



Loop Swim is a brand that transforms post-consumer PET plastic bottles into phenomenal UPF50+ sun protective swimwear in funky and bold color combos for women, men and kids.



With The Nectar Foundry, Soni offers creative and intentional home and gift solutions for individuals and corporates. — All photos by courtesy of Itee Soni



a village, it is a campus. My college experience wasn't the best — there was a lot of competition and envy and not so much collaboration, so Shanghai has given me that.

Q: What were you trying to bring to the local community?

With Loop, Heather and I are building our dream circular company demonstrating that waste is just a resource in the wrong place. Our swimsuits are made exclusively from recycled plastic and Loop also recycles your swimsuit at the end of its useful life.

It is a trusted resource for the eco-conscious global traveler and a key player in raising ocean plastic pollution awareness. Responsibly made in China, Loop also continues to educate and inspire a “deep bench” of future sustainability heroes and a 100 percent circular swimwear industry worldwide — a foundational goal for the brand, with speaking engagements and workshops on sustainable fashion, circular economy and zero-waste living.

With The Nectar Foundry, I offer creative and intentional home and gift solutions for

individuals and corporates. I hope to curate products that help me reconnect with my roots in India, work with craftsmen in our local communities, and honor their timeless handicrafts while still creating original designs celebrating my time and life in China.

With my design and aromatherapy workshops, reiki, and tarot, I have created a safe space for personal expression and collaborative conversations in the community focused on helping everyone cultivate and nurture their right-side brain, all the while making better consumption choices.

Q: What are the biggest challenges setting up a business here? How do you stay motivated?

For me it was the language, but that's easy to get around. When I first moved here it was like white noise and I liked being ‘lost in translation,’ but once we set up the business, I knew things would need to change. While my spoken Chinese has improved, for most things I use all kinds of translate apps and have lovely assistants — both remote and in-office. Plus, I am not afraid to ask for help especially when

I feel I cannot simply MacGyver my way out of a situation.

Q: What was the moment made you most proud?

Last year was a very tough year for Loop. We had just launched a brand-new collection right as we went into lockdown and during the peak retail months for any swimwear brand. It was a massive setback.

Additionally, my business partner was moving back to the US. While her move was always part of the plan, as soon as we reopened the reality of our very shaky finances, navigating it all alone and moving into a new studio simply crushed me.

But all along, very, very slowly I dug Loop out of its hole, and we survived it. I also launched my second baby — The Nectar Foundry late last year and this year in November I had an exhibition of all my art and design — for Loop and TNF. Both brands have a long way to go in terms of really thriving as the economy this year has been a huge setback for retail brands everywhere, but I am proud to have survived all of that and come out the other side. A bit battered and bruised, but stronger than ever.

Q: What are you working on?

I am currently working on a multi-brand WeChat online shop that will bring together Loop, TNF and hopefully other sustainable lifestyle brands all under a single online destination. I hope to be able to launch this (with a lot of help from my developers) in early 2024. This is of course in addition to all new design and product development going on behind the scenes. Stay tuned for bold new offerings from both brands!

Q: Who is a female-role model who inspires you?

They are fictional, but I love Roz Doyle from the TV show “Frasier” and Joan Watson from “Elementary.”

Roz is an independent single mom and really reaches for her dreams during the show — her career trajectory takes her from a radio producer to a network head! She is funny, charming, easy going and laid back in ways I am not, and I learned how to be more personable, not to sweat the small stuff, live with more ease and less judgement of myself and to always look at the big picture from her.

Joan Watson played by one of favorites, Lucy Liu, is a modern

day take on Sherlock Holmes where John Watson is recast as a woman, and rightfully so! I mean come on! To be able to stand working with and be good friends with someone like Sherlock, it has to be a woman! Joan is a brilliant, unflappable, patient, resilient and an extremely stylish modern-day woman who breaks from being a doctor to find joy in investigating. Her ability to always respond and not react to situations is something I admire the most.

Q: Do you have any advice for women entrepreneurs?

It will take longer than you think, it will be way harder than you think, and it will be very, very lonely, even if you have a partner — in business and/or in life. Only you will know your journey and not everyone will be interested in it either. You will bore friends and loved ones, so find a coach, find mentors, and find collaborators — FIND YOUR TRIBE.

Learn to eat your pride and ask for help. Learn to not hold grudges. I share my studio with the lovely Fernanda Sung and when we have arguments, we remind ourselves that at the base of it, with care and a lot of trust, we have built a friendship which will carry us through.

Stay humble. The good times won't last, and the bad times probably will, so be extremely grateful for everything — a beautiful day, a coffee in the sun, a walk in the park, be grateful for it all.

And finally, PAY IT FORWARD. Reach out, laugh and cry with your fellow entrepreneurs, and recommend them. It won't take away from your bottom-line, in fact, the goodwill will add to it in ways you never thought possible.