

The book *Dear Girls* (2019) is a reflection on author Ali Wong's story as an Asian-American woman, and after, a comedian. Written to her baby daughters in a series of letters, the book narrates Ali's wild teen years while growing up in San Francisco, her bad experiences with random sex staying in New York and the problems that have to do with parenting.

Instead of being a gradual step guide to nurturing two children, *Dear Girls* is a run of simple life lessons. In this book summary, Ali provides knowledge on how you can be both a mother and a woman with a career, the importance of traveling and out of comfort zone, and really embracing yourself.

Although, beyond that, *Dear Girls* is a powerful debate against perfectionism. The author demonstrates how solely accepting our bodies, character quirks, and other eccentricities can assist us on the path to life and the career that we desire.

Chapter 1 - Ali Wong's life story displays to us that both professional and personal ups and downs are important for self-development.

Every one of us has a picture of what our perfect life would seem like. Maybe it's getting our dream career, living out a romance suitable for the movies, or having a family, all of us desire something. However, although these determinations can be motivating, it can also provide us false hopes.

Life is not essentially a straight path; however, a journey that has a lot of twists, opportunities, happiness, and heartbreak –and also embarrassing instances where you desire that the ground would swallow you completely. Ali Wong's story is an example.

While Ali was growing up in San Francisco, she was a force to think about things. From buying her first marijuana pipe at the age of 14 to stealing makeup and destroying her mother's car, Ali was a classic rebellious teenager.

However, regardless of her wild streak, Ali was able to concentrate on a goal and ensure that she accomplished it. This made her go to college at UCLA. After she finished college, her determination then prompted her to relocate across the country to New York City.

In 2008, Ali relocated to New York, ambitious to follow her passion of becoming a stand-up comedian. She began her comedy career at the Brainwash Cafe, a mixture laundromat and bar. At the cafe, she put in the nightly work of improving her skill in front of an audience. Her grit and power of character assisted her not only survive but to thrive as an Asian-American woman in a career full of white men.

Between those meek early stages and the current day, Ali studied abroad, encountered the love of her life, and gave birth to two daughters. However, in spite of her accomplishments, her life isn't essentially perfect. She as well as her husband often go to couple's therapy sessions – as she indicates, the price is lesser than a divorce! – and she still copes with being both a career mom and a role model to her children.

Life is hardly direct. For each huge breakthrough, there are a hundred difficulties and trials to defeat and instants of calamity that will delay you. However, as Ali discovered, these only make you become stronger. Embracing life's unavoidable ups and downs permitted her to discover more about herself and find approaches to handle her issues.

Now she wishes to share those life lessons with her daughters. In the next chapters, we'll look at some of the perceptions that she hopes to share.

Chapter 2 - Nothing is more worthwhile than exploring the world.

Although, it is a cliché; however, it's true: if you need to leave your comfort zone, there's nothing more valuable traveling abroad. We discover things about other people as well as their cultures when we travel; things that we never would have found by merely sitting in a classroom.

This is particularly true when you really use some quality time in a place that's far from your house – something Ali had the opportunity to do while she was studying at the University of Hawai'i for two months during her second year at UCLA.

While she was Hawai'i, she met new friends, dove into an interesting curriculum, found new food, and added ten wonderful pounds while doing that.

Most essentially, she had the opportunity of hearing a moving talk by a speaker named Haunani-Kay Trask. Ali was encouraged by the manner the woman talked with power and authority without feeling the necessity to cover her femininity. Trask possessed what Ali names "goddess-queen energy," and that energy provided Ali an outline for being confident in herself and her views.

With that confidence, she kept on taking the dive into life's new waters. She used her junior year in Hanoi, Vietnam, and even met the love of her life – or so she believed.

She met a boy named Hai on the bus that students used to travel to classes who seemed like a male type of Ali. Also, he was geeky, adventurous, and bicycles. Ali was enticed to him immediately and made her feelings obvious; however, she could never really know if he felt the same.

