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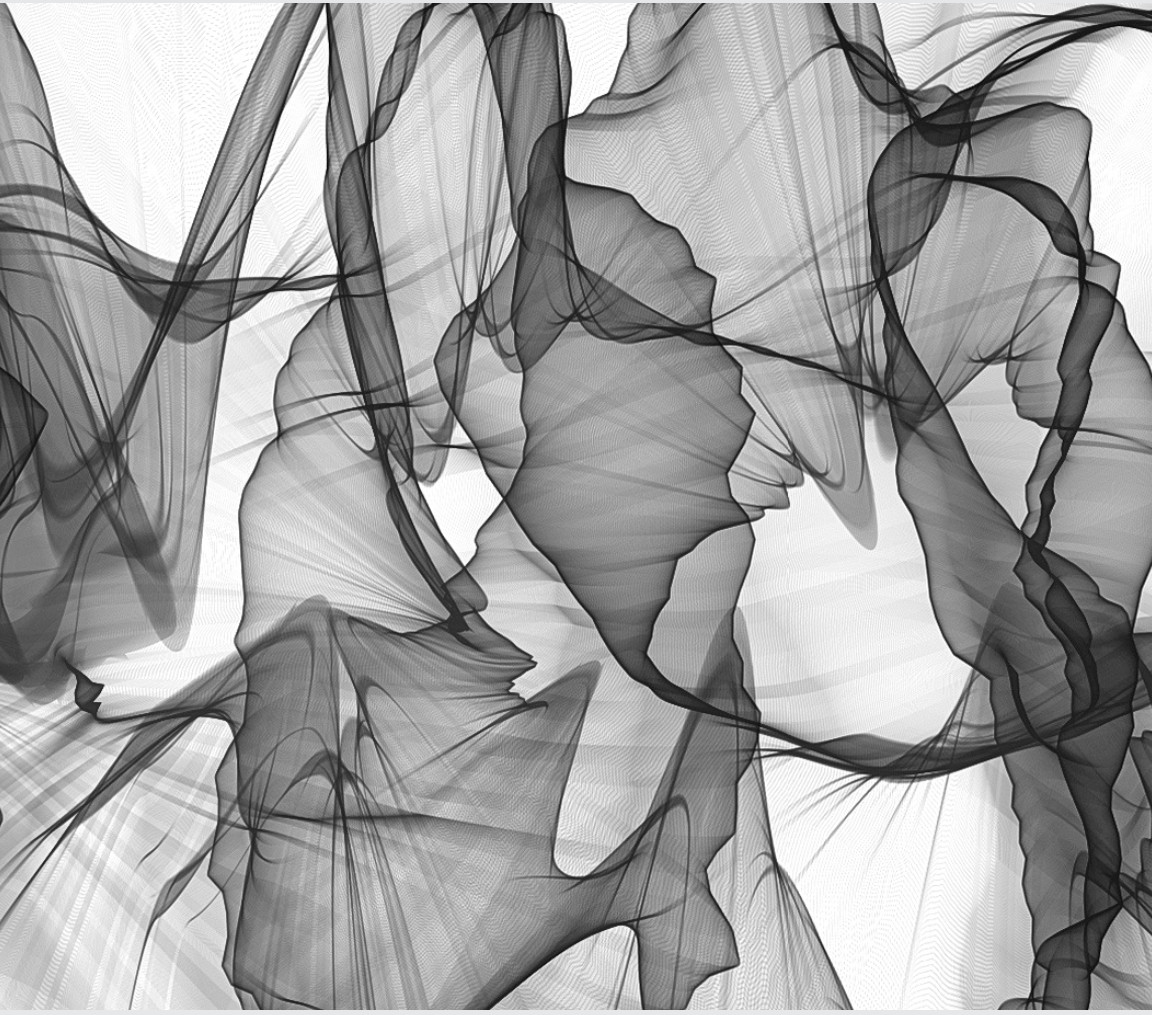

Denise Handlarski, Akanksha Misra, Margarita Levine, Jacqui Getfield, Pooja Bhatia Narang and many more

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A Balancing Act: Unlearning and Embracing Chinese Immigrant Mothering

