DesignWhine

Digital Magazine for UI/UX Professionals

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WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL ISSUE

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DESIGN AND WOMEN

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TWENTY FIVE INSPIRING
WOMEN IN UX DESIGN

Happy Women's Day!

About a couple of years ago I was working on a novel that had a strong female protagonist. The novel did not see the light of day but I learnt a lot about women's issues by writing the character. If I summarize my learnings in three crisp points, they'd be -

A) It is strenuous and difficult to be a woman in various areas of life across all social strata

B) Movements like feminism fail to permeate to the bottom layers of our society where they are needed the most

C) The struggle to equality has only just begun

If we look at the design/corporate world, issues like pay-gap, lack of women leaders are far too real. Although these issues are obscure at the start of a women's career, signs of them manifest quickly as a woman moves up the ladder.

Events and celebrations like Women's Day are special, because they remind us of these discriminations around us and give us hope and courage to fight them off.

This year, DesignWhine got an opportunity to interview twenty five inspiring, successful, talented and amazing women designers who shared some of their insights and experiences owing to the issues of women in our industry. I am greatly indebted to each one of these women for taking out the time to be a part of this! Thank you so much!

This issue is special in every manner. While working on this issue and

hiring freelancers to work for us, DesignWhine has achieved a perfect gender ratio of 1:1! The core team consists of one woman and one man and the freelancers' team consists of two women and two men working remotely from every corner of the world. We were conscious to bring in equal representation of women in our small venture and we're glad it finally happened.

However, there's also a narrative widely gaining popularity that suggests there shouldn't be any Women's Day because there's no Men's Day. But this narrative is flawed. Centuries' of history behind us has been a testimony to the fact that patriarchy has plagued all societies across the world. We celebrate Women's Day to remind ourselves of gender equality and a corresponding day for men would defeat the very purpose. Agreed, some of the women around us might be lucky to not experience discrimination and that's amazing but for every handful of such lucky women there are thousands who're not.

And celebrations like these should continue till a cent percent of our women answer in the negative to the question - "Do you think gender discrimination exists?"

Till then, the struggle and the celebration must go on.

RAJAT AGARWAL
Editor-in-Chief

C O N T

25 AMAZING WOMEN IN DESIGN SHARE THEIR INSPI...

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RING STORIES IN THIS WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL ISSUE

CINDY BRUMMER

FOUNDER, CEO & CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT STANDARD BEAGLE STUDIO

Cindy Brummer is the Founder and Creative Director of *Standard Beagle Studio*, a user experience design consultancy based in Austin, Texas.

Cindy began her professional career in television journalism but found her way to user experience design while working as the web producer an an Austin television station. She freelanced and worked as an in-house web designer and developer for 5 years before founding Standard Beagle in 2012. She currently leads a small team of UX designers and developers, helping clients improve their services and technology and make more delightful experiences for their customers.

Cindy graduated from the *University of Texas* at Austin. She is now an adjunct professor at *UT*, teaching the UX/UI boot camp program through the McCombs School of Business.

For fun, Cindy teaches boxing and is a certified Level 1 boxing coach through *USA Boxing*.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I'll be spending the day doing what I love best - empowering others to achieve their goals. It's nice to have a day to recognize the accomplishments of women and the work to empower future generations. Still, I try to make that part of my everyday - working to mentor, inspire, and empower my team, my students, and all the people in my life.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

I'm really not sure. I encounter a lot of women in my work at all levels. that said, I'm not privy to every workplace to be able to say for sure.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I don't believe that gender traits make anyone more or less suited for any roles. That kind of thinking plays into stereotypes and bias, which I like to avoid. However, I have met a lot of strong and confident women who are empathetic, have a growth mindset, and a deep-seated desire to make better user experiences. And that's what makes someone an excellent designer.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I have always admired and respected *Jared Spool*. His candor and perspective is refreshing and I would seek out his presentations at conferences (back when we could go to conferences!).

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

My greatest challenge has been overcoming my own lack of confidence and imposter syndrome. For years I worried that I wasn't good enough because design is a career I transitioned into. I didn't get my college degree in art or design. So I was afraid of seeking feedback from other designers. It was only when I decided to reach out to the community when I realized that it was my own fear holding me back.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

We need to talk to each other and find ways to lift everyone up. What plagues many industries is this concept that if I succeed, it means that someone else has to fail. And that simply isn't true. Competition doesn't mean we need to break others down. So as a collective, designers must embrace a way of thinking that we can all succeed and we should help each other.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Have grit. Life can be tough, especially design. It's hard to have our work constantly evaluated, and it can knock you down. Your own grit will help you withstand the bad days and help you embrace your own success.

> " **..DESIGNERS MUST EMBRACE A WAY OF THINKING THAT WE CAN ALL SUCCEED..**

Cindy Brummer - A certified boxing coach!

MEENA KOTHANDARAMAN

EXPERIENCE STRATEGIST AT TWIG+FISH AND LECTURER AT BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

A qualitative researcher and co-founder of *twig+fish* research practice, a micro-agency based in Boston, USA, **Meena Kothandaraman** loves meeting people and hearing their stories. She credits the diversity of her Canadian upbringing and the many places around the world she has called home as inspiration to her curious and open nature.

Understanding deep knowledge about people is what she encourages organizations to leverage as a strategic tool, and a basis to creating relationship with the people they serve.

Beyond consulting with global firms, she is a 20-year lecturer in Bentley University's graduate Human Factors and Information Design program and has curated the qualitative research course that has shaped the minds of many research leaders.

As a woman of color, who has two kids and a family she chooses to spend a lot of time with, Meena sees the importance of providing mentorship to young female professionals entering the qualitative research workspace. Her favorite motto is "we advance together, or not at all."

Meena is constantly learning and nurtures her interest in music (she is a South Indian classical violinist and vocalist), in the culinary arts (has hosted her own cooking show), and in children's literature (has published a children's book focused on the importance of

proper name pronunciation). She is always grateful to the many people who have inspired her own journey!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Celebrating Women's Day doesn't need to be limited to just one day – we should be celebrating ourselves daily. On a regular cadence, I look back to understand what has brought us to this point in time, and look forward, to the work that has yet to be done.
I always begin my day with a short meditation on something mean-

> ## "
> ## ..WE MUST BE CAREFUL IN OVER-ASSOCIATING SKILLS THAT WOMEN HAVE VERSUS OTHER GENDERS TO ANY PROFESSION..

ingful to me: Women's Day will start with a thank you to the countless women, specifically women of color, who have done so much to help me on my own path. My family is full of strong women, and strong men who have supported us. Part of my day has been set aside to listen to career and work/life balance questions from young women. Vocalizing openly the journey, areas of confusion, how we navigate them, and where we can assert ourselves without apology makes us stronger together.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women

in UI/UX design?

Not really , because a certain trend we have been seeing in our graduate program for a while is a larger percentage of women than men in classes.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

This is an interesting question. I don't believe women possess personality traits that give them an edge as UX professionals.

In qualitative research, we talk about mindset (how we perceive qualitative research activities) and mechanics (how we conduct qualitative research activities) of research.

Mindset "traits" that we must have include staying open-minded, curious and being willing to listen deeply to the details someone is sharing without assumption or bias. Mechanics "traits" that we must have include being organized, articulate and transparent in our way of communicating, and being assertive and confident of the process we are executing. Any gender can possess these traits naturally, or learn them over time.

I personally think we must be careful in over-associating skills that women have v/s other genders to any profession. We have enough proof that if someone wants to do something, and they put their mind to it, they can.

Meena Kothandaraman – Firm believer of 'We advance together, or not at all'

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

As a researcher, I look to analogous space for inspiration. This approach transfers to my role models as well. I am inspired by those who have led with character traits I aspire toward regardless of their gender (male, female, or otherwise).

