THE SECRET LIVES OF MALAYSIAN MILLENNIAL MUMS

UNTOLD STORIES
UNHEARD PERSPECTIVES
UNADULTERATED CONVERSATIONS

Ogilvy

WHY THIS THOUGHT **LEADERSHIP PIECE** ON MALAYSIAN MILLENNIAL MUMS?

A lot of our clients target mums, Millennial mums, in particular.

We come across a lot of data points around millennial mums, which we suspect are seen from a lens of bias. Millennial mums get a lot of flak and we wanted to dig deep in some of those stereotypes attributed to the Millennial mums.

That is where this study comes in, to investigate and interrogate those stereotypes.

Over the next few pages you will come across a lot of these stories that do justice to the perceptions, realities and stereotypes of the Malaysian Millennial Mums.

We did a lot of stalking, talking and bitching with these Millennial mums, in their lingo, in their ambience and a lot of these stories have been captured in verbatim as key pieces of this paper.

Stories of Dreams & Aspirations. Joys & Laughter. Stories that create the lumps in the throat and force the uncontrollable tear roll down your cheeks.

We tried our best to ensure they were real and earthy and above all stories of the most enjoyable feeling in life called motherhood.

83%

OF NEW MUMS ARE **MILLENNIALS**

BORN 1985 – 2005:
THE FIRST GENERATION
OF DIGITAL MUMS

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EVERY BRAND SEEMS TO BE INTERESTED IN THE **MILLENNIAL MUMS**

1.8 BILLION OUT OF 7 BILLION people worldwide are millennials, individuals aged 18-34 whose spending power is expected to reach **6 TRILLION USD** by **2020**. 72% of them shop and research for options online before making a purchase in-store. 81% of them are mothers, typically in their early 20s and 30s, pursuing careers, building families and homes of their own.

MILLENNIAL MUMS SEEM TO BE AS INTRIGUING AS **A UNICORN**

Each one has a different opinion about them

Each category has seen her through a coloured lens

Each client has a distinct take on her

WHICH LEADS TO A LOT OF STEREOTYPES FORMED BY A MULTITUDE OF PERCEPTIONS

FAKE

SELF OBSESSED

DIGI MORONS

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HERE'S WHAT WE DID

RESEARCH DESIGN

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 206

22
ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS
(22 RESPONDENTS)

15
VIDEOS AND DIARY
(15 RESPONDENTS)

122
QUANTITATIVE SURVEY
(122 RESPONDENTS)

9
FOCUS GROUPS
(47 RESPONDENTS)

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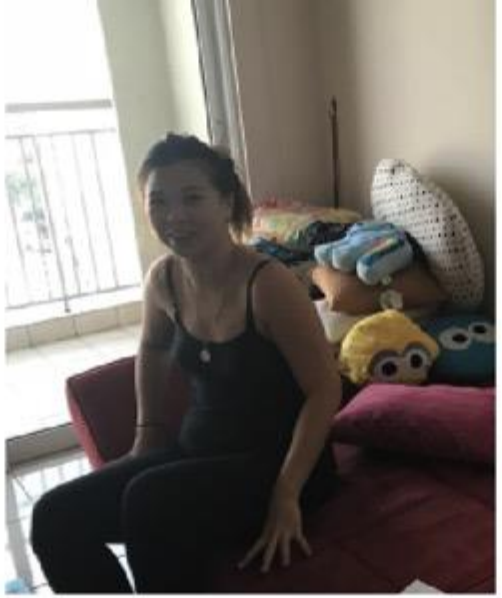
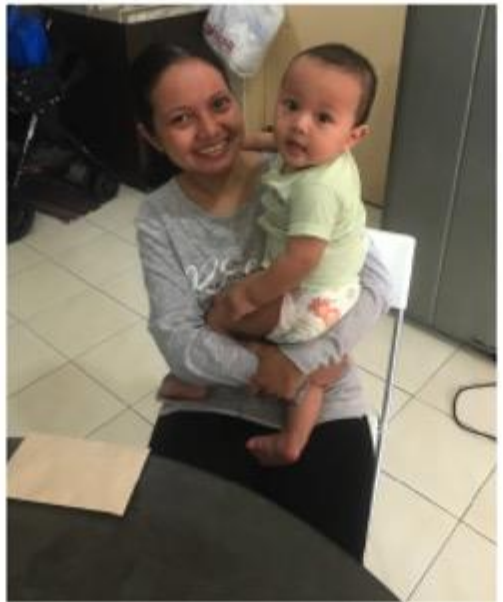
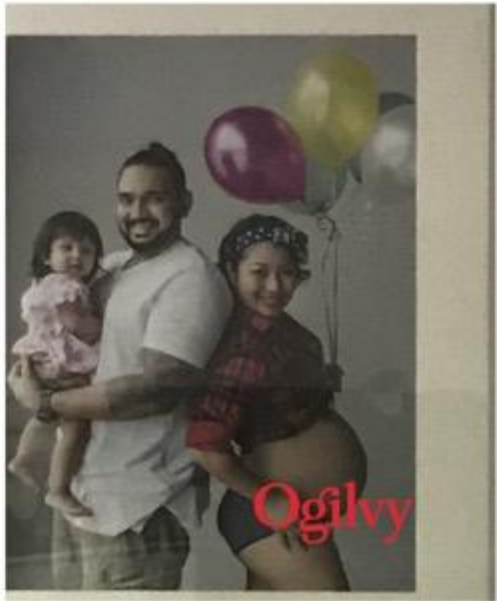


