



Ma, an animal lover, walks a golden retriever on Anfu Road in Shanghai.



Ma models overalls and vest with a cowboy hat.



A series of photos where she wore clothes that showed her belly flab drew online criticism.

I can remain in good condition because I love this job."

The way of being a model is not always smooth. But all the challenges made her mind stronger.

"Once I joined the photo shoot of a magazine," Ma recalled. "They told me to stay there silently and be cool. However, later they asked me to try smiling to the camera. Then I smiled but felt very embarrassed because when I smile, the wrinkles will appear on my face. They stopped me and told me not to smile.

"In another magazine shoot, they needed an elder model who had wrinkles. They thought I was not old enough but I asked them to have a try about my smile.

"I went there to strive for an opportunity so I wouldn't give up easily. I said I can smile for you or you can take a picture of my smile. Finally, they used my picture."

Ma said that experience made her understand that she should never compare herself with young models.

"On many occasions, they need me to show the charm of a woman at my age," she said. "So what I should do is to be myself and since then, I never fear my wrinkles and can have either a light smile or big smile in front of the camera. I recognized that my smile has its own charm."

In the past few years, she had participated in the commercial photographing of many big-name brands from home and abroad.

These experiences show a trend that people now are willing to accept imperfections than before. That means more and more

people dare to accept the way they are.

For an underwear advertisement, she and other five models were not in the shape of super model but represented six different stages of womanhood.

"It aims to tell women to face their real selves," she said.

But sometimes she still faces spite and bias from netizens.

Under a posting of her account on lifestyle-sharing platform Little Red Book, a netizen criticized her for bringing disgrace on her daughter with a series of photos in which she wore a vest and long skirt which showed the flab of her belly.

"Some commented that a woman at my age should not wear things like backless clothes," she said. "I ignored those voices and believe I will always do the thing I want instead of following others' thoughts.

"If you follow them, then you will lose



When Ma was 36 in 1998, she was a big fan of iconic designer Jean Paul Gaultier.

yourself. I dress only for pleasing myself. Even if you say I'm not looking good in those clothes, I will still dress like that. I can dress in anything depending on my mood and the occasion."

She knows that in the West, there are many older models and fashion influencers.

But she said she has never been affected by any of them.

"I don't take anyone as the model," she said. "I'm the model of myself. If I get to 80 and the brands still want to take photos of me, I will be happy to be their model."

Although Ma said she never considers that she will change anybody, many people changed after learning of her experiences and viewing her pictures and videos.

"Many people told me that they are no longer afraid of getting old and having wrinkles and some even dyed their hair white like me," Ma said.

"But I want to tell those saying that to live a life like me when they are old, they should also be strict with themselves on things like body shape when they are young."

For young women, Ma suggested that they should find work they like and suitable for them.

"Everyone has different personality and things that they're good at," she said. "Doing a job they like can make them exert themselves to the most."

"I will be young forever and always pursuing my dream. I will spend my time on the things I love, like filming videos, being a model and making clothes."