As a female professional, I especially admire those women who have advanced their careers by speaking impeccably, appreciating and learning from the people around them, and for those who have set a bar in positively balancing their careers with their personal lives.

Some of my role models are other researchers who lead with their high quality work, or perhaps come from political positions, heads of companies that have protected and defended their people, and some are people in my own family who have inspired my work habits and ethics.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

A challenge I distinctly remember 20 years ago was leading a project in Sweden, in which I was working alongside a male peer. I was considered the lead on the project, however, when it came to suggesting approaches and discussing the timeline, the client cut through the discussion and asked me if I had "family obligations". The client asked me, not my male peer. I was startled and didn't know how to respond. Ultimately I went with complete focus on the project, assuring them that no "family obligations" would get in the way.

In hindsight, this was not the way to answer this question, and basically encouraged the client to ask the same to other women after me.

Fast forward to 5 years ago, as my colleague Zarla Ludin and I were presenting our capabilities to a

prominent Fortune 15 company, we were presented the exact same question, this time to both of us. I paused, recognizing that this question sounded familiar. I calmly answered "That's an interesting question: would you ask that if we weren't women?" I delivered the question intentionally, kindly and without attitude. The room went silent. I then proceeded to indicate that it is important that whoever we work with respects us, as we respect them, for each other's abilities and potential. What made it worse was the client didn't take responsibility, nor did they acknowledge what they had just done. Instead, they cross-questioned us on whether our engagements were ever derailed for personal reasons.

After several awkward responses, we respectfully declined the option to work with them. I felt good about that, because the message was clear from our side: we have provided enough proof of the quality work we do and our capabilities and addressed all of their fair questions. We recognized we had to assert ourselves in order to communicate to the client that these additional questions were unacceptable.

Hopefully, this brings it to their attention and the next woman being interviewed will not face the same unfair treatment.

What, in your opinion, could we UI & UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

I find the use of the word "fraternity" interesting here, as it often implies "male group". I would suggest the term "young professionals" as an alternative. :)

Addressing gender inequality is lofty as an objective, and almost feels insurmountable.

I would suggest setting small goals, such as raising awareness, and

advocating for small change as good ways to get started. Identifying a tight scope for what we seek to change for the good before it ultimately affects us (it doesn't have to just personally affect us to make it's existence meaningful).

Raising awareness to the incredible level of unspoken manifestations of gender inequality is a great first step, and is already slowly happening.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Form a network of people with whom you can be transparent in your conversations. This network should not be limited to women only or UX'ers only, but it is important to identify UX women whose lifestyle aligns with your own vision.

Be assertive and honest in all situations, but be respectful in tone. Don't be afraid to ask tough questions – there is no harm in ever asking anything. It informs you a lot more about context and perspectives.

Design your life as you would design any good experience: focus on the people involved (you), your goals and aspirations, and provide yourself the best experience to get there.

Don't be swayed too much by what other people think you should do: be your own guiding force and make the decisions based on your own observations even if it goes against the grain.

Ask yourself how invested you want to be in UX work – and be accepting of that answer. Join into the conversation – even if you are new, your perspective challenges baked-in assumptions.

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RICHA SARABHAI

ASSOCIATE DESIGN DIRECTOR AT NAGARRO

Richa Sarabhai is an Associate Design Director at Nagarro with over 16 years of premium industry experience in driving creative strategy and developing innovative and sharply focused design solutions across various media. Through these years she has handled every part of the design business by working closely for Communication/Brand Design, Visual Design, Creative Strategy, Product Design, and spearheaded design teams for some prominent market leaders like *Sapient*, *Adobe* & *Publicis Digitas*.

She also loves to paint in her free time, a habit that's been a part of her life since childhood; which eventually became a Bachelor of Fine Art degree education and a career in the field of design. Richa has painted mural walls in many of her offices and loves to do hands-on creative decor for homes and design studios.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

The way Women's Day is celebrated has changed a lot over the years. On the personal front, it's a "thank you for being there" peck on a cheek by my spouse and son! But professionally, it's gone from getting Women's Day cards and gifts to celebrating gender equality in many different ways.

At *Nagarro* this year, we are extending the theme of the International Women's Day to our celebrations and both men and women of *Nagarro* are posting our pictures in the *#ChooseToChallenge* gender discrimination pose on our social handles.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?
No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

We talk about empathy day in and day out in the design context and conversations and I believe women are very empathetic. This quality in itself is the greatest tool for a designer and one that gives an edge to the women in the field of design.

The other one I can think of is perseverance or resilience.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Milton Glaser and *Paula Scher* - Old school, passionate, real, and a tad bit eccentric. I believe if you don't have a shred of madness and passion for something, you're not truly committed to it!

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

I haven't faced any direct repercussions for anything as a result of being a woman, but I think in general, a work culture that only rewards masculine traits such as competitiveness and dominance and understate feminine traits such as compassion and not being so 'out-there' is definitely a hurdle.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Many a times we have tried to look at an organisational problem through the design thinking lens. It is a very human problem and one that many of us encounter, directly or indirectly. We might all know women in technology who took a break in their careers to get married or have a baby and after a few years not understanding how to step back in the industry because the technology landscape has changed completely or women who are not a part of the "boy's club" at work and lose out on opportunities.

I think as designers, we can help in defining processes that can help curb gender inequality. Perhaps, more diverse interview panels, fair compensation practices and even capturing and learning from the exit interviews to determine why more women leave at or after a certain level.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

My advice to anyone starting out in the field of design is to trust in themselves. As designers, we have a tendency to doubt and underestimate ourselves, women moreso! No one knows everything, we only get better with time and how much better, depends on your thirst to learn and absorb.

> ❝
> **..A WORK CULTURE ONLY REWARDING MASCULINE TRAITS IS A HURDLE..**

Richa Sarabhai - A painter since childhood and a creative decor enthusiast

PRACHI MANE

SENIOR INNOVATION MANAGER AT STRYKER

Prachi Mane is a psychologist who has been passionate about UX for the last 15 years and loves user research. She believes User Experience is central to all experiences in life so understanding users is critical.

Working across organizations has helped her understand facets of UX in context to various domains and the ever-evolving nature of user needs with technology advancements is what she finds refreshing about this profession.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I will be reaching out to all my women friends to rejoice what they have achieved in their lives.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