WE SPOKE TO MUMS FROM **DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE**

STEREOTYPE

I am entitled to certain things in life. These are my rights as a mum.

REALITY

All they are asking for is incremental positive changes for her and her family.

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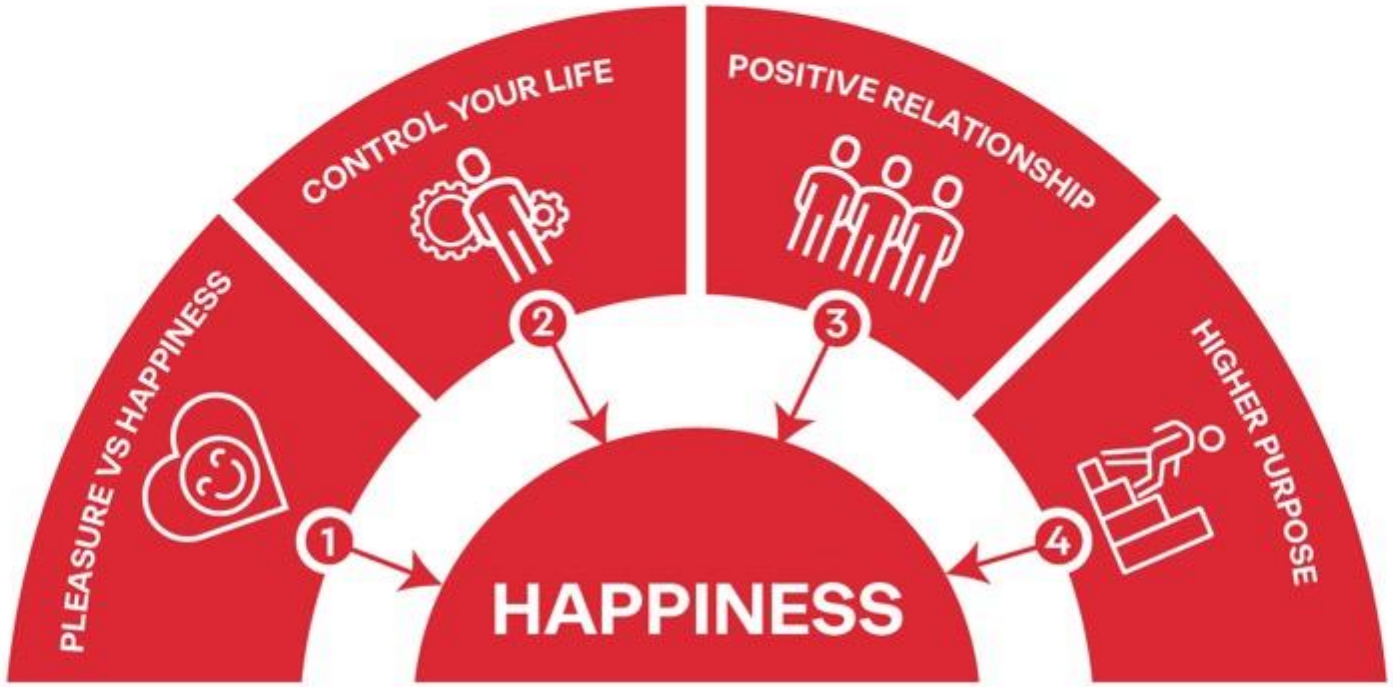
THEY ARE SEEKING **FAIRNESS OF PURPOSE** IN ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES



