on what governments and corporations are doing and speak up against it where I can. As a designer, it's important to be aware of challenging problems that affect our lives and to think, discuss, and act on trying to solve them. I do this by joining lots of professional meet-up groups with my colleagues and friends.

I also try to live as sustainably as possible - not owning a car, eating a mainly vegetarian diet, am mindful of animal welfare, buying green products, being as waste-free as possible, and keeping my clothing purchases minimal and as ethically as possible. Of course I still have flexibilities and could do more but I try to consciously stick to these as much as possible.

I would like to make bigger changes, tackle problems caused by decision makers who define our lives, including political and corporate decision makers. In order for this to succeed however, we would need to act as a collective and mobilise against those who are making decisions that are against the interests of the majority for self-gain. We would also need to rethink our economic and political systems as currently capitalism is pushing people to act according to self-interest, and neoliberalism is leaving people to fight climate change as individuals rather than a collective.

My advice to the next generations: Do not live life blindly. We're put on this earth to do something, so make that something good. For all you take, you need to give something positive back.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Eunice



Outside the Box

Sustainability With a Twist