The ability to empathize and communicate makes women better UX researchers for sure. We are good at designing our lives taking into considerations multiple perspectives which gives us the ability to think out of the box and be more flexible - making us excellent UX designers too.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?
I look up to *Eric Schaeffer* who I had the privilege to learn usability from during my training at HFI.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?
Being able to convince the critical
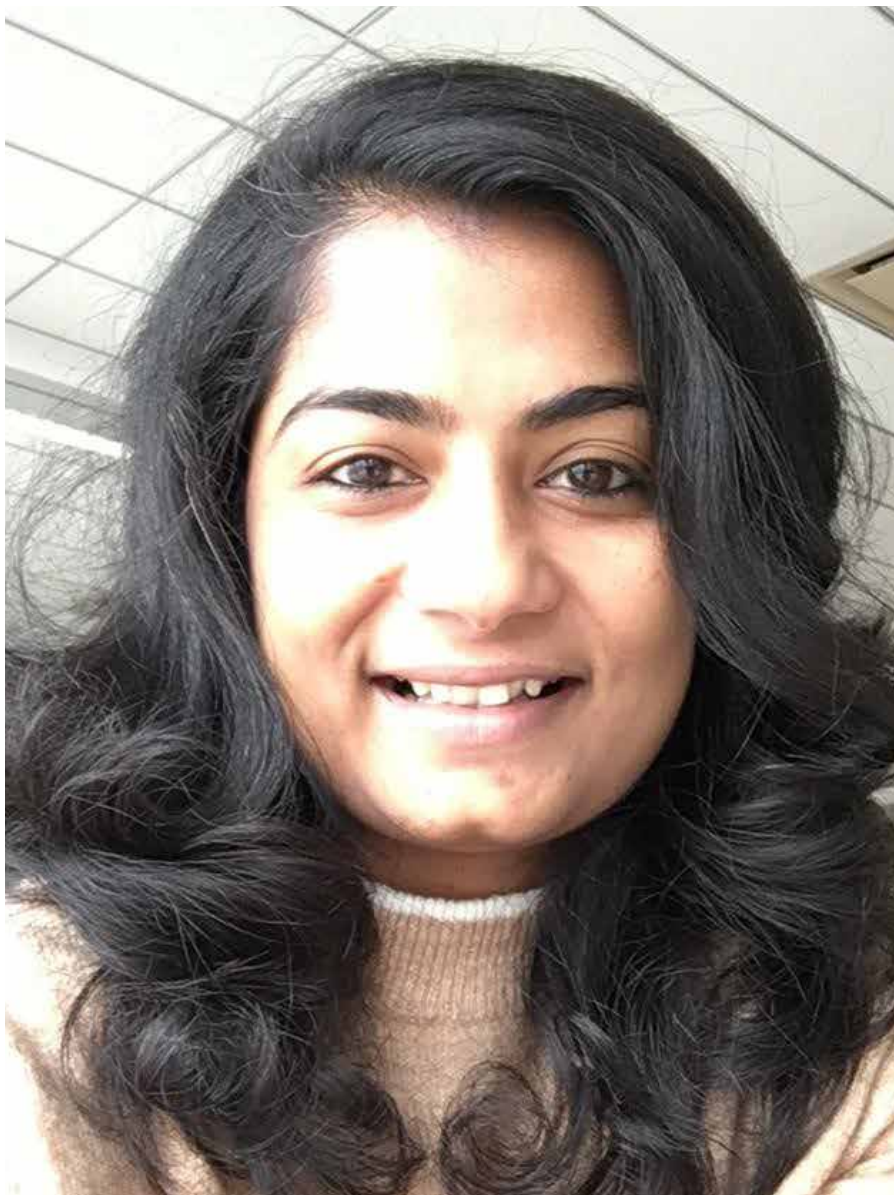
impact UX can bring to very traditional organizations has been a huge challenge. Being a woman UXer the challenge is bigger to explain the benefits to leaders who are more technology-centric.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

We need to unite as a community

and bring out success stories of women and men in various walks of life giving a platform to both genders.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

The sky is the limit - UX is an excellent space for women to thrive!

DEEPA BACHU

CO-FOUNDER & CEO AT PENSAAR DESIGN

Deepa Bachu is an out & out product person. She enjoys identifying problems worth solving & then innovating simple but awesome experiences to solve the problem in ways that delight customers.

She is also a mother of two amazing kids and being a mom is he priority and a big part of her identity.

Shhh..she's a closet artist!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Sharing my POV with an amazing woman who deserves everything she has accomplished despite the odds. And of course, celebrating the fabulous women at *Pensaar Design* who, I am really fortunate to have the opportunity to work with.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Yes, under-representation of women is in every field and design is no exception.

I am making up for it with the majority of employees being women at *Pensaar Design*!

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?
Very hard to generalise something across an entire gender really. If I was forced to name one, I would say the ability to naturally empathise with others.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

David Kelly & *Elon Musk.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

In the corporate world (my prior life), my male counterparts got promoted far quicker & easier. My promotions did come, but longer than my male counterparts.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Evangelise design, together. Pay it forward!

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Design is an amazingly broad field with a lot of opportunity to innovate. Right from understanding human behaviour to creating and designing experiences, you can spend a lifetime learning. There is never a dull moment.

ANGELINE BHAVYA

SENIOR USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER AT CISCO AND PODCAST HOST AT DESIGN LOTA

Co-host of the *Design Lota* podcast, where she tells the stories of designers and creatives from various fields, in the past **Angeline** has studied and worked in software engineering. After asking a lot of questions about the interface while working as an engineer, she went to NID and has worked in design for the last 10 years including an education startup, a UX design agency and a software firm. She's also the mother of a 3 year old and enjoys illustration, hand-lettering and singing.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I want to celebrate and encourage women doing and trying to do excellent work.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

In my own experience at the workplace, I haven't seen that but in public spheres and in the online world we do need more voices of women to be heard.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I have personally known my women colleagues to be better and thorough listeners, and I believe that makes any human a better designer.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Chris Do, *Joe Natoli*, *Paula Scher*, the late *M.P Ranjan*, *Karthi Subbaraman*, *Prof. Balaram* and *Ellen Lupton.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Being treated and perceived differently as a professional after becoming a mother. Our workplaces need to be better sensitized to overcome the biases we have

> **..OUR WORKPLACES NEED TO BE BETTER SENSITIZED TO OVERCOME THE BIASES WE HAVE AGAINST MOTHERS AND THEIR TIME AND ABILITIES..**
>
> **..I WANT TO CELEBRATE AND ENCOURAGE WOMEN DOING EXCELLENT WORK..**

against mothers and their time and abilities.

One simple guideline is to ask the person what they can handle and not make assumptions on their behalf.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Take a serious look at our own teams and take steps to hire women. This means to make an effort and look for good candidates who are women, so that they can have the opportunity to enter into the hiring pipeline.
We also need to see more women in leadership, and that can only happen if we play the long game and make changes at different levels - mentor young women, hire women and also make the workplace conducive for women of all ages and stages to grow in their careers.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Be flexible, take bold steps, and don't stop moving forward.

Keep your eyes on the road and pay attention to voices who are rooting for you.

Keep learning every single day and celebrate your growth.

Angeline Bhavya - A mother, an illustrator and a hand-lettering enthusiast

NIAMH HARMAN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT SPECTRUM.LIFE

Niamh Harman is a very passionate about designing for social positive impact. She does some volunteering and loves being able to combine design and technology to better peoples lives, particularly in the area of wellbeing. Her background is in branding and packaging design, but she went on to study UX Design and fell in love with it!

She currently works from home as a Creative Director of Ireland's largest Employee Health and Wellbeing company.

Putting design aside — she is a Cat-Mom and lives in a small house in Dublin, Ireland. She is an active Dublin Simon Community Souprun volunteer helping the homeless community of Dublin, is an ADPList mentor and her favourite food is PIZZA!

50/50 split between men and women so I don't necessarily see an under-representation of women in the field. I do however really encourage the women I mentor, its about really pushing them and giving them the boost and confidence they need.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Empathy empathy empathy! If you think something might annoy a user, chances are it will! Its always important to put yourself in the user's shoes. Take a step back from your work. Look at it as if you didn't design it. Send it to others, seek criticism. We can always improve. Be ok with redesigning, redesigning again and again until its right. Every iteration brings new learnings.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

I've worked as part of a predominantly male dev-team for 5 years, I don't have a dev background so a lot of that stuff goes over my head, which initially caused me to suffer from terrible imposter syndrome. I have to remind myself that I have other skills and its ok to not know everything. I've also been incredibly lucky that I've worked with amazing men in this field, so they have never made me feel like I don't belong or shouldn't be there. Its just in your head sometimes. I recommend *The Imposter Cure* by *Dr Jessamy Hibberd*, this really helped me.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Help other women to succeed, mentor other women and showcase other women! Be proud of the success and achievements of women. Look at *Whitney Wolfe Herd*!

Research shows that that women are more likely to achieve professional success when surrounded by other women, so surround yourself!

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Go for it!!! Read *Mark Manson*'s, *The subtle art of not giving a fuck* and don't be afraid to fail. Failing comes with learning and it will only make you a better designer!

> ## ..WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS WHEN SURROUNDED BY OTHER WOMEN..