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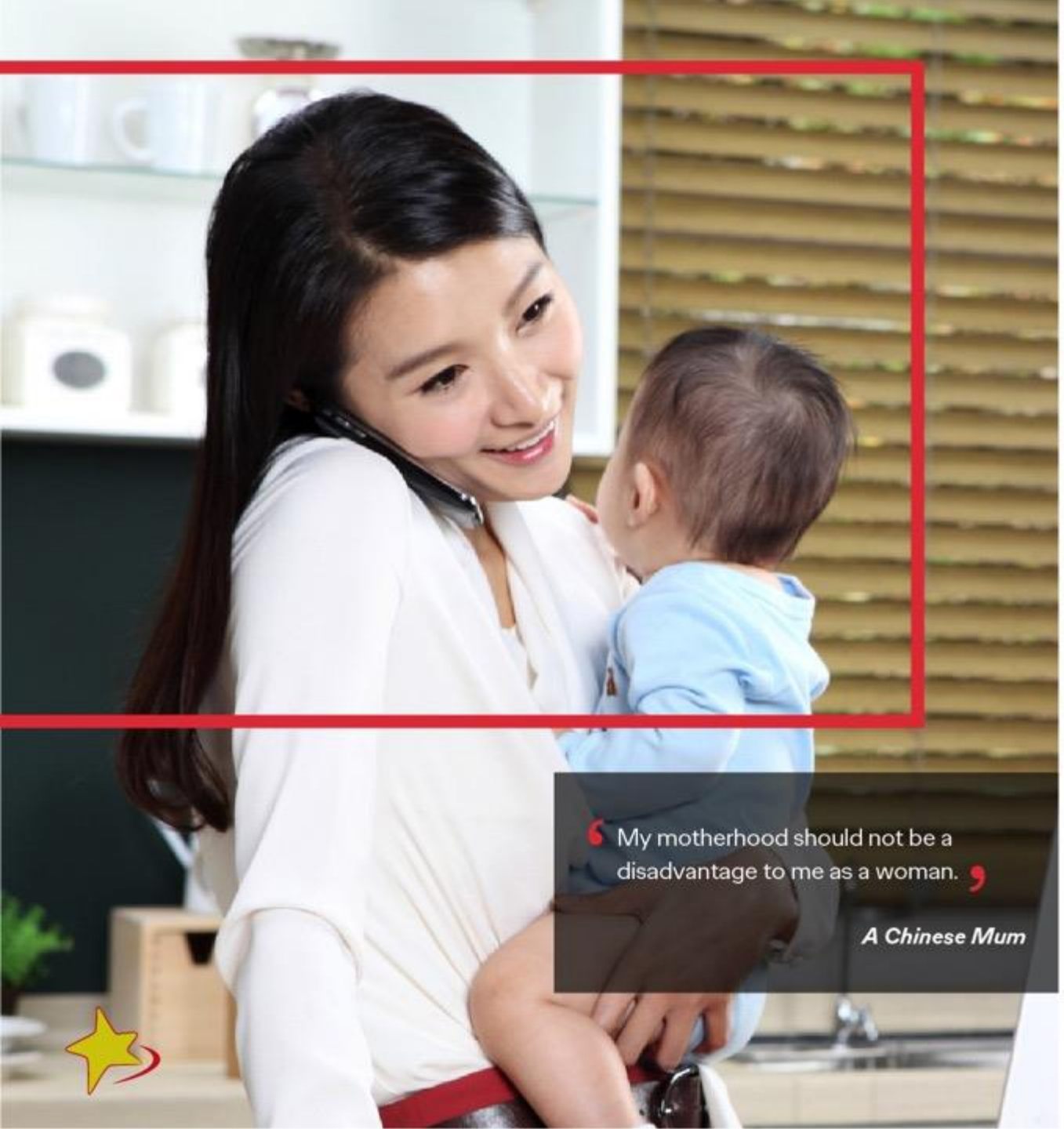

THEY ARE CHASING EQUALITY, WHICH THEIR MUMS HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF...

