

Katryn Kruger is a model citizen

 By [Maroefah Smith](#)

7 Aug 2019

What do you do after walking the runway for Givenchy and Dolce & Gabbana alongside the likes of Gisele Bündchen? Well, you use your experience and expertise to create a safe space for women to share *their* experiences like Katryn Kruger.

When she's not shooting covers and campaigns for *Vogue*, Dior and Prada, Kruger works as a motivational speaker. Recently, she launched a series of events called Koffie Met Katryn at which she shares her life story, journey and lessons she's learned along the way. She also uses this platform to inspire fellow women to follow their dreams.

Kruger tells us more about how modelling has shaped her, the importance of women supporting each other and the role of social media in uplifting women.

■ **You started Koffie Met Katryn, earlier this year. How has it grown since then?**

After the first Koffie Met Katryn (KMK), there were a lot of people who wanted to get involved – specifically other female entrepreneurs who wanted to collaborate and contribute to upcoming gatherings.

The number of women who want to attend has also grown immensely. The gatherings are fully booked within minutes and consequently, there's been a long waiting list since.



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Katryn Kruger walking the runway for Dolce & Gabbana.

▣ What are some of the things you think all women experience in business?

I think we all fear failure and therefore place a huge amount of pressure on ourselves. Apart from entering the business world, we still need to keep up with all the other demands that come with being a woman; running a household, being a wife and/or a mom.

Another thing I think **all** women experience in the workplace is the double standard between men and women. When women are assertive or firm, require things to be done a certain way or take a stand, we can quickly get labelled as “bossy”, “being difficult” or, even worse, “she has PMS”. But with a man, he is said to be a good leader and gets praised for it.

But, I think, we also experience a real sense of support and sisterhood with our female co-workers because we can all relate to one another in some way. I think that’s pretty special.



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▣ How has your modelling career shaped you as a 21st century woman?

I think being a full-time model from the age of 16 has forced me to form my own ideas, stick to my guns and to stay true to myself and what I believe in.

That has come in pretty handy in a world and society where we get bombarded with information and Instagram-perfect posts of what we ought to look like, what we should be saying or what we should be doing to be “accepted”.

▣ What’s the biggest lesson you’ve learned in your career?

This perfectly ties in with my answer above. The biggest and most valuable lesson I have learnt in my career is that you should always stay true to yourself.

In my industry, you get swept into streams of trends – what to wear, how to dress, what to say, etc. I had to ignore all that and just focus on who I am within my own beliefs and thoughts.

▣ How do you think women can support each other more?

“ We can take the time to listen to one another. Once we do that, we’ll soon realise we all laugh, cry and stress about similar things. ”

And in that realisation, we will find compassion and support towards each other.



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I saw this with the KMK gatherings – women from different backgrounds, religions and ages can come together and share stories we can all relate to in some way or another. And through that, we form a community to lean on.

■ ***You started Koffie Met Katryn on Instagram. What role do you think social media plays in creating uplifting spaces for women?***

Social media definitely makes it easier to reach out to other people. It also offers a more personal and creative form of communication, so it plays a big part in finding a community you like and where you can go to be inspired and supported.

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[View this post on Instagram](#)



On Saturday at KOFFIE MET KATRYN , beautiful @claudiadenobrega shared a message that was on her heart She spoke about the seasons of life and that we need to trust God in the process, and to BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED. 💎💎💎💎💎 . I got goosebumps as she spoke, because this message resonated so much with me. . This season I am in - getting to share my story, inspire others and offer a platform for women to get together and inspire one another, is filling my heart with so much joy! . The women I get to meet, and the stories and pearls of wisdom they share have changed my life forever. . So I believe I had a lot of growing to do to reach this season, and I want to bloom ... And continue to inspire and be inspired. . What a privilege 💎💎💎💎 . #kmk #femaleempowerment #inspiration . Thank you @alibodillphotography for this portrait ❤️👍

A post shared by Katryn Kruger (@katrynkruger) on Jul 30, 2019 at 7:20am PDT

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Just look at how many mommy accounts there are that offer valuable advice from experts as well as an outlet for women to reach out to fellow moms for tips or words of encouragement.

“ Women seek community and social media makes that a lot easier to find. ”

📌 What's next for Koffie Met Katryn?

I will be hosting it on a slightly bigger scale to accommodate more women, but I do like to keep the gatherings small so that it still feels intimate and personal. I also hope to do a few KMK gatherings in other cities, since a lot of women and girls have reached out to me and ask that I host it in their home towns like Pretoria, Johannesburg or Durban.

We are also thinking of offering workshops at high schools where I talk to girls about what I have learnt and give them practical advice on life, as well as offering some masterclasses on fun things like make-up and styling.



Kruger presenting the first Koffie Met Katryn.

📌 What's been the most memorable thing about Koffie Met Katryn so far?

The sense of camaraderie I experience with the women! Like I said, through listening to each other's stories we soon realise we deal with similar stuff in life.

“ It's been incredible to see how a group of women who are all strangers start connecting with one another and, after KMK they, leave as friends. ”

I have also met some incredible women through KMK that have become friends or who I end up doing business with and who inspire me on a daily basis.

Through KMK, I have built my own little community of awesome women and that just fills my heart with so much joy and excitement to share this with other women.

Stay in touch with Kruger and KMK on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and her [website](#).

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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