It was frustrating and motivated by her curiosity, she snuck into Hai's room one night to look for his diary and find answers. What she discovered was a disappointment – Hai wrote in his diary that he wasn't sexually attracted to her because he believed her legs, armpits, and upper lip were really hairy.

Ali might have been ashamed. However, rather, she remembered Hawai'i and how motivated she felt there. She accepted she didn't require a man's consent to feel good about herself, neither did she have to do something about the hair on her body – she only required to stop wasting her effort on Hai.

The time Ali's spent in Vietnam ended up being much more than only discovering love. Taking in the wonders, sounds, and smells of Hanoi, and the food, she was able to reconnect to her mother's Vietnamese origins and learn more about her culture.

Therefore, if you have the chance to travel, travel. The lessons you will discover and learn while abroad may just assist you on your journey to feel more at ease in yourself.

Chapter 3 - Know that: other people's notions about your race and gender don't represent you.

All of us get examined by others, and people regularly make opinions about us based on the slightest of impressions. For people like Ali who is an Asian American, this is a regular incident. All through her profession as a comedian, Ali has had to deal with a lot of absolute racism and ridiculous stereotypes, as well as the misogynistic remarks with which any woman has to cope.

Also, she had to cope with being overlooked as a female comedian. During Ali's early twenties, she got on the stage in Honolulu just to hear a man from the audience instantly groan, "Oh no, this is going suck" – based on nothing except her gender and his own sexism.

In order to make people see her seriously during her early years as a comedian, Ali began attempting to take the attention off her gender by playing down her femininity onstage. She'd go to shows putting loose cargo pants and a skater shirt, tying her hair two buns, wishing that the people in the audience would see beyond the reality that she was a woman.

Regardless of that, she still had to cope with situations where white, male comedians would arrogantly say to her that she was just successful because she was a female and a minority. They would say to her that "You're really lucky." "I'm only another white guy."

Unfortunately, there aren't any written rules for handling ignorant behaviors like these. What Ali discovered was that all she could do is to just remind yourself that other people's views don't define you.

Definitely, this is easier said than done, and it took Ali some time for her to get comfortable with challenging people's beliefs of how an Asian American woman should act and what she should wish for. The question young people regularly asked her even presently is, "How do you go into Hollywood as an Asian American woman?"

According to Ali, the answer to that is beyond the question of race or gender. It's passion, drive, and a zeal to flourish that will take you to where you wish to go.

Chapter 4 - The route to “success” is a steep climb.

Regardless of what anyone says to you, building a career that you're proud of required hard work and hustle. When you first begin in any career, there'll be instances when you need to do things that you don't like, work for people that you don't really like, and provide your services for next-to-no money.

During Ali's days as a stand-up comedian and actress, there was no end to her willingness to hustle to create a career. However, it wasn't easy for her. In the year 2012, she was strained really thin – while working as a TV actor; also she was touring as a stand-up comedian in situations that were far from best.

The tour comprised of continuous travel, cheap hotels with clumpy beds, and usually bad food. Also, it was a vast amount of work; during a stop in St. Louis, Ali did nine stand-up sets over five days, all of which was done in the same cramped, smoky basement bar. To top it all, she had to face the regular stress of never truly feeling comfortable – at work, she had to keep away male comics who were known for the sexual harassment to which they endangered their female colleagues.

Regardless of how difficult it got, only being able to put herself out there and perform made everything meaningful to Ali.

Regardless of the hard situations, she knew something significant about growing as a professional: nobody can be good at something immediately. If you truly care about becoming better at something, you need to be prepared to commit yourself to the hard work that needs.

When Ali initially began doing stand-up shows, there were various instances when her jokes didn't go so well with the audience. She ultimately understood that bombing in front of strangers – receiving no laughs – was not a thing to be ashamed of; however, basically a part of improving her skill and discovering her exceptional voice as a comedian.

By testing, innovating, and providing something new to the table regularly, Ali progressively stopped bombing. She discovered how to make her unique voice shine through, creating substance from her personal experiences and family history. However, as we'll get to see in the following chapter, reconnecting to her background didn't only make for better jokes. Also, it made her endure some hard times.