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THEY ARE
SEEKING BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND MOTHERHOOD

No longer willing to sacrifice motherhood milestones for success at work

> In my business I will get calls at 1am. My boss tells me business is just like that. So now I off my phone at 7pm. I lie and tell them there's no reception at my house.

Malay first time Mum

CLASH WITH PREVIOUS GENERATION, AND FEELING **UNSUPPORTED BY SUPERIORS**

There is a feeling that the workplace hasn't evolved in line with a society that is pushing for more accommodation on individual needs

> After I stopped working, I started this small home baking business. It was just for friends really, but now I'm too busy to take any more orders...still I will only bake 2 days per week. The rest of the time is for my kids.
>
> ***Malay experienced Mum***

INCREASING NEED FOR **JOBS AND CAREERS** TO FIT AROUND THEM, AND UNWILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE

Search for better solutions

- MORE MATERNITY LEAVE
- FLEXIBLE HOURS
- WORKING FROM HOME
- RUNNING OWN BUSINESS

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STEREOTYPE

A potent cocktail of narcissism & hedonism

REALITY

Online bravado is a facade

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ONLINE WORLD IS OFFERING A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE OF **FRIENDSHIP AND CHOICE BEHAVIOUR**

Seeking input when making choices has become the norm for this generation, now they are extending this behaviour to parenting

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FEWER OFFLINE FRIENDS, AND DITCHING FRIENDS WHO **DON'T HAVE KIDS,**

BUT... more online relationships, often with those who are in similar situations

> "The Facebook group I use most often is the one for Mums in PJ with babies born in January."
>
> ***Chinese first time Mum***

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THE NEED TO FEEL THAT OTHERS ARE EXPERIENCING **THE SAME THING** AS THEY ARE...

and also a need for support and validation for their decisions, be they big or small

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RISE OF ONLINE FORUMS AND **WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE**

Even those who don't often post on Facebook will regularly contribute to discussions on mummy forums

> Before with social [media] I would just post photos of food, but now with the mummy groups I am really active asking questions and giving advice. I feel like it's a service, I am helping others as well as getting help myself.

Chinese first time Mum

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STEREOTYPE

Tech-obsessed digital morons

REALITY

Motherhood is lonely and tech gives them much needed support

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GOOGLE & GRANDMA.
BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.

I cherry-pick things from my mum's world but I need to be abreast of what's right as per today's world and make my own way.

> "I only take advice from my mum when it is relevant or when it makes sense."

Chinese first time Mum

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COPING MECHANISM OR A NEW LIFE, WITH VERY **LITTLE SOCIAL LIFE**

Helps them stay socially abreast with the world and what's going on in their friends' lives

> "I don't post as much as I used to, but it's a process of sharing and receiving. You share something to receive something."
>
> ***Chinese experienced Mum***

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TECH AS **BABYSITTER**

Use technology as a distraction to keep kids engaged while she squeezes time for herself and other household chores during the day

> Sometimes if I am busy, it is easier to let them watch [kid's Youtube] It's designed for children, so I know it is OK for them to watch it.
>
> ***Malay experienced Mum***

> I try to limit device time to 1 hour per day, but sometimes if I am busy or I really need to do something, it's just the easiest thing to do [to give the child the iPad].
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

TECH AS **WORK PROVIDER**

Giving mums freedom by changing working practices and allowing them to work from home

Leads to Mum feeling more independent as she can earn money, and also more valued by the husband as a contributor

> "I'm doing business online. Selling supplements on Insta. I can do it from home, and the money is quite good."
>
> ***Malay experienced Mum***

> "I always buy pre-loved stuff on Carousell app, and I sell on Carousell too, either stuff I have bought or stuff I [no longer use]."
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

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THE BEST OF ME FOR **THE WORLD TO SEE**

The WHITE SWAN SYNDROME

The societal expectations of poise, perfection and grace is at odds with the paddling that is going on in my life.

