- Mental health / Social networking

Burnout, Boundaries, and Being Online

Navigating the complexities of digital fame, we speak to two Malaysian content creators and a mental health professional to explore how to safeguard emotional resilience and wellbeing online

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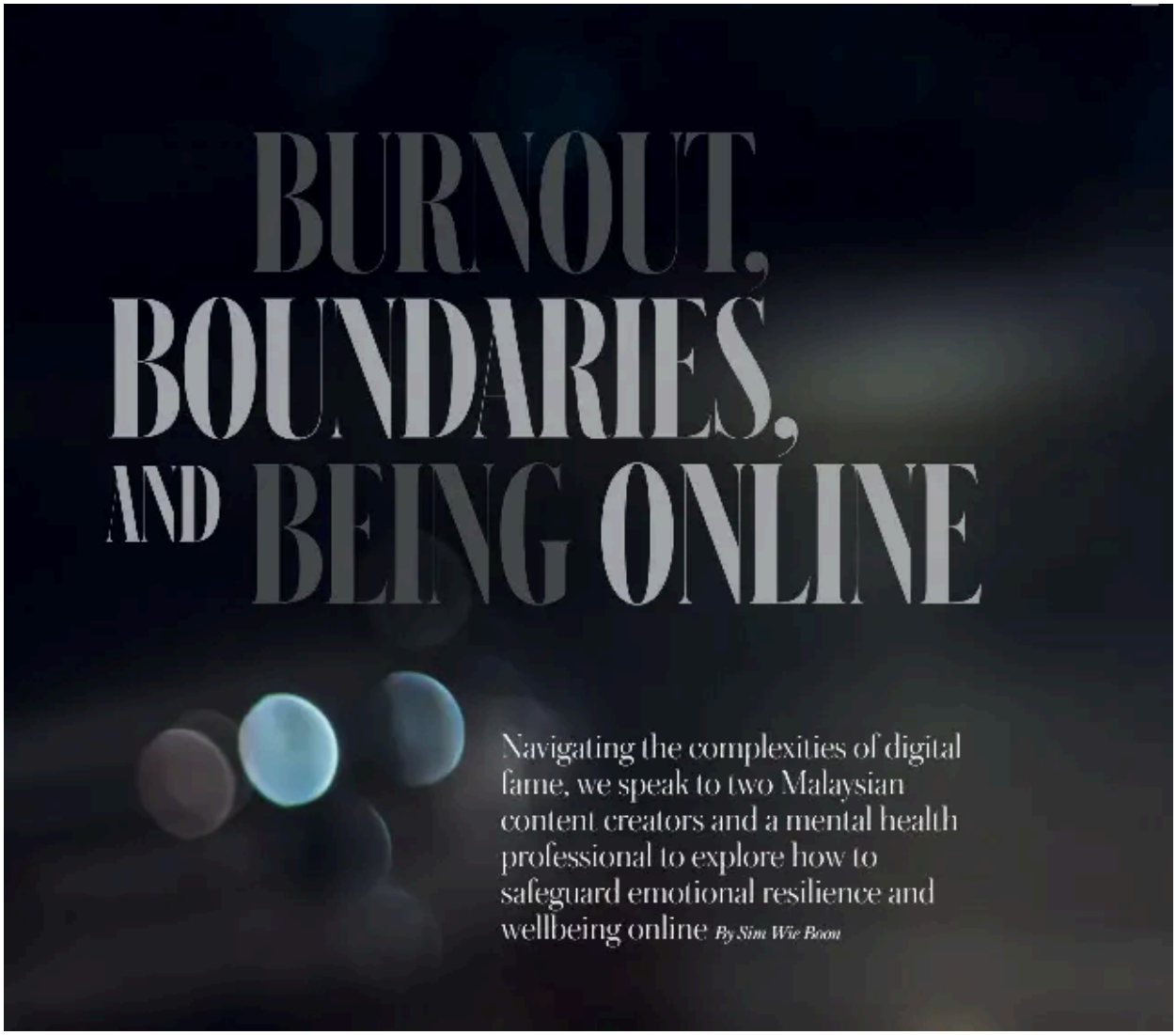

Behind the glossy screens and viral moments of social media lies a quieter narrative that many might not think about when scrolling through their phones. It's one that highlights the personal cost of constant visibility and relentless content creation. As content creators rapidly rise to become the norm of how the modern economy operates, conversations are generally centred on 'how do I become a content creator?', 'What's your social media strategy with content creators?', 'Can they deliver the posting in 24 hours?', 'How much does it cost?' and much more. But a question that one rarely asks is, 'What about the mental health of content creators in this world of relentless social media?'

