

Essay

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Laban-Laban: Tiger Millennial Tita

The Stage is My Playground

As a millennial *tita* (aunt), I may not be the freshest face in the room, but I sure know how to charm the audience as I sizzle on the dance floor. Thanks to the influence of Sexbomb Dancers, Viva Hotbabes, and Spice Girls who taught me how to be flexible and learn several entertaining dance moves while singing. Whether it's the catchy "Spaghetti Song," the sexy "Basketbol," or the empowering "Wannabe," I can always rock the stage and make everyone smile.

Turning forty, I am no longer flexible as I used to be but I can still bust out my favorite dance number of Macarena from Los del Rio or Asereje (Las Ketchup) during talent shows and intermission numbers in company-sponsored events. Trust me, Tiger Balm helps a lot.

Ageless Grace on the Catwalk

Who says age is a hindrance to grace and style? Even as a millennial *tita*, I can slay a *Vogue* catwalk with confidence and poise. The secret lies in the dependable allies of the White Flower or Katinko that keep me feeling invigorated and ready to conquer any runway. These are secret weapons to soothe my sore muscles and joints after a long day of work or exercise. They also help me relax and sleep better at night. They are my best friends when it comes to self-care and wellness.

Embracing Wisdom Through Proverbs

I grew up practicing what I would say during the Question-and-Answer of *Eat Bulaga's* "Little Miss Philippines." This made me articulate my thoughts clearly and eloquently. This skill comes in handy when I have to present my ideas or opinions in meetings, seminars, or interviews. In competitions, when someone's feeling "wannabe," "Little Miss Philippines" also taught me that there's always a proverb (*kasabihan*) to provide guidance and wisdom in any situation.

Resilience and "Laban-laban" Spirit

Being a millennial *tita* is not easy. I deal with the challenges of aging, such as arthritis, gout, and wrinkles. As a millennial, I have to cope with the expectations of society such as being independent and successful in my career but even if I am almost forty, adulting is still challenging because my inner child can still be immature.

Approaching my 40s, hormones might be playing tricks on me and starting to get haywire. But thanks to the Sexbomb Dancers' motivational expression, "Get, get, Aw/Au" (Go get the gold) and their famous "Spaghetti Song" with its "pataas-pababa" (going up and down) moves. The Sexbomb Dancers taught me to "laban-laban" (fighter) and be resilient even if life is full of ups and downs

Aside from the SexBomb Dancers, the Viva Hotbabes were also a great influence on me as a millennial *tita* to be engage in physical activities like "basketbol" because "ang sarap mag-basketball" (basketball is pleasurable). Viva Hotbabes also taught me to aim for my goals

with the last line of their famous song, “Shoot that ball.” When things get tough, I can always bounce back and overcome any obstacle.

Embracing Teamwork

Aside from having a British accent like Harry Potter and Peppa Pig, the Spice Girls taught me to be a team player and to “spice up [my]life” with passion and enthusiasm. They taught me that having different personalities (i.e., sporty, baby, scary, posh, and ginger) can be enriching and that diversity is a strength for a team.

Learning Adulting From a Millennial Tita

Like a Jedi to a padawan, a millennial tita like me can guide and inspire Gen Z and Gen Z alpha because of our experiences. One of the things that a Gen-Z can learn from a millennial tita like me is cooking. Thanks to *Wok with Yan* and *Cooking with Tita Nora*, a millennial tita like me can prepare a home-cooked meal that is budget-friendly.

During *petsa de peligro* (running out of cash before the next pay day), I look for Mom’s Tupperware that I can use for my lunchbox. Some of my *tipid* (thrifty) food hacks I learned from college was to pair Skyflakes with a canned Spanish sardines or pork and beans and it can be “gourmet” meal. I also match instant pancit canton with hotdog or corn beef and it becomes a hearty lunch. If there’s free food from the office pantry, I follow Ate Shawie (Sharon Cuneta) and use the Tupperware to take home leftover food, which I can for dinner or breakfast.

When it comes to the corporate world, I can show how Gen Z can ace and rock it. While I do not have the latest gadgets and social media apps, I have experience, expertise, and a whole lot of common sense. I can teach troubleshooting like a clogged toilet or sink or changing a lightbulb, thanks to *MacGyver*. I can guide the Gen Z on how to communicate effectively, collaborate well with a team, stay organized, and be a leader because aside from the SexBomb dancers, Viva Hotbabes, and Spice Girls, I also grew up fangirling with boy bands like Backstreet Boys, Boyzone, and NSYNC.

The Queen B

So, to the Gen Z and Gen Z alpha readers, respect your Queen B—a millennial tita like me who has the spirit that embraces every moment with flair. With a role model like Madonna, a millennial tita will “let her body go with the flow” and still “strike a pose.” Additionally, with Beyonce’s resonating voice, a millennial tita like me is a “I’m survivor, I’m not gonna give up ... I’m gonna make it.”

Despite the “pataas-pababa” life challenges that a millennial tita faces, which include going up and down the stairs even with throbbing knees, I’ll keep dancing with grace and wit even if I am no longer “young, sweet, and seventeen” like in *Dancing Queen*