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Call my mother of course! ;)

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

My mentees are probably about a

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I really look up to my previous boss *Aileen Cox Blundell*, she's so incredibly entrepreneurial and innovative and she thought me a lot about self-confidence. She has been a huge role model for me throughout my career.

Niamh Harman - A cat-mom and an active volunteer!

ASHWINI GARDE

UX DESIGN & RESEARCH LEADER AND VISITING FACULTY AT MIT INSTITUTE OF DESIGN

A design professional with over 18 years of cumulative experience in the fields of User Experience Design and Research, **Ashwini Garde** hold an M.Des. (Visual Communication) Masters degree from IDC, IIT Bombay, and a B.F.A. in Applied Arts from Sir J.J. Institute of Applied Arts. She is also a Certified Usability Analyst (CUA) from HFI and an IBM certified Design Thinking Practitioner.

Ashwini has led design teams to bring innovative, intuitive solutions to clients and businesses. She works in the area of Digital Transformation and re-invention across various domains like Digital Banking, Next Generation digital products, and services, Mobile technology providers, etc. She is a keen research-minded designer, working hands-on with User Research, to seek key insights into User

usable, and simple design solutions that evoke a delightful user/-customer experience.

And oh, she's also an aspiring writer!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Nothing really special, might catch up with some of my friends and celebrate in a low-key way.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I think empathy comes naturally to

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

In my early career I was not taken seriously because I was young and female. However this attitude in the workplace has changed over time with grey hair. :) I do feel that young women bring a lot to the design industry and we should be taken very very seriously even when we are young!

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Read a lot, be well informed, be analytical and depend on your intelligence and creativity, girls!!! There is no need to think that you are different, or that you should be treated differently because you are a woman, have fun with your work and make it a good life!

Women sometimes have unique skills, like, for example, an intuitive understanding of emotions, better soft skills and great communication! Build on your positives and rock the world!

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Be focussed, be passionate and be driven. Drive and enthusiasm will take you very far, much much more than credentials or education can!

> ## ..EARLIER I WAS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY BECAUSE I WAS YOUNG AND FEMALE..

Behaviour and turn these research insights into compelling and informed design solutions.

She is passionate about designing approaches for UX design that are empathetic about user needs and is strong at crafting experiences with a user-first approach. Her core interest lies in deriving insights from user research and applying them to craft creative,

women and women are more tuned into other people's feelings, emotions and thoughts on a habitual level. This makes them empathetic, caring and intelligent designers and researchers.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Nathan Shedroff, Jan Chipchase and *Don Norman.*

Ashwini Garde - A design leader and an aspiring writer

PRIYA SHARMA

SENIOR UX ARCHITECT AT MCKINSEY & COMPANY

Priya Sharma has been curious since ever, that is what she thinks led her to become a designer.

What she does today is her passion and she looks forward to contribute more to the world!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

With other women of course :), especially with the ones around me, empowering them, whichever way I can!

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I'd say empathy and that's the basic step of understanding anything related to human and solving problems at the deepest level.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?
Shashank Sahay, *Don Norman* and *Julie Zhuo*.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Not sure if this is with respect to being a woman, but the greatest challenge I have had to face as a designer is that sometimes I have had to work with non-designers who do not possess design maturity, which leads to more efforts to get stakeholders buy-in.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a rela- **tively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?**

Never doubt yourself, I see a lot of women have self doubt which is even more dangerous than being over confident is.

The second helpful thing would be empowering each other to get better and rise higher in the busi- ness.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

We're blessed with empathy skills! Let's leverage that and make this world a better place to be.

ANSHUMALI BARUAH

VOICE & AI UX DESIGNER AT DEUTSCHE TELEKOM AND MENTOR AT WOMEN IN VOICE

Anshumali is a designer & theorist working towards mapping of customer experiences in Voice, Conversational AI & associated emerging technologies. She is excited about the potential of AI in providing us fulfilled moments where most of us seem to be overwhelmed with technology.

She is a part of the Magenta Voice Program at Deutsche Telekom, Germany's Innovation Hub. There, she designs experiences for Telekom's Hallo Magenta assistant. In the past, she has led a team which designed conversational experiences for Bixby, Samsung's Intelligent Assistant at Samsung R & D Institute, Bangalore, India. Her work has also led to patents in the field of AI.

She is an alumni of the IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay, India, specialising in Interaction Design.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Be thankful for all the women in my life.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

I would say there's under-representation across the levels.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Emapthy, mindful connections.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

John Maeda, *Cathy Pearl* and *Zaha Hadid.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

My biggest challenge was (and still is) establishing myself as a professionally ambitious woman.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

The best thing we can do is really simple, support each other, empower each other to make our voice heard.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

It really helps to drown out the negatives and look for what is that one thing you can take out for yourself in your current situation (it could be something you learn the hard way, a friend who stood by you, an opportunity). Don't stop. Be yourself fearlessly!

MIRIAM ISAAC

UX & PRODUCT DESIGNER AT MIRIAM ISAAC

A mother of 4 beautiful children, **Miriam Isaac** is a UX Designer and loves to read and listen to one too many true crime podcasts!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I hope to raise awareness on my social media about the unjust discrimination that women face in the workplace, but also hope to spend quality time with my daughters :)

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Yes.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I think women are amazing! They are loyal, dedicated, loving and hard working. They also work hard to help and build up those around them. These traits are invaluable to any UX designer.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I'm going to say women as this is women's day! So *Ioana Teleanu*, *Anfisa Bogomolova*, *Ana Santos*, *Helen Domina*, *Veronica Camara* and *Patricia Reiners*.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Unfortunately, I've faced a lot of gender and religious discrimination as a designer. So many different things have happened along my career journey, which made me question so much. It took a lot of time to understand and put the

pieces back together.

I am now a proud advocate for women in general and specifically religious Jewish women.

I'm so grateful to the wonderful design community for being so supportive.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

We need to build each other up. We need to understand that the jealously we may feel towards each other is part of the patriarchy and is in no benefit to us as women. We need to read books like *Women Don't Owe You Pretty* to

truly understand how ingrained these ideas may be within us.

Keep raising awareness and keep supporting each other!

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

It's not going to be simple or easy. You will face hardships, and it will be difficult. But please keep going, please stay strong, reach out to other women and yes, there are also many male allies amongst the community.

Reach out, until you find your tribe and keep at it, until you find your place within this beautiful community!

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DEEPALI NAYAR

ASSOCIATE CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT PUBLICIS SAPIENT

Nature inspires **Deepali Nayar** in ways that words cannot describe. Right from her childhood through her growing years and now in her professional life as a designer, she has always looked to nature for energy and inspiration; for answers to the most puzzling questions. She has never had a seat in a closed space. She loves sitting by a window, looking up at the sky, and experiencing the infinite freedom it bestows. And that's exactly what she loves about design too – the liberty and joy in it!

Had she not been a designer, she would have most certainly been a pilot!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Every day is our day, isn't it? We create something new, learn a trick or two, and become a better version of ourselves.

Having said that, we do have an interesting line-up of talks planned this year. I'm particularly looking forward to attending one that'll showcase how women in design are going beyond conventional boundaries and making a mark for themselves.

Not only is it a great time to be a "woman in design", but the future looks very promising too. Women are acing their multi-tasking game, raising the bar every day and having fun doing it their way!

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Women are under-represented in most professional fields, not just in UI/UX design. And while gender barriers do exist, there are also numerous women who have shattered such stereotypes and exceled in their respective fields.

We should draw inspiration from such "sheroes" and take that essential first step to break the mental barriers we have created for ourselves.