As a Chinese immigrant, motherhood involves unlearning patterns of thinking and behaving from one's upbringing and learning healthier ways to mother. Many view Chinese mothers as tiger moms, a harmful stereotype that does little to embrace the diversity of Chinese motherhood. This article draws on my lived experiences as an immigrant mother to my three American-born Chinese children. For me, the act of immigrant mothering entails a delicate balancing act where Chinese and American values often conflict. These conflicts highlight the racial inequities in how mothers are allowed to mother and experience motherhood. There is no one way to mother, but the heteronormative white, middle-class mothering style is dominant in how society defines good mothers. Little has been written about racial equity among mothers and how motherhood often details negotiating between culture-specific and American norms. My article seeks to explore racial equity and widen the boundaries of motherhood by exploring the impact of immigrant mothering practices, navigating Chinese and American cultures as an immigrant mother, reflecting on how my immigrant mothering has affected my American-born children, and lastly, understanding my cultural history and its influence on my Chinese identity. To widen the rhetoric on mothering, we must engage the narratives of racially diverse mothers to understand motherhood's multiplicities and complexities. Only then will we have a more inclusive view of motherhood that will build racial equity to benefit women and children.

I like to think that I'm not the typical Chinese mother who is often characterized as extremely strict, doesn't express affection, and only cares about obedient children who study all the time, but I think my American-born children see me as that critical tiger mom who only cares about grades. One time, my youngest mentioned how strict we were as parents, which led to my tirade about how we've never beaten him or his siblings when both my

husband and I were subjected to frequent beatings while growing up in a traditional Chinese immigrant family. This led me to see the cultural divide in our home with greater clarity. I see myself as an authoritative mother who is not as quick to yell as my mother, encourages open communication, and is willing to listen to my children's side of the story before I dole out any punishment. Those are the characteristics of authoritative parenting, where the child-parent relationship is bidirectional with open channels of communication, as opposed to authoritarian parenting, where relationships are unidirectional and parents hold all the power with little input from their children (Baumrind 412). I was first introduced to cultural conflicts in mothering when first-time motherhood taught me rather quickly that I could not be a stay-at-home mother because I wanted to pursue my dreams of becoming a psychologist, professor, and researcher. Sometimes pursuing my dreams seemed in direct conflict with my role as a Chinese immigrant mother because I felt guilty working on my degree when I thought I should be spending time with my babies and guilty for nursing my babies when I should be working on my doctorate. My maternal guilt was overwhelming, and although I was fortunate to know a few academic mothers, it would have been nice to know one who was Chinese because I needed help navigating the stark differences between American and Chinese cultures. My dear late colleague, Dr. Joy Noel-Weiss, helped alleviate much of my maternal guilt with her supportive advice when I was a doctoral student trying to juggle motherhood, academia, and life. She told me: "One of the best things about being in the moment is you will hear the little voice in your heart. Trust it, as you have learned to listen to your children, listen to your heart. It will help you find your place. The world will not leave you behind; you are contributing by simply enjoying your children and discovering who they are." Hearing her words of wisdom led me to value my inner voice, and I became less guilt-ridden when I took a break from work to play with my children. Her words also struck me because I had never heard anyone encourage me to trust in myself, as filial responsibilities often left me feeling I needed to centre my world around my family instead of my own wants and desires.

Growing up in a traditional Chinese household taught me that I needed to do more, and if I didn't kill myself doing everything, the world would view me as lazy, which is the kiss of death in many Asian families. This made me feel as though I were slacking for being in graduate school for far too long and feeling exhausted all the time because I was pumping every three hours for six months straight so my daughter could be exclusively breastfed. It took me a long time to unlearn those toxic cultural values and find a way to balance my career and family, allowing myself to rest when I was tired or enjoy a book without feeling guilty. This sense of unlearning meant constantly reevaluating my Chinese immigrant upbringing while adopting American values to create

a happy medium of mothering. I recently saw a meme posted by @ brownmamatrauma entitled "Why children of immigrants find it difficult to rest" (Ninad). It listed how rest feels selfish, we were taught that our self-worth was tied to our productivity, we associate rest with laziness, we feel guilty for not being "productive," rest feels like a waste of time, we feel guilty that our parents didn't have the same opportunities to rest, our parents didn't have the privilege to model rest or practice self-care, and we watched our parents work tirelessly to provide for the family. That meme reflected everything I felt as an adult immigrant and motivated me to try to parent differently. I want my children to know the value of rest, and if I didn't rest, how could they learn its importance?

