editor’s letter

After a year-long hiatus of the university magazine, I am honoured to assume the new editorship for our latest magazine.

The revamp is the result of months of thought, creativity and vision by a team of student editors, and I hope you love it as much as I do. The artwork for the cover depicts our first issue and to make our mark of our new beginning.

Our goal with this magazine is to spark conversation and have a flow of ideas within our community.

We are immensely proud of this issue and hope to only strive for the better with every issue.

We hope you enjoy reading!

- Aliya Khatri
  Editor-in-chief, Red Beat
All the way from South Korea to the United States of America, Middlesex University Dubai’s International Day celebrated the diverse range of cultures present at our university.

The multi-cultural event held on 7 December 2017, consisted of 34 countries. This was also the first year that South Africa, Ghana and Turkey were on display. Students run the booths dressed in bright and beautiful ethnic wear, they had souvenirs on display and served traditional dishes from their country. This event was open for all to enjoy and even had the Russian Embassy Consul as a special guest. The event was attended by over 3000 visitors.

The University’s Music and Dance Club organised cultural dances and various performances. Singers sang delightful songs from different countries. Popular Bhangra group in Dubai, PureBhangra and MonsterCrew dancer, Muzer Mustafa also showcased stunning performances on stage. The Dance Club made sure to include traditional dance forms from various countries, such as Bollywood, Classical, Afro Fusion and many more.

The event highlights the spirit of the UAE and how it welcomes various nations and cultures of the world with open arms.
Marhaba To All

by Anaitha Mildred

Marhaba week is a week full of excitement and games for new students as well as existing ones. Marhaba means “greetings” in Arabic. The main aim of Marhaba week is to welcome the new students and connect the new students and current students together. It is a platform where students are free to socialise, sign up for their favourite clubs and maybe discover a new passion! There are also a few events, games and giveaways organised by different clubs, which encourage students to sign up for them and due to these activities, signups for all clubs were high.
Welcome To The Club!

by Anaitha Mildred

A little introduction to our clubs and their coordinators!

Art Club
Naeema Nazar, coordinator of Art Club says "The club strives to provide a creative outlet for the members by conducting various events and activities that include all forms of art ranging from traditional to digital. Art Club also contributes to many of the events held at the university in terms of props and décor. Some of the main events in which the Art Club was a part of was the Mental Health Awareness Day and Halloween where club members were actively involved in creating decorations and props for the play conducted by the Drama Club".

@artistshub_mdx

PR and Advertising Club
Aliya Khatri, coordinator of the club expressed that: "The PR and Advertising club encourages students to connect with industry professionals and learn as much as they can about the industry even if your major is not PR and Advertising. We also offer many designing and writing opportunities with our new university magazine, Red Beat. We recently conducted a workshop on Adobe software". One of the previously held workshops was geared around learning the basics of Photoshop. Workshop spots are usually limited so you really need to be quick when signing up!

@mdxpradclub

Poetry Club
Nicole Ruth Alva describes poetry with a quote from Thomas Hardy "Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art". She further explains that: "Poetry Club is where students share their poems and writings with each other and build a base on social media. We host events and attend events around Dubai".

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Anime Club
Shaheen Moaddab, in charge of the Anime Club, stated: "The Anime Club is where fans of anime, manga and Asian pop-culture are able to come together and meet fellow fans. It is a rather niche interest that has seen an increase in popularity in recent years. Anime Club is a very active club with two meetings every week where members watch and discuss anime, play games and have fun".

@mdxanimeclub

Drama Club
Reem Mushtaq, explained: "Drama Club gives students a platform wherein they can portray their talent and do something they love with other people who share the same interest. Drama Club has performed for many major events in the University. It gives an opportunity to all the students who love being on stage, in the spotlight, and in front of the camera".

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Baking Club
Nashel Nash Maria Louise coordinator of Baking Club declared that: "Baking Club is more of an icebreaker which encourages students to learn, reach beyond their comfort zone, make friends and be a part of something bigger. The Baking Club brings together all the students who love food, baking, cooking and encourages them to share their experience, knowledge and expertise with each other and bond over something that they are passionate about."