The design community is certainly becoming more inclusive and there's never been a more opportune time to take charge, evolve and inspire.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Women are creators. We are creatures of logic and evaluate all the pros and cons before arriving at a solution. This gives us an edge in life and in art. Our advocacy for "beauty" is backed by our endorsement of "rationale" and that's what a great "user experience" is also all about.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Molly Scannell, Dina Amin, Barry Fiske, Wendy Johansson, David Carson and *John Maeda.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Not as a woman designer per se, but simply as a design professional with over 16 years of experience working with global teams and clients, breaking the stereotype of "we know what our customers/users want" is a big challenge that I continue to face. That's work-wise.

At a personal level, I want the world to stop looking at India as a design production hub. Bringing talented Indian designers to the forefront and getting them the acceptance and acknowledgment they deserve from the global design fraternity has been a strife. The mindset change has been slow, but our designers are creating award-winning work and people are beginning to take notice.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Truly imbibe the spirit of "liberty, equality and fraternity". Have an open and learning mindset and respect people for the value they create, not the gender they identify with. Borrow from each other's strengths and unique life experiences.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

You've got it in you girl. Go, conquer the world!

> **..DESIGN COMMUNITY IS CERTAINLY BECOMING MORE INCLUSIVE..**

Deepali Nayar - An ardent nature lover!

VANESSA DSOUZA

HEAD OF DESIGN AT SHOPUP

As a child **Vanessa Dsouza** was immensely curious about why things were designed the way they were and why some objects serving the same purpose seemed more interesting to people than others. She became deeply obsessed with objects from an early age. She was absolutely stunned when she realized that everything around us was "designed" — one way or the other — by someone.

She saw that when people got comfortable with some objects, they became alive and took on a life of their own, affecting the people around them. Sometimes this relationship was a beautiful one and sometimes it was painful to the users. To her, this is almost like a marriage between the object and the user. Design stands in the middle of this marriage like Cupid, making the user fall in love with the object.

Her 'Aha' moment was in the late 1990's - during her stint at DEShaw - where she was surrounded by the best minds and state-of-the-art technology and design.

She saw for the very first time the impact and scope technology was enabing, in its ability to reach out to millions across the world. Connecting the dots, she saw how good design could be the only creative tool that brought technology closer to humans and how it could shape experiences positively.

Design had a responsibility. That was her turning point - she took the leap in honing this curiosity and fueling it all the way up - there's been no turning back since!

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Do women need a day? Everyday is a Woman's Day when one is progressive, purposeful and positive.

Having said that, this Women's Day, I wish all women loads of luck in making their aspirations come true without any self imposed inhibitions. Be real. Be genuine. Be ambitious. And remember that success is not about reaching the top alone. It's all about taking as many deserving people along with

you, irrespective of their gender.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Research has proved that female role models have emerged as the key in encouraging other women to excel in areas where they may be under-represented. You can't be what you can't see — and for women, that often translates to senior leadership positions tradi-

tionally held by men. Ironically, in my experience as both a designer and as a design manager, I've noticed that there is a fairly sizable number of women at the junior to mid levels. It's as you go up the corporate ladder that the number of women in leadership roles decrease.

The reasons could be aplenty - marriage, children, other responsibilities which society deems that women invariably prioritise, etc.

Organisations need to take cognizance of this anomaly and measure needs to be put in place to support women along the way.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Instead of pinning it down to gender specific traits, let's take common traits first because it is important to realise that there is business value in good design. It is not just about improving the core products or the delivery of services but the full user experience and the value the customer obtains that matters. When you look at it from that perspective, clarity of thought and the ability to ask the right questions are very valuable traits.

Most women are more empathetic and typically endowed with an aesthetic eye, but what women need is to get comfortable with is design metrics and data led design decisions. They need to work collaboratively and communicate how their designs tie to meeting business goals.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a

designer?

Challenges yes, but I cannot say that I've encountered any obvious difficulties just because I am a woman. I am aware of the general challenges that women face of course. I've had the privilege of working with amazing co-workers, right from *DE Shaw* to *Deloitte* in my early days and then to *Amazon* and *Voonik* where I've led teams. If I were to call out a big challenge, it is about learning how to transition from designing to managing a design team and eventually to making the design team of strategic importance to the organisation. There was no rulebook or easy approach to this.

And its not just because I am a woman, but its certainly tougher for a woman to get management to recognise this.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

The impact of gender disparity goes far beyond the workplace. It shapes the world in which we live. If I were to focus on one, a severe lack of female leadership in design is the most striking area. Amongst the big and small companies I've worked in, almost none of them have had a woman in a senior leadership role when it came to design. Neither did they have a grooming mechanism for women leaders in design. To me this is an area that needs more light shined on.

When I was given the responsibility to lead design, it did not come with a rule book of how to look at

design strategically and tie it to organisational growth. Among the ways we overcame this was by putting in place simple measures like assessing design performance with the same rigour of tracking revenues, but it took a long while and humongous effort.

If this fraternity could bring together other women leaders in design and mentor young designers or bring about a guidebook for young designers to transform themselves into leaders of tomorrow, it would play a big role in addressing this gap of women in senior design roles.

With all this talk of inequality, in today's volatile markets, which includes design as an industry and profession, diversity in the workplace is a key step to a successful business. I believe an important part of this is to celebrate the difference men and women can bring to solve tomorrow's problems.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

While anyone can pursue a career in UX, not everyone would necessarily feel at home in this field.

When considering whether this is the right path for you, remember that the skillset of a good UX designer is dynamically broad. You need to think about your inherent characteristics, natural talents, and what motivates you to go that extra mile, on a daily basis.

A UX designer has incredibly wide ranging skill-sets that encompasses a variety of soft skills, industry skills, and crossover skills.

> **..FEMALE ROLE MODELS HAVE EMERGED AS KEY IN ENCOURAGING OTHER WOMEN TO EXCEL..**

NEHA SARASWAT

SENIOR MANAGER AT WALMART GLOBAL TECH INDIA

An absolute cynic to hopelessly romantic, **Neha Saraswat** has lived her life in extremes. She finds herself naturally picking things that others find challenging or absurd while she respects others it never crosses her mind that she needs to seek permissions or approvals. She lives her life with a loose definition of being good and trust people by default.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Driving to Hyderabad with my best friend to find her furniture for her new home.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?
Yes and No.

Design for creation is a feminine activity, and women tend to like this field. The corporate culture though is usually the hinderance so we see a lot of designers not making to design leadership. It is not a problem of under-representation. it is a problem of proper channeling of talent.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I dont think anybody's gender makes them better or worst for any job in the world there is one thing that women bring clearly to workplace, it is perseverance, they keep at it and hold their grounds

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I look up to *Indi Young* and *Donella Meadows*. Both of them happen to be women.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

As a designer, I have faced zero challenges pertaining to my gender. As a woman, and a forward looking one, people have found me intimidating, loud, out of place, attractive, always presenting last, always being stopped when talking, never given a stage, demanding, sharp and much more. All of this has worked in mixed manner for me.

Unless women present their own cases they are rarely looked at or considered for next opportunity.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

The young people must form deeper bonds with their other gender partners, exchange ideas, discuss ideas openly and profusely.

Design is a cerebral activity, for it to be inclusive everybody needs to be part of same discussion.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

For everyone starting young, they must start by making more - the more we make the better we get. The craft has everything in it, it is out there to help us go beyond the mundane clutter of discrimination. Hone your language and articulation and believe that you can change this world singularly and together. Make friends both men and women and be open with your ideas. There is great power in openness!

ANANNYA BHOWMIK

PUBLIC SPEAKER AND SERVICE DESIGNER AT FROG

Anannya Bhowmik's interest lies in speculating problems from a holistic system-level lens to design a solution. She has a background in Service & Interaction Design and enjoys working with cross-cultural heterogeneous teams.

Currently she is working with Frog, Bangalore, and has a formal education from NIFT & Politecnico di Milano.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I don't have any specific plan as such. Probably I would serve breakfast at bed for my mother!

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

There is a good number of junior to mid-senior professionals. But, I can only spot an iota of influential top management women.

