

Fearless, or just pigheaded?

By [Charlene Oliver](#), issued by [Grey Africa](#)

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Did you know that [DHA](#), an important omega-3 fatty acid, is found concentrated in mammalian brains? I ate one. Yes, I did. *Pig brain!* I still shudder at the thought, and I am pretty sure that my vegan friends will have my head for it. Yet, I did it. Why? Because actions speak louder than words, and when confronted with your own perception of bravery, you can only step up and face the proverbial music.



That, at least, is what drove my decision deep in the heart of Manila at our local Grey offices. Here we were treated to local delicacies, including balut (google it at your own risk) and, of course, the above-mentioned grey matter. Thankfully, there were many other delicious eats and treats. I can highly recommend Don Papa rum, our creative drink of choice, and anything adobo (Pilipino BBQ basting, of sorts).

Manila, and Campaigns at Grey, played host to our Grey Regional Creative Council. This is where we spent three days going through the work from each country while putting our own creative stake in the ground. Effective? Yes. Famous? Well, we'll leave that for another article.

What an honour! An I-almost-peed-myself kind of honour. That's what excitement and nerves will do to you. To sit among thirty-three of the top creative minds in our region, and represent South Africa, one of sixteen different countries. We really do have a diverse crowd in the AMEA region, and this diversity allows for great creative conversations and inspiring work.

I learned a few things while representing Grey Johannesburg. I learned that we fly our big girl knicker flags high. We have a lot more ladies in leadership positions in South Africa than many other countries. We have a more equal playing field with regards to diversity and bringing different voices to the table. This is good, and it changes absolutely everything.

I learned that some of the challenges us South Africans face are often similar to the challenges our international counterparts face. It's how we approach them that sets us apart. Our cultural insights are unique, and we can differentiate the problem with a solution that bears local relevance. We can be more African. We're sitting on rich creative territory here. We can solve ideas and connect with our fellow South Africans *our way*, by really changing perception and behaviour.

I realised that the same can be said for our creative industry. Our challenges are often the same, but we can learn from each other and stand together fearlessly... in order to move forward and to do things better.

"The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." ~ Nelson Mandela

I'm pretty sure he meant women too.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlene Oliver is Creative Director Officer of Grey Advertising Africa.

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