

HER *life*



LESSONS FROM LIFE

## What I Learnt

In her quest for perfection, ATCEN International Group Marketing Communications Director **CAROL SIEW**, 30s, learnt that the first step begins with letting go.

**WHEN YOU'RE** already doing a good job, do you still feel you have to get it absolutely perfect? That was me when I started out as a website designer in my early 20s. I knew that design was a very subjective matter and that not everyone will like the end result. But because I wanted everyone to like it, I had to seek perfection. That was job satisfaction for me.

I thought this was a great attitude, until one day while perfecting a website (one already approved by the client), I was told off by my superior. "Why are you still working on something that has already been approved? What more do you think you can do with it? Just let it go!"

It hurt but it hit me in the right place. I realised competent work wasn't about

perfection; it was about self-acceptance and saying, "I'm finally done". I knew then that in wanting to be perfect for others, I was actually striving for personal satisfaction. I was given an insight to myself as seen through the eyes of someone else.

I wanted to be the best to impress people so they would like me more. I thought if I placed high standards on myself and lived up to them, I could have a level of self-satisfaction that would override any need I had for outside approval. It relates to being in control.

Today, I know that perfection isn't everything. I know if I work fast and get the job done well, my clients will be happy. This now is job satisfaction to me.

One of the ironies of

being a perfectionist is that it leads to a great deal of imperfection! It can lead to a lack of accomplishment because I often won't start something if I don't think I can get it right. I spend so much time repeatedly debating the smallest details and exaggerating the consequences of not getting it right.

I'd like to share something with all perfectionists - don't spend more time than absolutely necessary on any one task. Your goal should be to start and finish every project quickly but also completely and satisfactorily. Let things go; don't spend your time re-doing things. Perfection, in itself, is imperfect because you don't get a chance to fail and to learn from your failure.