



She, however, admits that she stays away from coffee, tea, or cold beverages, and drinks plain water every morning when she wakes up. She keeps a routine exfoliating and moisturising regime but seldom goes for facial treatments.

"I also do line dancing once a week to keep fit," she says. "But beauty does not last forever. I prefer to be respected for my attributes and good deeds."

The down-to-earth grandmother

Cynthia adds that there is more than meets the eye in beauty contests. "It is not just about good looks. Contestants must also have talent, communication skills, and have a big heart in giving back to charity," she says. "For me, winning the Ms Grandma Universe title gave me the platform to do community service and attend functions."

Despite her schedule and title, she fulfils her role as a wife, mother and grandmother in making sure the family's daily needs are met. "I take my kids to school, do the groceries and run errands, just like everyone else," she says.

Cynthia is a beautiful grandmother everyone would love to have. Her beauty is reflected not only in appearance, but also in personality. There is confidence and timeless beauty in older women that younger women need to develop, and such beauty and grace only comes through experience and wisdom, as Cynthia shows. 📸

Ms Grandma Universe
Cynthia Ong



At the Magdalena Island in Chile

Looi thrives on living a purpose-driven life

► From page 22

"You might say we're bartering services: a room or tour package as payment for our services. But we always pay for our own food," says Looi, who has written two e-books: *How To Save Lunch Money And Take Your Family On A Yearly Dream Vacation* and *Travelling in Uruguay*.

She stays motivated by reading ("a lot") and travelling. She is also inspired by her "very, very driven" children – 19-year-old daughter Bethany and 16-year-old son Jonathan.

What do people say of their decision to uproot the children? "We have a non-conventional way of doing things but in the process, we have brought up motivated kids. I believe in walking the talk. If you want purpose-driven kids, you have to be purpose-driven yourself."

She laughs when I ask if she's a Tiger mom as described by Amy Chua in her book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. "I laughed when I read the book. For 10 years I was like that. Then I took a radical step back. Now my relationship with my children is like one between friends, yet I have the

authority. They relate better with Ken; he's more easy-going."

Both children are social media experts in their own right. Bethany has her own clients for social media work. She is currently interning at VaynerMedia, a social media brand consulting agency founded by Gary Vaynerchuk, a global authority on social media.

"Her internship was supposed to be for three months but VaynerMedia extended it for another three. Bethany's resume is more impressive than most typical college graduates. That will be useful when she wants a full-time job," says Looi.

Bethany was featured last month in the "Amazing 12 under 20" list in *Justine*, a lifestyle magazine targeted at teenage girls.

Jonathan reviews travel gear on his own website. He is now writing a book on how he finished high school in two years with 24 credits from Florida Virtual School, a homeschool programme.

The Looi family is proof that the family that travels together stays together as they experience life off the beaten track in strange new lands. 📸

"We have spent a lot of money and sold almost all we had. Living a nomadic lifestyle is not easy. As a freelance writer, I constantly have to look out for projects."



Their upcoming travel destinations include Iceland, Russia, China and Hawaii