Where do all the ladies go?

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

It's a proven scientific fact that women posses more empathy, that makes them a better designer. In my opinion, most of us are multitasker that also gives them an edge in this case.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Maja Gruszynski (General Manager of frog India), *Kara Pecknold* (Executive Design Director at frog leading global sustainability initiative by frog), *Ekta Jafri* (Design Director IBM iX), *Azmina Poddar* (APAC - Design Studio Head BCG)

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

I would not say I have faced any challenge for being a "woman". When I see unequal representation of female leaders in the industry, that turns my spirit down.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Firstly, we (women) need to stop considering ourself "less" and

even ignore the feeling of being a "victim". We should (and we could) pull up each other to solve the problem of gender inequality.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Master your craft but don't stop there. Do more than that: blogging, speaking, workshops.

As a frog can say, "Make your mark".

KARISHMA AJMERA

CO FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT TWIST OPEN UX

Karishma Ajmera is the co-founder and creative director at Twist Open UX (twistopen.in), a strategic UX design agency in Bangalore. Her design practice is at the intersection of user needs, business needs and technology. Her strengths lie in Customer Experience design and she enjoys interfacing with teams and customers globally to bring innovative and disruptive design ideas to life. Her work includes training, mentoring and empowering creative talent, collaborating with multi-disciplinary teams and manoeuvring through project/business challenges. On a day to day basis she plays many roles, steering a team of designers to create solutions for customers that include Healthcare, Social innovation, Retail, Analytics, Data Science, Military, Payments/finance, Cloud applications, IoT products and solutions, Telecom, Wearable tech, AI and Blockchain.

She is also the treasurer of the National Executive Council of ADI (the Association of Designers of India). The ADI is an independent national body of the design community that creates an interface between design professionals, and the industry, the educational institutes and the policy makers in the government.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I plan to read short stories about rebel girls to my two sons this whole month, so they grow up knowing that gender has no role to play in our capabilities.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

In my experience, I've realised women have strong people skills and communication skills, both of which serve a UX designer well.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Charles and Ray Eames, Stefan Sagmeister and *Ada Lovelace.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

I've been blessed that I've only had to prove my credentials as a designer, rather than a designer who happens to be a woman; so most of my challenges are the same as those faced by any designer, male or female.

That said, because the teams we work with come with their own inherent set of biases, gender-based challenges can crop up.

One particular area where women UX designers may face an issue is while working with engineers/coders, an overwhelming majority of whom tend to be male. There's an implicit assumption that as women, we may not be able to grasp technical specifications and functionality. That we will only understand the nuances of design, but not the engineering components required to implement the UX/UI design we've created.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

As a fraternity that is constantly learning, I believe we've come a long way when it comes to gender parity. Obviously there's still a lot of work ahead, but as long as we stay true to the credo of what it takes to be a good UX/UI designer: imbibing a diversity of thought, culture and perspective, we'll get there.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

It's a misnomer that UI/UX is purely about aesthetics: the fact is, the true purpose of design is to bring value, so an understanding of how the client's business works, or business in general, is a must-have. UX designers are essentially bridge builders: we connect the dots between business goals and user goals, and to do that effectively, we need to bridge the gap between design and engineering, so that the design experience and its intention are both carried through. This doesn't mean that designers have to become expert coders, but simply that we need to understand a developer's perspective, a sort of 'shared understanding.'

> **..I PLAN TO READ SHORT STORIES ABOUT REBEL GIRLS TO MY SONS..**

Karishma Ajmera - A designer, an entrepreneur and the treasurer of ADI

KOMAL BASRAON

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER AT SIEMENS TECHNOLOGY INDIA

Describing herself, **Komal** says, "I'm your friendly neighbourhood UX Designer"!

She is generally found reading or experimenting with seemingly bland food (think broccoli) when not designing.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Responding to men mansplaining to me how we need a men's day :) On a serious note, I try celebrating women around me all year round. I hope some day we reach the level of social equity where we do not need to reserve a day on the calendar to appreciate ourselves.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Of course there is, not just in UI and UX but in the tech industry as a whole.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Empathy, the core of designing any human experience, comes naturally to us.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Lizzie Dyson, Elizabeth Churchill, Jessica Walsh, Gurman Bhatia (She's a data journalist but her work is fascinating)*, Whitney Wolfe Herd* (CEO at 31) and *Debby Alberts* (Designer at 60!).

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

To make male developers take me seriously. Being a designer and a woman is twice the challenge when it comes to male developers. Not going to add the 'no offense' disclaimer here :)

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

The problem of gender inequality is a "wicked problem" and needs to be targeted at a socio-economic and governance level. We can still do our bit by making our designs inclusive, especially for a majority of the women in the developing world whose usage of the internet and the mobile is still very utilitarian. On the other end of the spectrum, we need more women in design leadership positions

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Women, more than men, are conditioned to doubt themselves. My advise would be to take the leap, plunge in, and enjoy the ride. When in doubt, ask yourself, "*what is the worst that could happen?*", more often than not, it's not much!

Enjoying this issue of
DesignWhine?

Buy us a coffee and
support us.

LINDA SUM

SENIOR PRODUCT DESIGN MANAGER AT HULU

Linda Sum was born and raised in Hong Kong, attended high school in the UK, and moved to California for college, and worked in New York City for a few years. Now she's back in Southern California and enjoying the sunny weather!

A few things that inspired her to learn and work in the design/tech space -

1) Sim City 2000: She was in awe of its UI and icon design when she first played the game at the age of 10

2) Kandinsky's paintings (composition, VII, 1913): She was deeply moved and inspired by his paintings and his struggle as an artist at the age of 12

3) First time visiting Tokyo at the age of 13: She marveled at the Tokyo subway map and discovered her interest in map and information design

4) A chair design exhibition in Hong Kong: She visited this exhibition when she was 15 and discovered design and Eames!

5) A 2D design class she took at a community college: Linda discovered graphic design as a career path when she was 18

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

There'll be company events that I will be attending, including a webinar and celebration. I also plan on reading *Unleashed* which is a book written by these two amazing female leaders on the topic of team empowerment and leadership skills.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Yes and especially women of color and the absence of females at the

leadership positions.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Empathetic, nurturing, tolerance of stress, altruistic.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Julie Zhou, *Dantley Davis* and *John Maeda.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

1) Being expected to fit in certain gender roles at the workplace

2) Being assessed mostly on performance and achievements rather than potential during promotion cycle. Hence feeling the stress to always perform at the highest capacity to prove myself

3) Break into leadership role at tech companies

4) Imposter syndrome

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem

of gender inequality?

We need to create space to share stories and experiences more often without the fear of judgment. Knowing that there's a community where we are all going through similar challenges and discuss how we can support each other through the journey is very important. Gender inequality is a complex issue to tackle. It requires designers from a diverse racial, gender, socio-economic, and professional background to unpack the subject and turn into tangible items we can work with. We also need allies and advocates

> **"**
> **..WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO ASK FOR OR NEGOTIATE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITHIN UX AS WELL AS COMPENSATION..**

from different industries to support the initiatives.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

It's important to be true to yourself. Don't let a job or others' criticism doubt the very things that make you unique and amazing. Love it and own it, because those are the diverse perspectives and voices we need to make positive change and impact in the design space.

Linda Sum – Discovered her love for information design by a Tokyo Subway Map!

MANISHA GUPTA

DESIGN LEAD FOR ADOBE COLOR & CAPTURE AT ADOBE

A design lead at Adobe **Manisha Gupta** crafts the future vision of digital products with some stellar ideas on how to provide the best experience to our new-age users. she's also a type-enthusiast and the co-founder of *47-Days-of-Devanagari* type challenge to advocate the aesthetic quotient of the Devanagari script across the globe. When strolling on the streets, she's always photographing people, places & life, and has travelled to 30+ cities in India to learn about its cultural diversity.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I am and have always been a believer that womanhood is a lifelong celebration and not restricted to a day. So, even for the upcoming Women's Day I shall continue to champion other women to tap into their interests and pursue their passions, take time to learn and be proud of themselves.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Yes, but like other creative fields, the number of women in UX/UI design fields are also increasing.