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Club Fearless - Debating and Public Speaking
Shivani Mathur, second year Journalism student and leader of Club Fearless says: “Club Fearless encourages students to come forward to debate and open up to their viewpoints. It increases public speaking skills and boosts the confidence of students. Debating Club has weekly debates on an array of topics ranging from themes and subjects such as economics, entertainment, society, politics, evolution, ethics, science and environment. Kaleidoscope is also a part of Club Fearless which is centred on Sustainable Development Goals, it is a cultural slam that combines art with social awareness”.

@mdxfearless

Music Club
Joan Bangera passionately explains that the purpose of the Music Club is to “offer a safe space where students from all over the world can share their common passion for music. Music club encourages all genres of music and thus music events are organised to do the same. Many of the annual music events including the Festival Christmas Bazaar, International Day and Youth Festival are highly anticipated by all the students at the University”.

@mdxmusicclub

Events club:
Faheem Faizal, the leader of the club, states: “Events club lives by the line 'Idea into Action'. The club has more than 250 members, being the biggest among all clubs. Members of the group converge by volunteering at various events which happen at Middlesex University Dubai throughout the year. Each of the members aims to reach a 40-hour mark to be awarded a volunteering certificate at the end of the year for their hard work. The association also helps to promote other clubs through the Instagram page and provides the workforce required to make an event happen”.

@mdxevents

Photography Club
Kaavish Hussain, coordinator of Photography Club says: “It is the hub for all photographers of all levels who are passionate about photography. We are the eyes of all the major events that happen in the university and we make sure we capture them. Over the past months, we have had mini-competitions among the members of the club, where they submit their work based on a theme and are then critiqued. Photography Club also has photo walk-ins, in the form of trips and photography skills workshops”.

@mdxshutterbugsatwork

Gamers’ Den - Gaming Club
Saud Arif coordinator of gaming says: “I decided to take over the Gaming Club a year ago when I felt that there are so many amazing gamers in Middlesex University Dubai who don’t have a chance to be recognised, the only gamers that were recognised were the ones who played FIFA. Gamers’ Den now has a group where every member socialises and gets to know the other, talk about the upcoming games, host competitions and share information about competitions happening elsewhere. Most importantly they compete together and take time off from studies.”

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Dance Club
Maria Antonenko coordinator and choreographer of the Dance Club believes: “any person can learn how to dance, that’s why Dance Club doesn’t have auditions and it’s open to all. The Dance Club is one of the biggest clubs in Middlesex University Dubai. It offers various dance classes every weekday taught by professional choreographers. Members organise and take part in many activities and competitions. The club is happy to invite new members to join the dance club!”

@danceclubmdxdubai
Sports Club
Mohammad Umair Khan sports representative says: “Sports is the thrill of victory to the agony of defeat; sports stories are all about the all-too-human drama of competition and courage. Middlesex University Dubai gives an opportunity to all students who love sports and who are willing to learn. If the students perform well in the competitions, then they are promoted to play at the national and international level. There are seven major sports: basketball, football, volleyball, badminton, athletics, cricket and table tennis at Middlesex University Dubai. Sports helps you to stay in shape, teaches you how to organise your time, keep mentally fit and boost friendships and teamwork.”
@mdxdynamites and @mdxevents

Charity Club
Manaal Mulla coordinator of Charity Club explains: “the purpose of Club Impact is to give the students of Middlesex University Dubai the opportunity to give back to society. In a city like Dubai that is well developed, Charity Club recognises the issues that might not come to notice. Charity Club spreads awareness about different causes of cancer, health, and many more. The members also volunteer at special need schools and help construction workers by providing food and visiting them. We also organise blood donation camps. As a club, we also encourage women empowerment for the ‘HeforShe’ campaign by the United Nations”.
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Writing Club
Amina Arnaut coordinator of Writing Club mentioned that: “Writing Club isn’t just about writing, but about the creativity behind how the words are moulded. It’s a club that lets students enhance their writing abilities but also allows their imagination to take hold. Book Club really allows people to express their emotions, un hinge themselves or create a world through one of the freest forms of art.
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Tourism Club
Isabel Giannina Feldbauer coordinator of Tourism Club enthusiastically explained that: “Tourism Club focuses on giving a new perspective on tourism studies, not only for students from the tourism programme but all students from Middlesex University Dubai to explore regional places and international cultures to widen their horizon and increase cultural understanding especially as Middlesex University Dubai is a multicultural University.
@mdxtourismclub

