

Eulogy by Soh Xiaoting, Mingwei's friend

I've known Mingwei for half my life. She was the sort of friend you knew you could count on. She was fiercely loyal and protective of those whom she held close. Come hell or high water, she would stand by you, if only because you were her friend.

We were similar in many ways, such as the way we perceived situations, dealt with relationships, felt about plastic surgery and food, enjoyed creature comforts, being vain and dressing up. We liked animals, the outdoors, the idea of martial arts, valued friendship and treasured family.

Mingwei had an amazing ability to make things happen. She was a go-getter, and was unfazed by most things.

While we were holidaying in Japan, our group ran into some trouble cancelling a room reservation. Admittedly, it was our fault. It was stated clearly on the website that full rates would be charged if cancellations were not made 3 days in advance, but being Singaporeans, we didn't want to part with our money. Jenny, Hwee and I tried futilely, each calling in turn, to try and convince the management that they should waive the penalty, but to no avail. I still remember Mingwei rolling her eyes at us and saying "here. Let me handle it" She started off with "Good evening. I am Mrs Tan. I am calling as I am aware that my daughters are having difficulties settling an issue with your management." A few minutes of clipped replies and pointed questions later, she ended the conversation with "Thank you. Your cooperation is most appreciated. Good night." And flashed us a grin and most uncharacteristic victory sign

Mingwei could seem like one tough cookie. But beneath that resilient exterior, she was endearing in her fearlessness to love, be affected, and feel vulnerable.

While undergoing treatment for lymphoma in secondary school, I found out from my mum who had found out through Mingwei's mum that Mingwei had cried and gone to her mother and had asked her to visit me and recommend doctors to me. But she wasn't one of those friends who would come by, look at me with sadness in their eyes and tiptoe around me gingerly like I was a porcelain doll they were terrified of breaking. In front of me, she never let on what she felt inside. She'd drop by for visits, sneak in famous durian puffs and keep me up to date with school gossip. I guess she always understood what I really needed.

One of my most vivid and recent memories of Mingwei is of her sharing her early 21st birthday gift. We were in the midst of catching up and gossiping over drinks at Hyatt.

She held up the pendant she was wearing and went, “ooh! Ooh! Have I told you about my birthday present? My mum got me a diamond necklace, and it's not just a diamond necklace, it's a .5 carat diamond necklace! Do you know what this means? This is THE birthday present. It doesn't matter if my mother doesn't get me any other present for the next few years, I mean, this is IT! This is all I need, this will carry me all the way till I'm like married or something. Do you know what this means to me? Oh you don't know what this means, but really, I'm just so so so happy.” She was quite intent on making sure I knew it was a .5 carat diamond.

And I guess that's Mingwei: headstrong, at times obstinate; capable, honest and forthright, clever and sharp tongued; she never took herself too seriously; dramatic, passionate, generous, thoughtful. She loved sparkly things, loved cars, loved having fun, loved life, loved shimmy, loved her friends, and loved her family.

I'm thankful for all the memories we've had; the embarrassing photos, wonderful meals, reckless misadventures, frivolous obsessions and heartfelt mushy moments. I'm thankful to have gotten to know Mingwei's family; to have been a part of their lives and to have been invited to partake in this very private moment.

I'd like to celebrate her life, and recount funny stories, and find peace in that she lived boldly and was loved by many, but there's still a heartache that leaves behind a gaping emptiness It's not every day that you come across someone so open hearted and so generous, who is so much like you and understands you so well. Mingwei was/is a very precious friend to me. Miss you.