One way the Chinese cultural value of family did prove essential in balancing my career and family was having an extended family unit. My husband, also an immigrant, is the oldest son, and one of his familial duties is to take care of his parents, so his mother lived with us. She stopped working as a seamstress once her grandchildren were born. Having a flexible teaching schedule and reliable childcare with my mother-in-law was instrumental in becoming my department's only full professor of colour. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the immense value of having reliable childcare and flexibility at work for women to balance the needs of their families and employment, but sadly, this is still not the norm in the United States (Kalluri et al. 1; Ma, "Reflections" 134). This flexibility also benefited my sister-in-law, as I would pick up my niece from school when she worked, and when she became a stay-at-home mother, she would pick up my children when I worked. In hindsight, I am in awe of how we all supported each other, and one of our greatest successes is how close our children are to each other as young adults.

In casual conversations with my Chinese friends who are mothers or grandmothers, we've concluded that there are numerous things we have to unlearn to help our children balance their identity as Chinese Americans because we all navigate between two cultures and generational differences that often clash. Although we grew up during a time when Chinese mothers were stringent and punishing, we are trying to break out of that authoritarian model. Recent research on Chinese parenting styles shows Asian parents are becoming more authoritative, in which communication, autonomy, and social-emotional skills are valued (Way et al. 68). In trying to nurture both Chinese and American identities in my children, I have to navigate the treacherous territory of instilling a sense of pride in them as they grow up in a country that forever sees them as a foreigner while continuously negotiating between Chinese and American values. This has been especially difficult with the increase in anti-Asian attacks during the pandemic, which I fear will continue for years to come. Between 2020 and 2021, there was a 343 per cent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes reported to the police in New York City (Center for

the Study of Hate and Extremism). I suspect there are many more unreported instances of anti-Asian hate crimes, such as the woman who verbally assaulted me at the supermarket. I considered pelting her with the canned food within my reach but was worried my husband would have to bail me out of jail. I always remind my children that the first thing people see when they meet you is that you are Chinese, so you need to be comfortable with that.

One Mom's Strategy against Anti-Asian Sentiment

As I grew up during the 1970s and was often the only Asian in my neighbourhood and schools, I am no stranger to racism. As a Chinese mother, I was hoping my children would be spared the prejudice I experienced, but racism never quite takes a break, and here we are dealing with discrimination again. When my children were in elementary school up until the eighth grade, I always volunteered to teach their classes about Chinese New Year and gave out treats. This was my attempt to reduce anti-Asian sentiment and teach their classmates some cool things about Chinese culture because I knew their Catholic school curriculum was not inclusive. In hindsight, I was also teaching these children a different view of what a Chinese woman could be, and they showed me how little they knew and cared to know about other cultures. More than once, I was disappointed in some of the children's behaviours, with their ignorant words and conduct that were reflective of their parents', but my master plan must have worked because none of my children were bullied in that school. I attribute part of that to my personality; my children's classmates knew I would call them out on their poor behaviour, and I was a novelty to the other parents, as I was not the typical Chinese woman because I do not put up with anyone's nonsense. I recall one mom who never went to college saying to me that immigrants were taking away all the jobs, knowing full well that I was an immigrant. I gave her the most intense look, prompting her to say that she wasn't directing her comment towards me. "I don't mean you, Cathy," she said. In hindsight, I should have asked her pointedly what job I was taking from her, a woman who had never set foot in a college setting. These are the conundrums I contend with: I have this insider status in which racists feel comfortable spewing their xenophobic rhetoric, and I feel responsible for educating them, which is exhausting at times. It is through experiences such as this that I teach my children how prevalent racism still is, and I wasn't always this pessimistic. I used to tell them that the election of Barack Obama was evidence that the world was getting better. Little did I realize that Obama's election was the catalyst that emboldened racists to vote an even bigger racist into the White House in 2016, and I had to face the grim reality that the world never got better. As a child of the 1970s, I grew up with the "look down, don't talk back" mentality, to accept racism, and to not question

inequities because I was a minority.