Book Club
Mommina Asif coordinator of the Book Club says: “the main purpose of the club is to bring together readers, as well as those looking to pick up reading. Book Club assigns a different book each month and then hosts meetings to discuss what the members liked about the book and what they hated. This sparks a debate about the books and exposes members to different opinions. Every month the club explores a new genre so that the club caters to everyone’s interests and reads both fiction and non-fiction books.
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Middlesex University Dubai hosted its annual Festive Bazaar with various events taking place side by side from drama to dance. December is a month that houses hospitality, a day which holds time together capturing all our joy. Books, jumpers, greeting cards were on sale for the students and teachers to gift their loved ones. It is a festival of giving and the money collected was given to Al Jalila Foundation. Boomerangs were in motion; a few friends captured pictures to look back at the emotions. Hot chocolate, piping hot Karak tea and freshly baked cookies fused the air. The students were all dressed in colours of green, red and white to show their spirit for the festive season. Children from the Emirates National school dropped by to perform as a choir, and they took back some memories with them. This event would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the unity displayed by the students from various clubs.
If there’s one thing you should know about the students at Middlesex University Dubai, it’s that they are extremely talented. Artists showcased their creativity on Thursday, February 15th as the evening was devoted to live music, poetry and drama.

From acoustic strings to stronger vocals, the music club brought the ‘Night of the Performing Arts’ to the Residences where students lip-synced the entire night. There was drama, there was comedy and there was poetry, where artists shared their original work, bringing people in with their words, their actions and their flair.

For many performers, especially for those in their first year, this was their prologue and the event was the perfect opportunity to find others with the same budding passion for the performing arts.

As the day wore on and fairy lights switched on, performers standing in front overlooked an audience that kept growing and kept cheering. The audience enjoyed 22 acts that always brought something new to the stage, as the hours passed unknowingly. Where the evening first saw students on beanbags, winding down for the weekend, the night was charged with music, bringing everyone back to dance among the stars.

If Thursday night was anything to go by, it’s obvious that the university and its artists will see many more of these events. It would be a shame if you would miss the next one!
IS CRAMMING before an exam more helpful than harmful?

by Sumayyah Khatri

T he night before an exam, students often find themselves cramming with the help of several coffees and energy drinks. But how effective is such cramming before an exam? Is it more harmful than helpful?

Several studies have shown that people’s memories decline more quickly after learning large chunks of information than it does otherwise. Psychologist, Hermann Ebbinghaus, observed a forgetting curve after learning. People have their memory halved in just a matter of days. But when a lot of material is learnt in one go, it can put your brain into overdrive, making it difficult to process everything. Switching up learning settings, research indicates, can help by providing more prompts.

How strong any memory is, depends on the kind of processing that it goes through. When it happens at a deep level, through focusing on its meaning and personal relevance, stronger memories are formed. Making your own notes can also aid in memory as you would reorganise information according to your own understanding and thinking patterns.

Multiple studies suggest that sleep is what makes your memories concrete. Sleep deprivation affects the hippocampus, interfering with the knowledge transfer from short to long term. This results in poorer learning. So, it’s important to get enough sleep, and reduce taking stimulants like coffee and energy drinks, which can disturb your sleeping pattern. This affects your concentration and performance on tests.

While it may be obvious for some people that studying for exams ahead of time is the most effective solution, it is not always practical or possible. So an almost as effective alternative would be to space out your learning sessions, getting more sleep, writing notes and avoiding tons of coffee.

Lynda Hyland, Psychology Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University Dubai, advises, “In the days immediately before an exam, you need to eat a healthy diet, sleep well, and read over your study notes at your leisure. You wouldn’t do all your training for a marathon the night before, because it would be counterproductive to do so. You would begin preparing weeks, or even months, in advance. So why leave everything to the last-minute when you’ve got an exam?”

MIND over MATTER

by Sharvari Alape and Mehnaz Abdul Assis
R
edbeat had an exclusive chat with our own Nesa Rassouli about staying healthy.
A recent graduate of Middlesex, Rassouli is a personal trainer and calisthenics coach at Fit Inc., she's here to share some some valuable advice for anyone who thinks fitness is out of their reach.

What does fitness mean to you?
Fitness is pretty much my life. It's not only my job but it's definitely the one thing I'm most passionate about in life. My days, weeks and life revolve around my teaching and my own training too.