Chapter 5 - Reminding yourself of your origin and who you are can be a source of wisdom and strength.

We all have a story of our origin. These stories either good or bad, short and sweet, or full of twists – regularly constitute the basis of who we are.

Ali's story began with her relatives relocating to the United States – her mother is from Vietnam, and her paternal grandfather is from China. Reflecting on these journeys and the strength they required has assisted her to get the strength to handle difficulties all through her life.

For instance, when Ali first relocated to New York City, she had to share an overcrowded apartment with another six people. Anytime she felt the urge to complain, then, she thought of the story of her grandfather's lonely childhood.

At the age of only eight years old, he had relocated to Monterey, California, alone. When he was there, he survived by working as a live-in cook and cleaner in the house of a callous family; although he was hardworking, they didn't even give him a bed. Rather, he slept in their house basement with just a sheet of newspaper underneath him. Poverty went with him into his adult life, as well. Not having enough beds for his family, he slept together with his wife on the hard floor.

Reflecting on her grandfather's life humbled Ali and assisted her to know more about herself and her personality.

It assisted her to understand that, as for the majority of the people, the values and personal features that represented her had been partly, if not completely, defined by the things her family had transferred to her. This is the reason why, just like her grandfather, she was able to survive any circumstance.

In that light, her bad New York apartment was easy to cope with – it was only a matter of remaining concentrated and working hard until she was eventually able to come up with the money for something better. Luckily, saving money was another thing that she had learned from her Asian immigrant parents.

Also, something else she learned from them was to become a big factor in her career success: the capacity to handle criticism. Having been cruelly teased by her family her whole life, Ali was very ready for every bombing she would have to do on the path to becoming a successful comedian.

That's the splendor of the wisdom we learn from family – it turns out to be a huge toolbox that we can reach into our whole lives, regardless of whether or not we understand it.

Chapter 6 - Relationships are essentially about reciprocated acceptance and support.

Life is not perfect, neither are we perfect. We all have our flaws, quirks, and eccentricities, together with their strengths and talents. The crucial key to making successful relationships, though, is to accept and value people for all these skills.

However, let's take a minute, to be truthful with ourselves here. Discovering a person you're ready to accept wholly doesn't occur overnight. You may have to go through lots of what you don't want before you can discover what you're truly searching for.

This was definitely the situation for Ali. After various disappointing frequent sex when she was staying in New York, Ali agreed that she wanted to meet love. She began dating Justin, a guy who would eventually be her Mr. Wong. During their first date, she called him to one of her

shows at Gotham Comedy Club. In spite of her dirty stand-up routine, which ended in her mooning the audience, he didn't run a mile in the other way. As a matter of fact, he emailed her straight away after the show and said to her that he hadn't laughed like that in a long time.

It was very obvious from the beginning that Ali's career would take up huge space in their lives. The couple discovered from an early stage that being supportive of each other's dreams and goals was an essential basis for a successful relationship –particularly once they were married and had children.

Ali understood from experience that the majority of the men found it difficult to be with a woman who, as a comic, was gone most nights. Also, she was aware that her difficult schedule signified that a man in her life would occasionally need to put his own career second if they wished to have children.

After the marriage of Ali and Justin and when they became parents, she co-created a film known as Always Be My Maybe. Filming, unluckily, needed her to be in Vancouver for six weeks, leaving Justin to take care of their baby daughters all by himself, something with which a lot of men might have found difficult.

Justin was a different man. Not only was he keen to take care of the childcare all by himself; however, he also traveled from LA to Vancouver each weekend, taking the girls with him so they could all spend time together.

Relationships, just like careers, require hard work to sustain, particularly when children are involved. However, that's normal – a fantasy life of leisure is really different than reality, as we'll explore in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 - Life isn't a highlight reel. It won't work out as you want it all the time.

All of us believe that we understand how we want our lives to seem like. We make outstanding plans and lofty objectives that we think will make us happy. However, life doesn't really bother

about our plans, and the world regularly throws curveballs at us. Eventually, the only thing we can do is endeavor to adjust.