Being an academic and a researcher have helped me cope with the insanity that is going on right now and given me the tools to be critical, raise questions, fight back, and call out injustices. This goes against the stereotype of the quiet Asian who doesn't rock the boat. It does my heart good that my children learn about civil rights in school, have parents who discuss these issues at home, and see other mothers protesting with their children. Today, we are moving past the stereotype of the quiet Asian and seeing more dialogue between Asian parents and their children, in which children are influencing their parents' mindsets regarding race, challenging their parents' racist views, teaching them about LGBTIQ+, exposing the detriment of the model minority, and standing up against injustice. The days of keeping our heads down are disappearing, which is a critical step towards racial equity.

During the pandemic, I became a part of several online advocacy groups over Zoom, where I connected with a few Asians who felt inspired by my outspokenness to fight against anti-Asian racism, the model minority myth (MMM), anti-Blackness, and white supremacy. For those unfamiliar with the MMM, it is a dangerous assumption that all Asians excel academically, are financially secure, and do not need support (Poon et al. 469). This erroneous assumption is based on aggregated data from all Asian groups that do not consider generation status, education levels, financial stability, as well as other measures. The biggest problem with not disaggregating this data is that it creates an inaccurate portrayal of all Asians as successful, resulting in those in need being denied access to the support they are entitled to and creating stress for those who don't fit into narrow Asian stereotypes (e.g., excelling at math and science, being socially awkward). In addition, white supremacists perpetuate this myth to divide communities of colour by highlighting how Asians are the model minority; therefore, other communities of colour should strive to be successful like them. What most individuals do not understand is that poverty in communities of colour has deep roots in systemic racism, beginning with redline districts affecting the accumulation of generational wealth, access to quality education, good health, economic stability, fresh produce, and adequate transportation (Lynch et al. 2-3). A strong work ethic cannot adequately address these multilayers of systemic racism. Yet the model minority narrative of working hard to be successful is often touted as the sole remedy. Sadly, this mindset also encourages anti-Blackness by blaming communities of colour, especially Black people, for not overcoming these systemic inequities and inequalities on their own (Yi and Todd 570). The murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery deeply affected me, as George's last words called out for his mother, and it was Wanda Cooper-Jones, Ahmaud's mother, who pushed for the arrest of her son's killers. These incidences show the heavy burden on mothers of colour and how white

supremacy disregards the anguish of mothers who are unable to keep their children safe. I feel the world would be safer if more mothers were voted into positions of power, but the United States has still not reached that point. We have actually moved backwards with mothers fighting for the rights to their own body autonomy with the repeal of Roe vs. Wade (Totenberg and McCammon).

Within academia, the MMM continues its legacy of harm, as there are numerous examples where the success of Asians and Asian Americans are weaponized against other communities of colour rather than addressing the lack of systemic support offered to students of colour or the harmful pedagogy of educators from primarily white institutions who continue to teach using racist teaching practices (Dumas 16-17; Emdin 93-94). As the only full Chinese professor in my department, I am also subjected to the MMM. I am viewed as a high achiever and asked to mentor faculty members in and outside my discipline without any structural support or compensation for these additional time-consuming responsibilities. My white male colleagues are not asked to do this invisible labour. These structural problems support a racial hierarchy that upholds whiteness at the top while Black Americans are on the lowest rung (Yi et al. 297). I've been vocal about being lulled into embracing the MMM and wanting to assimilate into the dominant culture, especially if that was espoused in our upbringing, but that was because many of us were unaware of the racial history of Asian Americans in the United States. I remind Asians that it is never too late to learn about the longstanding history of Asian Americans and work on our identity, as that is a lifelong process. It was that realization when I began to embrace my Asian identity. Fortunately, a handful of states are incorporating Asian American studies into their K-12 curriculum. Illinois was the first state to mandate Asian American history as a part of their public school curriculum, along with New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and other states following suit (Bellamy-Walker). This is a critical step towards building a solid Asian identity that can positively impact Asian parents and their children in encouraging racial equity.