In your opinion, which is the most effective fitness regime?
There's not really a one size fits all in fitness. Everybody has to find what works for them. We're built differently, like different things and have different lifestyle patterns. If I do have one piece of advice to give that could suit everyone would be to just have fun with it! Find something you love and doesn't feel like a chore, find something that makes you want to hop out of bed in the morning and you can't wait to do.

Who or what inspires you?
I have a few of what you could call "celebrity" idols who I turn to for long-term life inspiration such as Chontel Duncan, but I'm mostly inspired by the people who I'm surrounded by every day. My friends, my coaches and other people in the fitness community in the UAE. Being able to see them progress and become so successful right in front of me is my biggest push to knowing that I can do it all too if I put in the work everyone else does.

How do you balance between being a college student and a fitness trainer?
I'm not going to lie, it is very difficult. I teach at 6 am three times a week and have to rush back to uni for class and then back to work again as well as teaching evening classes. Time management is essential. I have a schedule that pretty much has written out what I will be doing with each hour of my day so that I have enough time for my clients, my own training and my uni work.

How would you say fitness has helped you transform from your past self?
I always say that being able to be fit is a blessing. It's made me more confident in myself and my appearance. It feels great to be strong! And it has made me a much more positive person, it taught me that no matter how many times you fall, the only thing that counts is the number of times you pick yourself back up and try again.

What do you think is the most prominent challenge people face while trying to be fit?
Laziness. I see it all the time! People like to make excuses for why they can't workout or they're too busy, so on and so forth. I could be sitting here and making all those excuses too, but that doesn't get anyone anywhere. That's why I urge people to find something that they really love. If it excites you, you will make time for it.

What tips would you give about yoga to beginners?
"Find something you love and doesn't feel like a chore" Just do it! You don't have to be flexible or be able to do a head stand or do any of the poses you see on Instagram. Everybody starts somewhere, just listen to your body during your practice and don't worry about anything else when you're on your mat- that is your hour for only you.

What is the best time to do yoga?
Everyone's different, I could do yoga pretty much any time of the day but you have to find what suits you. Usually, in the mornings, your body is stiff but yoga is a great way to get the blood flow moving through your body.

What is the one thing, in your opinion, that many people are unaware about yoga?
That you don't have to be flexible to do it! Yoga is for everyone, all ages and abilities. My mom has just started yoga at the age of 55 after not exercising for about 20 years, and she loves it! So if she can do it, anyone can!

Do you think practicing yoga affects one's perspective on life?
I mean it will complement any form of exercise you do. Even if it's the only thing you do! It helps with strength, mobility, flexibility, balance, I could go on forever!
Middlesex University Dubai held its annual, much anticipated inter-university sports tournament titled ‘Super 4’ this February. ‘Super 4’ refers to the top 4 competing universities including our very own that gets invited to participate in this exciting event; namely, University of Wollongong, Heriot-Watt University and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. This one-week tournament of thrilling competition began with a bang on 24th February 2018.

Students competed in a variety of different sports categories, ranging from football, cricket, basketball, volleyball, athletics, badminton and table tennis. Each University team included a woman’s division and a men’s division for every sport.

The women’s final football game was held in the Sports Mania, JLT on 24th February. The final table tennis game was held at Al Shabab sports club in Al Mamzar on 26th February. The volleyball men’s and women’s final game was held at Jumeirah Baccalaureate school, Jumeirah 1.

**RESULTS**

- Herriot-Watt Hawks emerged winners in the girls’ football finals followed by our very own Middlesex Dynamite’s coming in as runners-up

- Our Boys made a smashing victory against Herriot Watt in the 5 aside football finals

- In the tough game of volleyball, the UOWD girls dominated the sport coming in first in a glorious victory followed by the Middlesex girls

- The MDX boys again made us proud by beating the Wollongong boys in the fast-paced sport of basketball

- The girls’ finale saw Herriot-Watt beating Middlesex

- The last and final sport of table tennis saw an outstanding performance by our girls who are the reigning champions who defended their title against their main rival Herriot-Watt

- The finale of two teams was reversed for the boys’ tournament with Herriot-Watt university coming in first with Middlesex as the runners-up.

by Stephanie Goncalves and Somer Rodrigues
Keeping up to date with the latest trends has always been important for me. Endless shopping which ends up with me being broke is all too common now. Having just moved to Dubai has not only exposed me to different cultures but also to all the options that I can avail. From the beautiful flowing abayas, the embroidered Pakistani and Indian kurtas to the beautiful African prints. The longer I look at the people around me, especially on campus the more urge I have to go and improve my wardrobe.