Many organisations and design teams have started carefully structuring their teams with a multi-cultural mix of minds, thinking and approaches.

I strongly believe this diversity makes for much better results in the work we do.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Ability to deal with ambiguity and explore new ideas, being details-oriented, diligent and empathetic are the qualities that help women outshine as UX designers.

However, irrespective of the gender, being forceful and not able to learn from mistakes can create setbacks for any designer.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I deeply admire *Jonathan Ive* for working in depth on subjects, *Ian Spalter*'s strive for perfection and *Elizabeth Churchill* for her mature approach towards diversity and inclusion.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

As a woman, we all tend to face multiple challenges in juggling between professional and personal commitments, especially when you are also a mother of a 6-year old.

After the maternity break, I had to quickly ramp up considering the very dynamic nature of the design industry and the fact that there is something new to learn almost everyday.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

As a leader, we should build diversified teams with equal representation of both genders to bring in equality. This is one of the important ways to design experiences which are more holistic and not just driven by one gender mindset.

Even in our day to day work, we need to change mindset towards using gender neutral pronouns like they/them/their instead of he/him/his for our users. It could be small, yet impactful steps to begin removing the biases.

Unlike other streams, design being a young and collaborative fraternity can create mediums to bring diverse voices together and highlight their stories, challenges, motivation to help people get support and opportunities to flourish. This can help to create a gender neutral society and environment.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

My honest piece of advice is to not just think about women and men necessarily, but improve skills such as listening, empathy and collaboration which are growing in importance in the design industry due to the need to work across disciplines.

> ❝
> ## ..WE NEED TO BE USING GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS LIKE THEY/THEM/THEIR..

Manisha Gupta- A mother of a 6 year old, donning multiple hats

CHRISTINA CONNELLY

CO–FOUNDER & DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENCE DESIGN AT HONEY BADGER

Here are some phrases that describe **Christina Connelly** - Scottish ginger lass living in England. Lego Addict. USA Explorer. Published Illustrator. Business owner and Experience Design advocate.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I love to teach and mentor people and have been doing this for the past few years. Especially new designers. When I was starting out in the design industry myself, I didn't have anyone I could reach out to. So I made it my mission to be an approachable mentor in this field. This Women's Day I have arranged some 1 on 1 virtual chats with amazing women designers around the globe. So I can support them on their journey into design. I can't wait to meet them.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Recently I have seen the under-representation of women in the junior and mid-weight roles of the Design industry and it's women now dominating the senior roles. I see more amazing and powerful women in leadership now more than ever, and it's inspiring to watch. I still keep in touch with a lot of women I have managed in the past when they were trainees and juniors, who are now in senior leadership roles and it makes me very proud.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Women alone don't bring good or bad personality traits to the design industry. But in-fact everyone as individuals do. People are so unique and interesting in their own ways. Each one of us brings our own personalities and quirks to the design thinking process.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Liz Leakey - I worked with *Liz* during my time at the *BBC*. She was my first real mentor in the design industry. She taught me how to be a great design thinker, how to empathise with the audience and how to be a great manager. She gave me the confidence and knowledge I have today and I owe all my management skills to her.

Vimla Appadoo - I met *Vim* a few years ago when she invited me along to give a talk at her *SheSaysMCR* event. I remember watching Vim speak and being blown away by her enthusiasm, honesty and grace. We spoke after the event and hit it off. We worked together in a previous company and would end up staying after hours chatting about how we could right all the wrongs in this world.

Last year along with *Gareth Burton*, the 3 of us founded *Honey Badger*.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Salary! I have gone most of my career underpaid in my roles. I knew men were being paid more for the same role, which in turn made me value myself less. It took me a long time to snap out of that and stand my ground. I knew my worth, and I proudly stand by it now.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Encourage people to remove the skin over the skeleton. We are all wireframes underneath! Sadly, people label the skin you wear. So its time to remove it.

This will allow us to build equality in our cultures, not only with gender, but with race, sexuality, background and all other inequalities in the world.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Show your process and thinking in your portfolio, not just a polished outcome. Know your worth, and negotiate your salary. Its important you are as comfortable with the company as they with you - an interview is a two way process.
Be yourself. Bring your personality to your role. Advocate for your audience. Sometimes you will be the only one in the room doing so while other disciplines wont, so stand up for your audience and your users.

You are their voice!

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> ## ..I HAVE GONE MOST OF MY CAREER UNDERPAID IN MY ROLES..

Christina Connelly - Scottish ginger lass and a lego addict!

SNEHA BHADAURIA

SENIOR PRODUCT DESIGNER AT CENTIME, INC.

Over the years, working in many set-ups with very unique and talented people has shaped **Sneha Bhadauria**'s career and the way she designs. Her journey started as an artist, poetry enthusiast, which slowly moved towards designing digital products. She spent time building her own company and failed at that (she believes that's probably the best thing that happened to her!). However, she decided to spend more time on her craft and solve bigger design challenges.

Sneha loves design, sharing what she knows, learning what others have to say, and enjoys how dynamic it is. She has formally studied design at *Symbiosis Institute of Design*, and has ever since worked on multiple projects, across multiple domains with multiple teams.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I don't particularly celebrate the day but I do thank a few important women in my life to have been so strong and resilient. Share my gratitude for being a flag bearer in life instead of pulling me down. I also like to share a few fun notes and messages with my friends to enjoy the day with some pun.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Yes, I do feel there is an under-representation of women in the design world (as is in most industries). A lot of times it's due to lack of acceptance, sometimes it's the work-life balance portrayed as an issue, and a lot of times it just the pure lack of trust that women can lead. Undermining skills over gender-based biases is very common. Lastly and sadly, women don't have each other's back, we really need to be each other's cheerleaders. Men take their bro code pretty seriously, maybe it's time we learn a thing or two from them.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I personally see designers as designers not men and women. As a community we should focus on bringing in the the right skills to the table. Having said that all designers need to have great observation, appetite to experiment, restart multiple times with the same fire, know the basics of design and have the ability to adapt in a dynamic environment. Anyone with those is welcome to explore the world of design.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

There are a few people who have really inspired me over the years, *Bapa,* my terracotta teacher, my art teachers *Nitish Sir* and *Ghosh Ma'am*, my parents. They are not designers but they sure taught me everything.

I'd like to share a story about why I don't necessarily look up to people anymore, a while back I was travelling in Europe and met an old lady, we started talking she was well travelled and very Interesting. I asked her, what is that one thing that you have learnt in your life that you'd like to pass on to me.. She said, "Never look up to anyone and never look down on anyone." It took me some time to understand it but all it means is to be your best version every day.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

As a woman, the biggest challenge was to become a designer. When I started out design was not as popular in India. Most knew the synonym for design being Fashion. It was tough to explain what I wanted to do and why. Especially leaving the known viable, 9 to 5 options like banking or CA or just anything everyone understood.

As a woman in design, I felt the pressure of having to continuously prove myself was much higher compared to my male counterparts. Since acceptance also came from men in leadership roles. However, I feel that's great because I did push more and more to become a better version of me, my perseverance did pay off.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Truly imbibe the spirit of "liberty, equality and fraternity". Have an open and learning mindset and respect people for the value they create, not the gender they identify with. Borrow from each other's strengths and unique life experiences. Do not compare yourself with others on any account – work, capability or earnings. Have faith in your competence and uniqueness. Choose your stream and work towards mastering it. And, if you can, help others along the way!