The Impact of Asian American Studies

The impact of expanding racial equity on maternal practices needs to start by providing education on the Asian and Asian American experience on all levels. Pride in my Chinese identity was awakened when I received a fellowship that focused on bringing Asian American studies into community college classrooms. It was like a boot camp for Asian American studies and just what I needed to learn about my Chinese heritage and history. That fellowship changed the trajectory of my academic career and my view as a Chinese immigrant mother because it gave me the foundation I needed to foster a sense

of Chinese pride in myself that would trickle down to my children. The required readings taught me much about the enduring racism that Asians have faced and their resilience throughout American history. Although I grew up with parents who embraced the MMM, I learned how it embraces a colonizer mindset that centres on whiteness and derails the development of a positive Asian identity. The most significant detriment of the MMM is the implied suggestion that there are good and bad minorities, which further divides communities of colour. Asian parents who buy into this myth unknowingly harm their children, as its premise embraces the white-colonialist standard as the goal to success in the United States, which breeds a growing self-hatred of being Asian, resulting in increased suicidal ideation among Asian young adults (Qiao). This self-hatred becomes an internalized form of racism.

As a professor of psychology who teaches courses on child and adolescent development, I am well aware of adolescent depression and the difficulties of accessing culturally sensitive mental health support. With all my research and educational background, I still find it hard to discuss issues regarding mental health with my children because I'm fearful of hearing them say how my mothering has contributed to their pain. Ironically, I have no problems discussing mental health with my students, but as a parent, I should address it more often with my children. I have shared my struggles with rage, imposter syndrome, and intergenerational trauma with them. Hopefully, the media coverage of Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka has opened up a dialogue about mental health amongst young people that can help normalize these difficult conversations (Fryer). I'm more comfortable discussing the importance of living an authentic life with my children. If they ever come out as nonbinary, homosexual, or transsexual, they know I would still love and support them. I often discuss the connection between happiness and living an authentic life, but little did I know how difficult it was to find authenticity in mothering.

Authenticity in Mothering as a Chinese Mother

How I chose to live an authentic life came shortly after I became a first-time mother. I saw how motherhood seemed to be an area of life where strangers felt compelled to offer unsolicited advice, often followed by cruel judgment. For me, this catalyst came in the form of breastfeeding, where I fell into the trap of being consumed with the mantra: The breast is best. Not having a nurturing maternal role model, I felt compelled to be the perfect mother. That unrealistic goal manifested itself in breastfeeding because I equated giving the best to my daughter by nursing her for her first year of life. I relentlessly sought to exclusively breastfeed her and refused to hear others tell me otherwise. It enraged me when well-meaning loved ones said to me that formula was just as good because I was determined to feed my baby the best and the best was

breastmilk. Ironically, while pregnant, I didn't have any dead-set plans on breastfeeding. I read up on all the popular books about pregnancy and motherhood because I am a trained researcher, but something snapped in me when I became a first-time mother. I had internalized breastfeeding as the best for my baby, and anything less would mark me as a monstrous mother who willfully didn't give her baby the best. Breastfeeding did not come naturally to me and was initially extremely painful with all three of my children. This was a rude awakening because all my research had brainwashed me that a good latch did not hurt, yet I was squirming with so much pain during the first three weeks of nursing each of my newborns. My stubborn personality made me pump for over sixteen months for my daughter, nurse my older son for two and a half years, and my youngest for over three years. Even though I surpassed the American Academy of Pediatrics breastfeeding recommendations, breastfeeding for me was not the positive experience that was marketed to pregnant women, and my rage towards that unfortunate truth inspired me as a researcher to make breastfeeding an empowering experience that was woman centered and not industry centered (AAP; Ma, "I'm MY Breastfeeding Expert" 204).

My research helped me understand parts of breastfeeding that often got lost between policy and practice, but the most significant gift from overcoming my difficulties in breastfeeding was learning the power of maternal voices, especially my own. I have yet to hear of any culture that values maternal voices as much as male ones. My stubbornness growing up in a traditional Chinese family that was viewed negatively by many became my greatest asset as a mother. Women are caught in a conundrum where they are criticized regardless of any decisions they make as a mother. Since there is no way out of this predicament, I decided that I would simply do what I felt was best for me. If I was going to be criticized, at least I got to do what I wanted in the end. That was the single best lesson I learned since becoming a mother, and it has benefited me in multiple ways in and outside of motherhood. This mindset confuses many mothers because I don't think many people have ever encouraged them to listen to and follow their gut instincts. We still live in a society where mothers are viewed and defined by the degree to which they are all sacrificing, child centred, and engaged in intensive mothering, also known as the "new momism" (Douglas and Michaels 620-21). We as mothers sacrifice a lot for our children, but who sacrifices for us? We are often put in a quandary where pleasing others is viewed as good mothering—the sacrificial mother encouraged by American society and Chinese culture, which are predominantly patriarchal. It takes courage to go against cultural norms and even greater courage as a mother to risk the wrath of society and her elders, who define motherhood in a misogynist way. For the most part, doing what I want is a feminist strategy to fight against the patriarchy. Audre Lourde's quote,