I do admit, I gave in to my shopping addiction the first month I got here, which of course put a strain on my budget, especially one that was a monthly student allowance. However, the more I look at the people around me, walking down the street, rushing to class, standing in the metro, the more I’m inspired to add new items to my wardrobe every day. Not being appeased with the already quite full wardrobe I have, and trying to survive on a limited budget every month, I decided to be more creative and search for alternatives.

Thrift shopping was a concept I had often seen in movies and TV shows in the west. Remembering Carrie going thrift shopping in the Sex and the City made the idea seem all the more appealing.

Dubai knows fashion well and is all about the expensive brands. Looking into a Gucci or LV store is all I can do at the moment (as I said, student budget. A girl’s gotta eat too) H&M, Forever 21 and Splash is what fits my budget, but hey even that’s still too much for me going by the rate I go at.

SO, ladies and gentlemen in my pursuit to always look the best I can, I have made a wonderful
discovery: THRIFT SHOPS. Yes, that’s right! Right here in Dubai! Having never have visited a thrift shop before, I was fascinated by the idea. There are actually plenty of options for you to buy clothes, shoes, bags, books, household goods for a cheaper budget. I have listed just a few of these options. If you don’t mind your clothes being pre-loved but in excellent condition. These are most definitively worth checking out

**Thrift Bazaar Al Barsha**
This thrift store located in Al Barsha sells premium quality pre-loved goods. The goods are imported from the UK, USA and various parts of Europe. And the best thing is that it's not too far away from campus. So, between your classes or on your way home, try to check out this fashion heaven to avail great deals

**The Closet**
Got your eye on that Gucci bag or that LV scarf? No worries you can find authentic brands at a much cheaper price than you would find in the stores. Save yourself some money, or instead buy two instead of one. In fact, you could even make some money while visiting this store in Jumeirah center.

Sell your pre-loved items to them and they will make sure that they get a home in someone else's closet.

**Book world Satwa**
More into books than clothes? That’s ok we have something for the bookworms too. For those of you who finish a book in a few days or even hours, getting your hands on another one can be an ordeal, because books are expensive too. At this shop, you can find a massive collection, with books and magazines starting from 5 DHR! In fact, you can even trade in the books you've already read for another one at half the price.

**Bagatelle Boutique**
Every girl wants at least one staple designer bag in their wardrobe. However, if your parents aren’t ready to spend some good money on one which is fresh off the rack, I’ve got you covered. The best alternative is buying a pre-loved bag. Not only will you get it at a much cheaper price, but you’ll be able to pick up on from your favourite label too. This shop guarantees authenticity and sells mostly pre-loved bags in great condition. They do also sell some new pieces too though, in case you change your mind and splurge for the full price.
et’s be real. Dubai is a pretty overwhelming place. There’s so much to do, to see and to eat that sometimes you can’t keep track and end up going to the same places every time. But people are always talking about “trying new things” and all that, so why not give it a try? We’ll start right now. Here’s a list of some of the places in Dubai that you’ve probably (and hopefully) never heard of, that I’ve enjoyed. You can thank me later.

**Al Serkal Avenue**

First off, we have we this place Al Serkal is an industry warehouse site in Al-Quoz which is home to some of Dubai’s most amazing culture and arts venues that host national and international art exhibitions and shows all year round. It’s the perfect place for artists to network and learn from each other’s creativity because every nook and cranny around you emanates good vibes and energy. This place is also full of community art spaces, like the “A4 Space” and “thejamjar”, which are such fun places to go to meet talented, like-minded people. After all your exploration through the whimsical fairy-lit avenues, you can dip into one of the many cafes, or just relax in the library.

**Vox Outdoor Rooftop Cinema**

This experience is without a doubt one-of-a-kind and definitely a personal favourite. Located in the luxurious Galleria Mall in Jumeirah, you can watch a movie from a wide selection under the stars, cuddled up on a plush couch, beanbag or love seat with a blanket, a massive box of snacks (which all come with the ticket) and a loved one. When you’re finished with your movie, you can hang around on the rooftop and admire the skyline, or head downstairs and grab a bite to eat at the lavish restaurants in the mall.