Before Ali turned to a stay-at-home mom, she dreamt about all the relaxing things that she'd do with her life once she gave birth. Looking at Jessica Seinfeld's a celebrity Instagram feed, Ali fantasized that her time will be filled with baking and vacations to the spa.

Definitely, this was a delusion. Ali immediately became busy with the normal grind of cooking, cleaning, and playdates. Her imaginations of Michael Kors bathrobes were fast replaced for t-shirts with holes made at the armpits for it to make it easy to breastfeed, and chafe marks in spots she was never aware could chafe.

Every one of us understands that deep down that life isn't about the things we see on social media. As a matter of fact, the images of the perfect life that we see enviously daily couldn't be further from reality.

Ali began her journey as a wife and mother with a range of expectations that were stopped almost immediately. She discovered that life has a mean of avoiding the plans you set for yourself and is regularly filled with unlikely incidences. Let's use Ali's marriage to Justin as an example.

Immediately after their engagement, Ali's soon-to-be in-laws recommended the couple should sign a prenuptial agreement. Firstly, Ali was shocked. She believed that her parents-in-law were making an obvious statement about how much they didn't put their trust in her.

She was amazed at how rapidly she came around to the notion, nevertheless. After deliberating on it for a while, she understood how essential it was to have her own money and not rely on her husband's money. Presently, she understands that signing a prenup was the best choice she ever made for her life and career.

Chapter 8 - Child-rearing is not a picnic.

The majority of us have heard our parents discuss their experiences of raising children. The 3 a.m. wake-up calls, changing of diapers, cry, travel to and fro to soccer games, and the discussions with angry teachers are only part of the more challenging parts of being a parent.

In some instances, excitable, expectant moms and dads will be excessively optimistic about the type of parents they'll be and the type of family life they will have. Ali was one of these –during her first pregnancy, she imagined about the different types of things she wished to do when she becomes a parent, from nurturing her children on a complete-foods diet to reading to them each night. She immediately discovered that, however, that these aims were not realistic.

Parenting is difficult, and according to Ali's words, "relentless." It's a regular repetition of duties that aren't constantly really rewarding, such as continuous trips to buy the clothes, school needs, and several other things that every child requires. And also day-to-day trips to the supermarket!

Furthermore, to handle all the everyday chores of parenthood, a lot of women also have to face not achieving their own hopes for themselves as parents. That signifies learning that occasionally, you'll need to only forgive yourself and dish up mac and cheese from the box rather than a delicious, healthy culinary triumph.

Regardless of how well familiar you are, motherhood is occasionally just embarrassing. When Ali and Justin took their daughters out on a family trip to Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, Ali immediately began to see her breasts sore; within instances, milk was coming out from her nipples and soaking her dress. While this was happening, baby Nikki agreed that this would be a perfect time to poop in her diaper and spit her food onto Ali's already soaked outfit.

Saying parenting is hard is an understatement, clearly.

In spite of this, it can also be a pleasing experience. Being either a mom or dad is a chance to impart good values into your children and make sure they grow up feeling loved and confident. Nobody will ever be a perfect parent; however sometimes only being present for your children is enough.

Dear Girls: Intimate Tales, Untold Secrets, & Advice for Living Your Best Life by Ali Wong Book Review

From performing in dive bars as a young comedian to dealing with being a full-time wife, mother, and career woman, Ali Wong's life has regularly looked like an uphill climb both personally and professionally. As Ali talks to her daughters in Dear Girls with little, wise stories, a single message repeats over and over again: there's no secret spice to success or happiness. The only thing we need to do is to embrace ourselves, embrace our situations, and finally, admit the risky nature of life and experience.

Be yourself; it's actually that easy.

Whatever your aim in life is, having confidence in who you truly are is important. If you are in doubt, know that it is just you the world with your unique mixture of thoughts, skills, dreams, and motivations. Keep in touch with the parts that make you you and never change to fit yourself with someone else's definition of "perfect."

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