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." (125) rings true to me as a woman, wife, scholar, daughter, and especially as a mother, but it often labels me as selfish and not a team player. The new momism mentality is extremely robust as there are still times, though fewer, where I feel a twinge of guilt as I work on my research and question whether I should spend more time with my children. I hope to teach my children the importance of following their dreams, trusting their inner voice, and standing up for what is right.

The Black Sheep of the Family

As a child, I was often labelled stubborn because I always wanted to do what I wanted, which was frowned upon in my Chinese family. I see this personality trait in my youngest child, which can be annoying when it seems as if he is simply being defiant. Still, I understand him better because we share similar personality characteristics. My daughter regularly points out how I favour her younger brother over her. I try to explain to her that I'm just tired and have become more lax as a mother, but I also understand him better because we have similarly intense personalities, and he talks to me more often than she does, so I have a greater sense of his needs and vice versa. My explanations usually fall on deaf ears as she will detail how strict I was with her as compared to her brothers. It's difficult to explain the constant cost-benefit analyses I do as a mother to keep my children safe, especially during a global pandemic and amid anti-Asian racism. This will probably be a never-ending battle with her, but I am proud that she is expressing her authenticity of being annoyed at me. It takes courage to live with authenticity, and that is something I hope to instill in my children. I regularly remind them how lucky they are to have parents who support them, which was the opposite type of family environment that their father and I grew up in.

As an immigrant mother, I had to unlearn much of my upbringing and learn the value of extracurricular activities, play dates, birthday parties, team sports, well-roundedness, and social skills, which were not considered necessary by most traditional Chinese families. My upbringing focused more on self-sacrifice and filial piety, which was difficult for someone who wanted to do what she wanted instead of listening to what her elders told her to accept blindly. In many ways, the culture of individualism in the United States was better suited to my personality because I've always wanted to pursue my self-interests. Being this way wasn't always embraced by my Chinese family, and I was often scolded for being selfish and not doing as I was told. I felt my paternal grandpa understood me the most when everyone else found me rebellious. He always knew where to find me when I was outside playing in the parks to let me know it was time for dinner, never scolded me for playing video

games at the local pizzeria and was often quite impressed with my craftiness when I made gifts for him. He simply loved me for who I was, making him an outlier because Chinese culture, especially during his time, overwhelmingly favoured males over females. I am fortunate that my dad and husband are modern Chinese men who simply love their children regardless of their sex. Unfortunately, my grandpa passed before my children were born, but I often share stories of him with my children. Usually, my children don't see my internal battles to integrate the Chinese cultural ideals of collectivism with my independent nature. I hope they realize that sometimes being the black sheep of the family means being courageous enough to live an authentic life. I know it took me a while to embrace that status instead of trying to bend myself to the ways of my family, culture, and society, which often made me feel suffocated and miserable.

Learning to Mother

In many ways, striving to mother in an authentic way has been one of the biggest challenges I have encountered. Motherhood never came easy for me because there was much intergenerational trauma in my life where I did not have an example of what a nurturing and caring mother should be. I've noticed that many of my Chinese friends and students of colour also suffer from intergenerational trauma. How does one mother from that standpoint? This is not something I can easily blame on my mother because she also suffered from intergenerational trauma, as did her mother. I have learned to mother my children in ways I wished I had—supporting their dreams, showing affection, and allowing them to make decisions for themselves. Growing up in my situation frequently made me feel inadequate, but I was fortunate to have married a man who supports me unconditionally. It took me a long time to feel worthy of his love and to trust in someone who allows me to be unapologetically me. I grew up with a mother who often cursed at me in Chinese, beat me out of her frustration, and is still verbally abusive. Chinese people have the worst curse words, which have no English translation, and for a long time, I thought that was the norm in Chinese families. When I first became a mother, I felt I was going down that same path, but having a loving husband has helped mitigate my intergenerational trauma. There are numerous times when my children don't see how far their mother has come. I am not a perfect mother, but I have learned how to mother in a much less damaging way than my mother. These are the most challenging aspects of mothering for me—I have no roadmap besides knowing what I don't want to do, my children have no clue about the obstacles I have overcome and are critical in their clueless ways, and I don't have the mental energy to dredge up all the trauma I've survived to explain to my children fully. Writing about my trauma offers me an outlet to