**Ripe Market**

Another wonderful daytime event that I enjoyed immensely is the Ripe Market at Zaabeel Park. This event runs in several locations across Dubai, but my personal favourite is in Zaabeel because of its beautiful scenery and fun vibes. In a nutshell, it is a community event that supports local businesses and gives them a more personal and fun way to sell
their products—from handmade clothes and jewelry to organic foods and pizza cones. There are also fitness workshops, live entertainment, yoga and children’s activities. It’s a great time for everyone.

**Snookerworld**

If you’re more of a laid-back kind of person who likes to just hang out with friends, this is the place for you. Located on Dubai-Sharjah Road, go and enjoy a wide range of activities from billiards and table tennis to touch games and PlayStation. When you’re done with that you can ask the lovely and accommodating staff for shisha and relax for a while. What’s more is that just next door is an amazing restaurant called Layalina so you can grab a bite to eat between rounds.

**Rise at Dubai Creek Harbour**

How about a more relaxed day out with the family but with a little bit of fun for the kids? Rise is a full day event—“noon to night”—that takes place on Fridays and Saturdays at Dubai Creek Harbour, which is a beautiful and modern place on the waterfront overlooking the ever breathtaking and classic Dubai skyline. What I personally enjoyed the most about it when I went was the live performances because of the hilarious and talented MC. They even hosted a talent show in which you could win dinner for four, plane tickets and a whole lot more. In addition, there were fun activities for kids like karaoke and drawing, which my little siblings enjoyed immensely. The best part was the variety of delicious and unique food! This recently opened spot is the place to be on the weekends.
Do we really know who we are? Or do our friends tell us?

by Divya Ariga

When you meet someone for the first time, your brain takes in lots of cues, firstly on appearance, secondly on behaviour and thirdly on speech. All these cues are collectively used to come to an understanding about an individual. That’s why they say first impressions are so important; it’s because these impressions last a long time.

This odd phenomenon leads to the stereotyping of characters.

Stereotyping and generalisations have long been overruled as malpractice in modern society. Yet somehow it is impossible for our brains to avoid such hurdles.

“Bethany is so kind! She’d never hurt a soul!”
“Have you seen what Pranav did? Can he never not act like that?!”
“Noira never stops chatting, does she? She’s always going on about something!”

You might think these sayings to be cliché, and you are right, they are cliché. In the sense that they are generalisations made by spectators of people’s personalities. Generalisations which only scratch the surface of one’s complex array of traits. But it is too often that we hear sentences as such muttered in hallways, in classrooms and in social spots around town. How taxing are these passing comments?

If you take notice to what one says about their own personality and behaviour, you tend to see a deeper and more upsetting pattern of self-stereotyping. “Preposterous”, you might exclaim, but play close attention to your friends and yourselves. Haven’t you also fallen into the trap of self-stereotyping? If we are reminded constantly of our dominant or observable traits, we tend to comply to and encourage this image of ourselves around those who hold such opinions of us. If Bethany, our fictional example, is in the company her friends; friends who deem her to be prudent and moralistic, Bethany might not feel comfortable shattering such image of herself in front of friends. Thus, she continues to act prudent and moralistic. But her friends do not know that in actuality, Bethany is actually finding her footings in judgement.

Worst case scenarios include individuals subjecting themselves to generalisations about themselves to such a degree, that they are forced to maintain a dual life of sorts. This leads to shallow friendships and a lack of transparency with oneself.

What we fail to do, as friends, is that we do not give deserving credit to the complexities of one’s character. If Noira’s friends did not fall prey to calling her “chatty”, they might come to understand that Noira in actuality is a quiet person.

How can we help our friends and ourselves out of this destructive cycle?

Firstly, we need to listen.

We need to listen to all the things that our friends and colleagues have to say. We must come to see that they, as human beings, are far too complex for our own understanding. We must listen with open hearts and open minds, noting nothing for the future.

As individuals, we must resist temptations to please our friends with compliance to their schemes of us.

After all, we all know that we aren’t just smart, cute or funny.
There are a lot of things in this world that annoy me. If you know me, this fact may surprise you. I like to think that I’m a pretty carefree person, but you don’t have to ask any of my friends about that. Just take my word for it.

Anyway.

One morning in the winter of 2015, Joshua Feuerstein walked into Starbucks and ordered a cup of coffee, as you do. Except he noticed that there were no Christmas themed designs on the cup he received, and Santa Claus was no longer there. Instead, the cup was plain red with the Starbucks logo on it. This enraged him beyond imagination. How could Starbucks remove Mr. Claus from the design and demean the good holiday that is Christmas, thus disrespect the entire religion of Christianity?

