

# Celestine Chua

## Successful Blogger, Entrepreneur and the Founder of Personal Excellence



*This is part II of the [Success Interview Series](#).  
Part I is my interview with [Ricker Choi](#)*

The next interview in the series is with the lovely Celestine Chua from Personal Excellence.

Celestine on Channel News Asia

Celestine is a very successful blogger and the founder of Personal Excellence, a go to place for comprehensive and in-depth articles on various personal development topics such as productivity, motivation and finding your purpose.

She started her blog in December'08 and has since grew it to one of the top personal development blogs in the world:

- Featured in numerous local and international media such as [CNN](#), Cosmopolitan, Channel News Asia, CBS Business Network, Sun Herald etc..(for more media coverage, see Celestine's [media page](#).)
- Grew the blog to over 1 million pageviews/month in less than 3 years
- Successfully transition her business from an active business income model to over 90% passive income ([Click here to view more details](#)).

I hope you can benefit from Celes's insightful answers on the topic of entrepreneurship and tips on how to successfully pursue your passion and excellence in life:

### **1. Could you share what your driving force was to quit societal perception of "security and success" :**

**leaving P&G (Procter and Gamble) and have the courage to start your own business and blog? I mean most people I know would see this as the iron (or golden) rice bowl to have in life but you have left this behind and went for the "unknown" of pursuing your passion.**



*(J: Celes was working in brand management managing multi -billion dollar brands at P&G for two years before she started PE in 2008)*

Definitely my passion to grow and help others grow. I just asked myself, “What would I want to do for the rest of my life, if I’m not paid for it?” and my answer was to grow and help others grow, in the manner I’m doing it now (with my blog, online or in-person coaching, and so on. So with that, I then decided that I have to work towards this dream, because, hey—what’s the point of living if you’re not doing what you love? Quitting my corporate job was simply a natural step I have to take in order to pursue my passion

## **2. What were the challenges you were facing in the beginning of starting Personal Excellence and what tips do you have for overcoming these challenges?**

I would say knowledge gaps. I ran websites when I was in secondary school, but years had past since I was last in touch with the online community. I didn’t know how the online landscape was like, or even what [Twitter](#) was! I bridged this gap by quickly educating myself in the areas of blogging (<http://probblogger.net>), writing (<http://copyblogger.com>), and Web 2.0 sites like [Digg](#), [StumbleUpon](#), [Delicious](#), etc. which were the “it” sites at that time.

Another challenge I had was not knowing anyone else in the same space. I didn’t know any coaches, personal development gurus etc. who walked this path before, so there was no one I could relate to. I addressed this quickly by quickly connecting with other personal development bloggers via email and/or Twitter and building relationships with them. Today I remain in touch with some of them and we would e-mail each other every now and then to check how the other is doing.

## **3. If you would start all over again, what things would you have done differently?**

I would definitely outsource right away. Looking back, I spent too much time on low-value activities like site/business administration, (graphic) designing, editing, and the like. I can do them quite well, but really, my take is that I shouldn’t be spending my time on these things when there are more important



They self-victimize. They think people or the world is out to get them rather than sucking it up and just taking responsibility for the state of things.

Last but not least, they are too rigid. They either don't innovate which prevents them from being the leader in their pack or they are not versatile enough to adapt to life's circumstances. Agility to change is highly important to succeed in life.

activities like content creation, business development etc. for me to take care of. I wrote a one-stop guide on how to outsource including my outsource approach and tips: <http://personalexcellence.co/blog/outsourcing/>

Another thing I would do differently is to get my domain right at the beginning. I changed my domain name *twice* since 2008 (right now it's [personalexcellence.co](http://personalexcellence.co) and it's pretty much going to be the domain I will stick with from now on for PE) and each change caused a dip in traffic each time. It's not easy to build traffic and it's quite a waste when you lost traffic by virtue of changing domains. So, definitely think properly about your domain first and get it right before you start off.