To explore this, I spoke with mental health expert Gia G Kon, founder of The Inner Lynk Therapy and Wellness Centre, and prominent content creators Maggy Wang and Alicia Amin, who shared openly about their experiences and the unseen mental health challenges in the creator economy.

For Wang, burnout is not merely an occupational hazard but a recurring cycle she's learned to anticipate. "Burnout and the pressure to constantly 'keep up' is a never-ending chase," Wang reveals. "It sometimes spirals into an existential question: 'What am I even chasing anymore?' That feeling can be really hard to sit with."

Alicia, an actress, model, and content creator, echoes similar sentiments, though her experiences are uniquely nuanced by her ADHD. "Being on top of all my deadlines can be very hectic," Amin admits. "I crash out pretty hard

"It's a never-ending chase... Sometimes I wonder, what am I even chasing anymore?" — MAGGY WANG

when clients choose the 'safe' idea over my idea. It sets me off into a spiral of not wanting to make content for a while."

The emotional landscape of content creation, as therapist Gia notes, is uniquely taxing because "your work is immediately seen, judged, and sometimes criticised." She explains, "Unlike other jobs, content creation feels personal, especially when people don't respond the way you hoped."

This pressure to perform often ties a creator's sense of self-worth directly to engagement metrics. Alicia, however, maintains a cautious distance: "It doesn't affect me much because I've been working for a long time. Going viral does not mean you make your mark in the industry. Anyone who considers themselves an artist should strive for legacy over views and likes."

Wang, on the other hand, candidly admits the pain tied to low engagement. "Follower count, likes, shares, comments—they've become the currency of worth," she states frankly. "Even if you know your value isn't defined by numbers, the sting is still there."

Gia advises her clients on managing these emotional fluctuations by maintaining a balanced perspective. "Don't take it personally," she emphasises. "Virality is fleeting, and silence doesn't mean your work has no value. Creating from a place of purpose is what sustains you, not the unpredictable highs of being seen."

Boundaries, however challenging to set, become a critical lifeline. For Wang, it remains "an art I'm struggling to master." Her strategy? Establishing a 'no phone zone' when with friends and relying on her inner circle and therapy to stay grounded. "Some days are great, some days are just hard. Both are valid," she affirms.

"Very few people will care to help when you're going downhill" — ALICIA AMIN

"Behind every post is a person navigating complex emotions" — GIA G KON

Alicia has implemented her own strict boundary—the "twoweek do-nothing rule" after major projects. She's even disabled likes on her social media accounts, preventing unhealthy comparisons.

Gia underscores that healthy boundaries are essential for mental preservation. "Separate your professional content creator self from your personal self," she advises. "Honouring roles outside content creation preserves your sense of wholeness."

Despite increasing public discourse around mental health, both creators sense reluctance within their industry to engage fully. Alicia observes, "Very few creators and artists are willing to have open conversations as they're going through something. It's always after recovery. It's always a

success story." Wang concurs, acknowledging brief conversations with peers but rarely "a full-blown conversation about how we're truly struggling."

Gia highlights how one-sided parasocial interactions compound these struggles. "Creators may feel obligated to maintain a certain image, constantly respond to messages, or keep 'performing' to meet followers' expectations," she explains. "Over time, this can lead to emotional burnout, boundary violations, and blurred lines between personal identity and public persona."

Her message to creators feeling mentally drained is clear and compassionate: "There is no creativity worth sacrificing your mental health for. Loving what you do doesn't mean it should consume you. Set clear boundaries—not because you're unmotivated, but because boundaries are a powerful form of self-respect."

Addressing the audience's role, Gia reminds followers of their power and responsibility: "Every piece of content you see is someone's personal expression, time, energy, and vulnerability made visible. What you say—and how you say it—matters."

Ultimately, Wang advises younger creators: "Don't let them define you. The people who love you will support you, and the ones who don't, their validation and noise really don't matter."

Alicia's advice resonates with simplicity and strength: "Always do things that will allow you to sleep well at night. If you want to stick to your guns, make sure you have the resolve to go through whatever it requires."

Gia further suggests practical daily strategies for creators to maintain mental health. "Ground yourself with rituals that reconnect you to your humanity," she says. "Regular breaks, mindfulness practices, journaling, or simple acts like walking or spending time in nature can significantly lower stress levels and improve emotional regulation."