A rather “shook” Feuerstein posted a video on YouTube ranting about how this action was perpetuating the “War on Christmas” and that it was simply unacceptable. He then challenged his viewers to go into Starbucks and instead of telling the barista their name, they say that it’s Merry Christmas. The purpose of this was so “trick” the barista into honouring the holiday by putting it on the cup. His mastermind movement was spread and pushed across the internet and soon became a popular trend. In an email with CNNMoney, Feuerstein expressed his pride in the Christian community of America for stepping up to make sure their voices were heard.

What a load of rubbish. And for what? Broadcasting his hurt feelings probably didn’t do much except validate his feelings.

There’s no escape from the culture of offence, especially these days when validation is so readily available. You can simply hop online and find people agreeing with and encouraging your biased ideas, which only fuels the fire. Getting offended is so easy these days and so many people do it that it’s almost become a trend. Like, you’re not passionate enough about something unless you express harsh negative emotions towards anyone who disagrees. It’s not about “fighting for what you believe in” anymore, it’s become about just getting angry for what you believe in, which is way besides the point of the expression.

People who get offended easily exhibit serious inferiority complexes and try to overcompensate by seeking validation from people who also face the same problems that they do, which further fuels the fire—this is based on a concept in social psychology called group polarisation, “a phenomenon wherein the decisions and opinions of people in a group setting become more extreme than their actual, privately held beliefs”.

It’s madness. And it’s fuelled by the feeling of entitlement.
Now you may be wondering what exactly the relationship between an inferiority complex and entitlement is. The definition of entitlement shows that it can apply to anyone who believes that they deserve special treatment of any kind, be that through validation and reassurance or otherwise—that they are so special and misunderstood that that society needs to cater to their emotions. This creates victimisation because of the feeling of being attacked when presented with disagreement.

The point is that entitlement breeds victimisation, and victimisation breeds hypersensitivity and not being able to accept criticism and understand other perspectives—where all the ignorance and political polarisation comes from. It’s what I like to call the great rabbit hole of ignorance.

However, I won’t just sit here and complain for 700 words. How can we combat this issue? Reflection.

1. Picking your battles is essential. Remember: you fight FOR stuff, not ABOUT stuff. What are you willing to fight for? Is it worth maintaining the fight, to begin with? There is a beautiful kind of liberation in putting your pride and not wasting your time just to prove a point. Don’t be like the Starbucks guy. Make like Elsa and let it go.

2. Start with objectivity when considering new ideas. One of my favourite quotes I’ve ever heard is this one from Aristotle: “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought with accepting it.” When presented with a perspective different from your own, try to see what you can learn from it to enhance your own way of thinking instead of completely rejecting the notion.

3. Promote what you love, don’t bash what you hate. This allows us to not only spread more positivity in our communities, but also makes ourselves proud of what we’re choosing to fight for. If you have nothing nice and constructive to say, shut up. Expressing reasonable and justified distaste without consequent, constructive action doesn’t make you politically correct—it just makes you annoying.
For the past five years, the University has been involved with the literature festival activities in a unique way such that, we have an interactive session organised by the help of Ms. Louise Edensor our Senior Lecturer, Media and Education Department, every year with one famous author.

So far we have had the authors listed below:

• In the year 2013, we had Mr Ian Rankin a Scottish crime writer known for his best novel series Inspector Rebus.

• Our University welcomed Mr Stuart Mac Bride in 2014 who is a Scottish writer as well, his speciality is writing crime thrillers in the “Granite city” of Aberdeen and featuring a detective to add a twist and excitement.

• In our third year namely 2015 of literature fest we received Mr Graeme. C. Simsion an Australian author famous for his book The Rosie Project.

• In 2016 we greeted Ms Susan Abulhawa, a Palestinian American fiction writer and human rights activist, best known for her top-selling novel Mornings in Jenin

• Mr Ben Miller graced the University with his presence in 2017. An English comedian, who has a passion for writing science books with a hint of humour hidden within them his most famous novel is “Its not Rocket Science”. We also had Mr. Kei Miller, an award winning inspiring poet and fiction writer from Jamaica who is famous for many of his stunning pieces.