#### **4. What tips and advice do you have for aspiring entrepreneurs?**

Don't listen to the naysayers. People who say you will fail or who shut down your ideas don't matter. As long as you believe in yourself and you truly believe your idea can change the world, you can make things happen. I've written a piece before on tackling naysayers: <http://personalexcellence.co/blog/naysayers/> Another tip is spend cautiously. Be ready to spend where necessary but also be careful of the bottom line. Some entrepreneurs easily overspend on unnecessary, unimportant things in the beginning and that depletes their funds rapidly.

In things you have to spend on such as on contractors, office rental, office supplies, etc..., do your due research and get your bang for the buck.

#### **5. What are the common mistakes you have observed among people you've met who try to achieve excellence or success in life but didn't ?**

They give up too easily. They see a few obstacles and they think they are done. Such people never go too far in life.

They also expect baby sitting. Many things in life have to be learned and done by yourself. Be ready to get down and dirty and do the hard work. No one's going to spoon feed you the answers and there's no reason why they should either.



## 6. Where do you see PE in the long term?

In terms of structure of the platform, it is pretty much where I want it to be. It is an online platform with many verticals that people can use for their growth, such as articles, daily quotes, videos, inspirational manifestos, podcasts, and so on.

Moving forward, I just want to expand the reach and audience as much as possible. It's at almost a million pageviews a month now and I would want to push that to 10 million, 20 million, 30 million, and so on. That requires a lot of hard work and paradigm shifts in how I build my blog traffic, but it can be done.

## 7. Any big plans for PE this year ?

I can't wait to launch my video series. I already have my [Youtube video channel](#) set up but I have not been adding any content except for my media interviews and web lectures. I would like to do interviews with highly successful individuals or experts in their fields to have them share their lessons with the world. I think PE has developed into a great platform for personal growth and now I just want to find as many different ways to get others' message out to the world in the fastest manner possible.

I think having videos will be an excellent way to engage the readers at PE further. I have also confirmed several expert authors and will be bringing them aboard on PE soon to share their expertise in their respective niches. These include areas which I don't write much on, such as corporate/business/finance, healthy living, academia/studies, and communications/speaking. I believe having these authors aboard will help to expand the knowledge base of the site and enrich the lives of PE readers further.

Above all, I'm just looking forward to sharing more about myself and my life. PE has become a nice extension of my life, my personal life, and my readers are just like a part of me now. I look forward to writing more articles in a more unadulterated fashion and letting everyone in on my very personal life and occurrences.



**8. I notice you have a talent for writing- Did your 10,000 hour of talent starts when you start PE in 2008 or it goes way much earlier? My observation has been that you write really well right from the start – any tips on how to improve writing ability?**

Not at all! I wouldn't say that I have a talent for writing at all. I would say blog writing or article writing is only something I did with the start of PE. Before that, my writing was mainly limited to business writing (in corporate world) and prose/essay writing (in school, with project work and exams). I wouldn't deemed myself as being equipped with any writing skills before I started PE. I would say it's something I built up through the years of blogging.

Some tips I have on improving writing ability:

Read the articles at <http://copyblogger.com>.

Study the top successful blogs in your niche. Study how those bloggers write their headlines and content and learn from them. Replicate them for your articles.

Focus on your message and deliver it the way you would convey them to a friend or family member would help too. At the end of the day, writing is just a tool; focus on the message and everything will fall into place.



Thank you so much, Celes for this great interview!!

Big take away lessons from Celes:

-Be passionate about your dreams and believe in yourself. Don't let negative circumstances or people deter you from pursuing your dreams.

- Differentiate between high value and low value activities: Focus on the core high value aspect of your life/business and outsource the low value activities if possible. I am definitely looking into doing outsourcing this year and hopefully focus more of my time and energy on the core activities in my business.

-Be committed, persistent and patient in pursuing your goals. Nothing in life comes easy, especially in the beginning of any endeavor. Celes clearly demonstrates these characteristics when she first started PE: focus on the solution and be committed to make your goals a reality despite the challenges she encountered in the early years of PE.

-Be adaptable and flexible when it comes to success in business or in life.