reflect on my past and learn how to do better; my work provides an opportunity for readers to understand what mothers of different races and ethnicities face.

One lesson as a Chinese immigrant mother that may support racial equity in and across motherhood is the power that stems from mothering in a way that suits your nature. This authenticity is unique to each mother depending on the colour of her skin, those of her children, her cultural background, and her lived experiences. These facets will help her grow into her role as a mother. This is where the power of self-reflection, knowledge of one's history, and courage to move out of one's comfort zone can help a mother reclaim her power. We are living in a time when there is much division, and women's fundamental rights are continually being stripped away by malevolent individuals who fear the power of a united front of mothers. The combined voices of mothers would be a formidable force to strike out against white supremacy, misogyny, anti-Blackness, and the MMM. As divided groups, we are too busy fighting among ourselves. So much energy is wasted on superfluous debates—breast vs. formula, stay-at-home mothers vs. working mothers, or attachment parenting vs. the cry it out method of sleep training. The real problems that are killing mothers and children stem from racism, inequality, inequity, division, sexism, ableism, and all the other "isms." Mothering with authenticity can foster confidence in mothers, which would help us see with more clarity who and what are the real problems while working collaboratively to fight against injustice.

Learning how to mother is fraught with obstacles but allowing myself grace to learn from my mistakes is a necessary part of motherhood that should be normalized. The current rhetoric of motherhood entails a strive towards perfectionism, which is harmful and silencing. Motherhood is not about being a perfect mother. It is a transformative journey that involves constant change, adaptation, and flexibility. As I grow older, my focus on motherhood has changed from being entirely focused on one aspect (for me, it was exclusive breastfeeding) to one that is broader. I have learned to give myself more grace when I falter, and that view has led me to be less judgmental of other mothers, including my own. When I see her enjoying time with my children, I wonder if she has changed from a domineering mother to a kinder grandma. Dare I say she is a better grandmother than mother? I am fortunate to experience the complex layers of motherhood with multiple generations of women in my family because it allows me to witness how time affects how we mother our children and experience motherhood.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my two decades of motherhood, I realize how critical racial equity is for mothers. As an immigrant mother, I have frequently wondered if I was a good enough mother. I often fell short when I compared myself to the

American standards of motherhood or the new momism. Now that I am older and wiser, more confident in who I am as a Chinese woman, I realize that I was not deficient in how I mothered my children. I was merely judging myself based on the wrong standards. This is where the greatest need to build racial equity in and across motherhood lies. The traits many felt were problematic when I was younger were assets in becoming the mother I needed to be. Learning about the resilience of Asian Americans throughout history, pursuing my dreams, listening to my inner voice, and instilling pride in myself as a Chinese immigrant gave me the courage to mother in ways that worked for me. Expanding the boundaries of motherhood to be more racially diverse and inclusive can benefit mothers who fall outside the current and narrow definition of motherhood. With greater racial equity, women can have a broader experience of motherhood in more inclusive ways.

As I wrote this article, one of my mentees gifted me a book by Anna Malaika Tubbs. Her book honours the lives of three Black mothers—Alberta King, Berdis Baldwin, and Louise Little—who raised three sons who shaped our nation: Martin Luther King, Jr., James Baldwin, and Malcolm X. In reading her book, I realized how mothers of colour have often been erased from motherhood. This is a grave disservice to how we define mothering and provides evidence that we are far from racial equity in motherhood, but maybe change is coming with the advent of this book. Perhaps these books will help how we learn about mothers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, which will allow women to mother their children in ways that suit them best, knowing that motherhood changes as women and their children grow. To have that freedom to navigate motherhood and embrace the unique way a woman mothers her children is a beacon of hope during these troubling times.

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