• Recently we welcomed the famous American author Mr Joe Hill who talked about his passion for writing, particularly horror and comics, and answered questions from members of the audience.
Learn the basics: what IS comicon?

Comicon is an annual pop culture event and social gathering where people with similar interests from across the region come together to celebrate their love for comic books, manga and anime, movies, film and animations and many more that shape and define art and culture. This three-day festival brings out the geek in you and allows you to truly escape reality and dive into fiction, fantasy, and all your favourite fandoms. Comicon is truly an event to remember, and its one you’ll never forget.

Points to remember: little tips from yours truly

I have gone to MEFCC twice, and believe me when I say I have a lot of regrets and made some mistakes along the way. We all learn with time and experience, but to save you from all that hard work, here’s some tips to remember on your first visit to comicon:

• Research ahead of time

As helpful as I can be, it is still advisable to research on comicon and its upcoming events in advance. Know which days hold which events and have the booklet in hand at all times so you know which parts of the convention you’re interested and want to take part in.

• Comicon Tickets

Tickets are usually priced at AED 100-150 for a day if you buy them from the gate. However, if you want to save some cash, discounted prices are given to early birds who buy their ticket online or in any Virgin Megastore. Other packages include a three-day pass (AED 250) and VIP three-day pass (AED 500).
• Transportation
Make sure your mode of transportation is secured. As comicon is held annually in World Trade Center, the most popular and fun way of going is to travel by the RTA metro. Who knows, you might bump into some cosplayers along the way.

• Beware the queues
Like every major event, comicon has its own set of lines, starting from the entrance, to the activities and meet & greets. Make sure to come early to avoid such lines and spend more time having fun!

• Comfort is key
Comic Con is a big event, therefore there is a lot of walking involved. Based on my previous experiences, I definitely recommend wearing the most comfortable shoes so moving around is as easy as possible.

• Limit the things you bring and buy
Since you’ll be moving around frequently, be wary of how much merch you buy and always check if you have your belongings with you. In such a big place, it would be easy to lose your things, and it would make moving around a lot harder if you carry heavy stuff around. Unless you’re prepared for such strenuous activity, don’t pack a suitcase, just stick to a small backpack.

• What DO you bring?
Always bring these with you when you go to comicon: Your phone and a powerbank, money for merch and other things, and snacks and drinks (cause the food there can be a BIT overpriced)

• Friendship is magic
A little sparkly and childish, but true. MEFCC after all, a social gathering of people with similar interests. Don’t be afraid to approach and befriend the people there. Everybody is nice, and you should be too. Forget "stranger danger" cause in comicon, everyone is fam.

### All about cosplaying

Now cosplaying is the act of dressing up and getting into character inspired by your favorite comics, movies, anime, books, manga, and much more. It may seem difficult at first, but with continued practice, cosplaying can be a fun experience.

Before anything else, always research on the costume design, characteristics and personality of the character you want to cosplay AHEAD of time.
Don’t miss out on…

• Activities & events
There are a lot of hosted games (ex. Dungeons and dragons), music and dance performances, various workshops, artist alleys, and even a treasure hunt (last time I visited, unfortunately I couldn’t find the treasure :’( ) Research in advance as to which day and events you want to take part in.

• Food
Completely disregarding what I mentioned earlier, if you have the money, Comicon offers a wide range of delicious food and beverages that you can buy whenever you feel like taking a break and having a snack.

• Merchandise
There are stalls where you can buy books, figurines, posters, and many more, and check out the booths where artists sell their work and merch: these consist of varying fandoms and it feels great when you spot your favorite cartoon character imprinted on a tiny mug (believe me, I would know).

• Competitions
One of the most popular competitions in Comicon is the cosplay competition. Many people participate in this event and showcase their cosplays on stage and the winner gets a prize (usually money, hope that encourages you guys to join lmao) There are many other competitions to try out (gaming, basketball, and dodgeball etc) and I recommend you sign up for as much as you can.

• Guests
Celebrity guests come from far and wide to visit MEFCC and you have the chance to finally meet them. From tv stars and famous authors, to popular cosplayers and animators, it’s a one time opportunity to come face to face with your favorite idols.

Overall, I feel like Comicon is a fantastic way to express your love for your favorite fandoms, make new friends with people of similar interest, and most importantly to enjoy, have fun, and make the most of your Comicon experience (and I hope you catch me cosplaying Harley Quinn again this upcoming Comicon 2018, I will see you guys there).