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

You've got it in you girl. Go, conquer the world!

Sneha Bhadauria – "We can solve business problems by solving user problems"

ANA SOFIA GONZALEZ

PUBLIC SPEAKER AND SENIOR DESIGNER AT MICROSOFT

Ana Sofia is a Senior Designer at Microsoft. She delights in democratizing innovative solutions. With over 10 years of experience in the tech industry, she includes diverse perspectives into her designs. She knows that adoption to innovations might be difficult. By sharing her insights on innovation, leadership, work culture, and collaboration, she helps products teams and end users adopt innovation.

She has designed for mixed reality, artificial intelligence, retail from consumer to enterprise products in multiple countries. She advocates for D&I initiatives by being a chapter leader at Microsoft Latinx Employee resource group. She creates allyships for minorities, and mentoring innitiatives.

When she is not working or volunteering, you can find her dancing and exploring unknown lands.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

Attend and facilitate a panel hosted at Microsoft.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

It is not seen in early and mid level career, but we are missing a seat on the table in design leadership positions.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

We are nurturing, so some people prefer women design managers. We do more analyzing since we feel we have to constantly prove ourselves and create solutions with all of the right data.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

David Kelley, how he integrated design thinking in solving complex problems.

Dieter Rams, he simplified products.

Hendy Lamar, an actress and inventor, she created a technology that prevented signals transmitted over radio from being intercepted by the enemy during WW2, which now is an essential technology for wi-fi, bluetooth, and other wireless networks.

Muriel Cooper, co-founder of the MIT Media Lab and a pioneer of computer-graphics design.

Tasha Lutfi, a Design Director at Microsoft who I was fortunate to meet, she empowers minorities, she brings out her most authentic self, and creates innovative solutions to Microsoft.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

Speaking up in meetings, and speaking up with my authentic voice.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Learn to be empathetic, vulnerable, and curious. Small but impactful questions such as "how was your day? " can create empathy.

By being vulnerable so the person can open up, you could even learn that they they were sick and

> ## "
> ## ..WOMEN ARE MISSING A SEAT ON THE TABLE IN DESIGN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS..

maybe that is why they were not giving their 100% at work that particular day.

Remove the politeness of not talking about raises and promotions.

We need it to be okay to ask that so we can learn how to do it.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Always negotiate and ask for the stars!

Ana Sofia Gonzalez - A designer, a dancer and an explorer!

AZMINA PODDAR

DESIGN STUDIO HEAD AT BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP (BCG)

In the past 25+ years of experience **Azmina Poddar** has experimented in many genres. She has donned the garb of an artist to a design entrepreneur, dabbled at film editing to UI/UX.

She has also branded some organisations and packaged products like some premium wines and whiskeys. A storyteller at heart with numerous facilitation of design thinking workshops she's climbed up walls to paint them and created designer sarees to drape models on the runway.

She has helped young kids on the Bombay streets to read and write. and also designed some fairs, exhibitions, museums and cities and oh yes, she is also a mother!

All of this acscertains that beyond her doing and being lies *creativity*.

As a person she loves laughing and talking and is curious and eager all the time.

Azmina also loves to travel a lot and has lived across the country. In her creative process she often stumbles upon ideas and methods, each time learning and arriving at the end product. She never knows what she is going to come up with.

As they say, the journey is equally enchanting as the destination.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I do not celebrate women's day. We don't celebrate men's day then why us?

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

No.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Empathy is the key to good design. Women excel in empathy.

> ❝
> ## ..YOU BRING YOURSELF TO WORK AND NOT YOUR GENDER..

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

I look up to *Paula Scher*, *David Carson* & *Paul Rand*, a bit old school but that's where i began.

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

My gender was never a barrier in my entire design career. It was only when my bosses made me realise that I am a women leader it sunk in. I never see professional life from a women's perspective, for me i value what each one brings to the table than their gender. You bring yourself to work and not your gender.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

My two cents to all young women out there is that bring your best to your work life and never mention your gender as your barrier. Soon you will be amongst equals with your peers. I think first we should make sure that we bring professionalism to work. As women designers/professionals we have to stop playing the victim card and stand as equal and play fair. I have seen women leader always supporting fellow women colleagues and I continue to do that. I have always seeked support of strong women leaders in my life and i wish to do the same with women who approach me.

Women on top should empower more and more women into design fraternity.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Just go out there and begin your journey and see what fun it is to unravel your customer's needs. Do as much design thinking as you can and be hungry for work.

Azmina Poddar - *Creativity beyond her doing and being!*

MANISHA BHALEKAR

HEAD OF USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN AT DAT SOLUTIONS

Practising human centered design for 12+ years now, **Manisha Bhalekar** considers herself both a design as well as a people leader.

Her expertise is to build and scale the user experience design competency at big and small organizations. More importantly, she actively works to position UX as a core business competency, much like product, engineering and other pillars within an organization.

She leads teams and empowers them to excel at what they do and build products and services people love.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

I will be volunteering time to mentor early entrants into the UX design field. This is important part of giving back to the community and help students and early professionals build a successful career in UXD.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

This would depend upon geography. I've lived in the United States since 1999. I do believe there is an under-representation of woman in senior UX leadership. I'm looking forward to changing that.

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

I will answer this question differently because in my experience I have seen both women and men who are great (and not so great) UX Designers.

Instead, I will say that women are less likely to ask for or negotiate leadership positions within UX as well as compensation. This is not specific to UX only, I have observed this across other professions as well.

Again, this is something that my peers, fellow leaders, and I am actively working to improve.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Indi Young (user researcher), *Julie Zhuo* (UX leader at Facebook), *Lizzie Dyson* (Ladies that UX).

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?
Getting executive leadership to invest in UX as a business; getting stakeholders to understand how UX is different from graphic design.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Be self-aware, know what you can and cannot do and go after it. Be fearless.

ANJALI DESWANDIKAR

DESIGN LEAD AT LOLLYPOP DESIGN STUDIO

Anjali Deswandikar believes for every problem there is always a better solution. Every person is a designer and we can use our intelligence to build, design beautiful things that can enhance our lives.

She loves learning from travelling, knowing people and places.

Anjali belives that people, places and different situations are the raw data to which if we add intelligence would give us brilliant solutions.

How are you planning to celebrate Women's Day this year?

By writing a personal note of gratitude to few empowering, strong women around me.

Would you say there is an under-representation of women in UI/UX design?

Not at Lollypop Design Studio :)

What are some personality traits of women that make them better (or worse) UX designers?

Being open to ideas, being flexible, experimenting each time to find solution and never saying it can't be done.

Who are some design leaders (male or female) you look up to?

Anil Reddy (Founder, Lollypop Design Studio), *Jared Spool* (UIE.com), *Luke Wroblewski*, *Don Norman* and *Steve Krug.*

As a woman, what's the greatest challenge you've had to face as a designer?

In early career, I have experienced that UI design or visual design used to be considered as lower than UX design. I always wondered why since both require different kind of intelligence while both are equally important in their places. And hence it used to be challenging for me being a UI designer earlier if I was seeking for UX knowledge from someone I never used to get it openly.

What, in your opinion, could we UI/UX designers do, as a relatively young and collaborative fraternity, to solve the problem of gender inequality?

Designers hold superpower and they can influence the society with their magical skills in a good way. They should advocate the importance of both genders and that if we balance both genders we as a society will flourish.

Your message to young women looking to make their careers in UI/UX?

Being a woman you should never feel weak, in-fact a woman is a very powerful force that compliments a man and is much needed. Hence, women designers need to be brave and confident when they want to present any solution but at the same time not at all arrogant and adamant.

We need your ❤️

DesignWhine was born and continues to grow in moonlight.

Its a small independent venture run by a handful of team members after office hours. A lot of hardwork and resources go into it's production but we do it for the love of the UI/UX community.

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