> The world only sees the best side of motherhood, they don't see me with sleepless nights or changing nappies at 3.08 am

Chinese first time Mum

THE BEST OF ME FOR **THE WORLD TO SEE**

TILL I GET RID OF MY MOM-BOD, MY BABY IS MY PASSPORT TO FLAUNT

> I am judged as a mum by how I am coping with motherhood. I have to show my best performance to the world. Not my struggles.

Chinese first time Mum

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TECH AS AN ENABLER

STEREOTYPE

Online shopaholics

REALITY

Pragmatism influences choice of channel

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NO, SHE IS NOT AN ONLINE SHOPAHOLIC, SHE IS THE GROUPON QUEEN WHO **MAXIMISES VALUE AS COSTS SPIRAL**

Online channels give mums more control over the their budget and offer a practical solution to manage their lives.

> "Online shopping can help manage my tight budgets better. The bulk discounts on diapers and infant formula does make a lot of difference. Plus it is all delivered at my door-step."
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

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ONLINE SHOPPING HAS ITS ROLE BUT SO HAS BABY FAIRS

Brick & Mortar is preferred for one time high value products where physical experience and touch & feel is important. Online for high frequency, low involvement categories

> For the big stuff, we went to baby fairs. My husband did a lot of online research into all those gadgets, like the buggy and the car seat, but really, you need to touch them and feel them.
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

> For diapers and things like that I buy in bulk online. It's convenient because I have multiples. They deliver and the price is reasonable.
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

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SHE IS ALWAYS OPEN TO TRYING **A NEW PRODUCT**

Constant flow of information also means that she always being exposed to new products and is always open to discovering something better.

> "No I don't need to buy the same brand. If I see something which looks different or better, or I read an online review, I will try it."

Chinese experienced Mum

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STEREOTYPE

Millennial mums are more tiger mums

REALITY

Tiger mums are on a slow but steady decline

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THE RISE OF EQ AS THE MOST DESIRABLE TRAIT IN CHILDREN

Success of kids is no longer driven by IQ or academic success alone. Mums now want their children to be successful on their own terms.

> "It's not so much about getting straight As. If they are able to contribute to society and they are happy doing what they are doing, then I have done a good job."

Malay experienced Mum (who has a masters degree)

> "Socialisation leads to an ability to face problems and then to more success as an adult. Our kids need to learn that in life you can't get everything that you want."

Chinese fist time Mum

CODES OF PARENTING CHANGING FROM **AUTHORITATIVE TO POSITIVE**

- Recognition that the child should have some input into the decision making
- Explaining rather than punishing, allowing child to make some decisions, even if they are wrong

> "I still use the rotan (cane) on my children, but unlike my father, I will try to explain to them what they did and that this is the consequence."
>
> ***Chinese experienced Mum***

> "I will let my kids choose what they want to be when they grow up, as long as it legal. I don't want to force my kids like my parents did."
>
> ***Malay experienced Mum***

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RETHINKING UPBRINGING FOR **AMBIGUOUS TIMES**

- Less structure and more desire for play and "well socialised" kids
- Resilient kids, and the need to feel failure

> It's important that my kids get that kampung experience, and play with their cousins in the dirt with the chickens. Of course they may fall over or get dirty but that's an important part of childhood.
>
> ***Malay experienced Mum***

> When I send my kids to different classes and activities. It's not so much about what they learn, it's about being with other kids and learning how to socialise.
>
> ***Chinese first time Mum***

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STEREOTYPE

Armchair activists

REALITY

I want to bring up my kids differently from how my parents did

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CHANGING IDEAS
ABOUT GENDER AND RACE

- Gender neutral toys and games
- Less focus on race

> Even though I have a son, I bought this cooking set for him. I don't want him to be limited to just traditional boys toys like cars. It's better if he has both.
>
> ***Chinese first time Mum***

> When my child says 'this Indian uncle' I always correct her and say 'he's just an uncle. It doesn't matter if he's Indian, Malay or Chinese.
>
> ***Chinese first time Mum***

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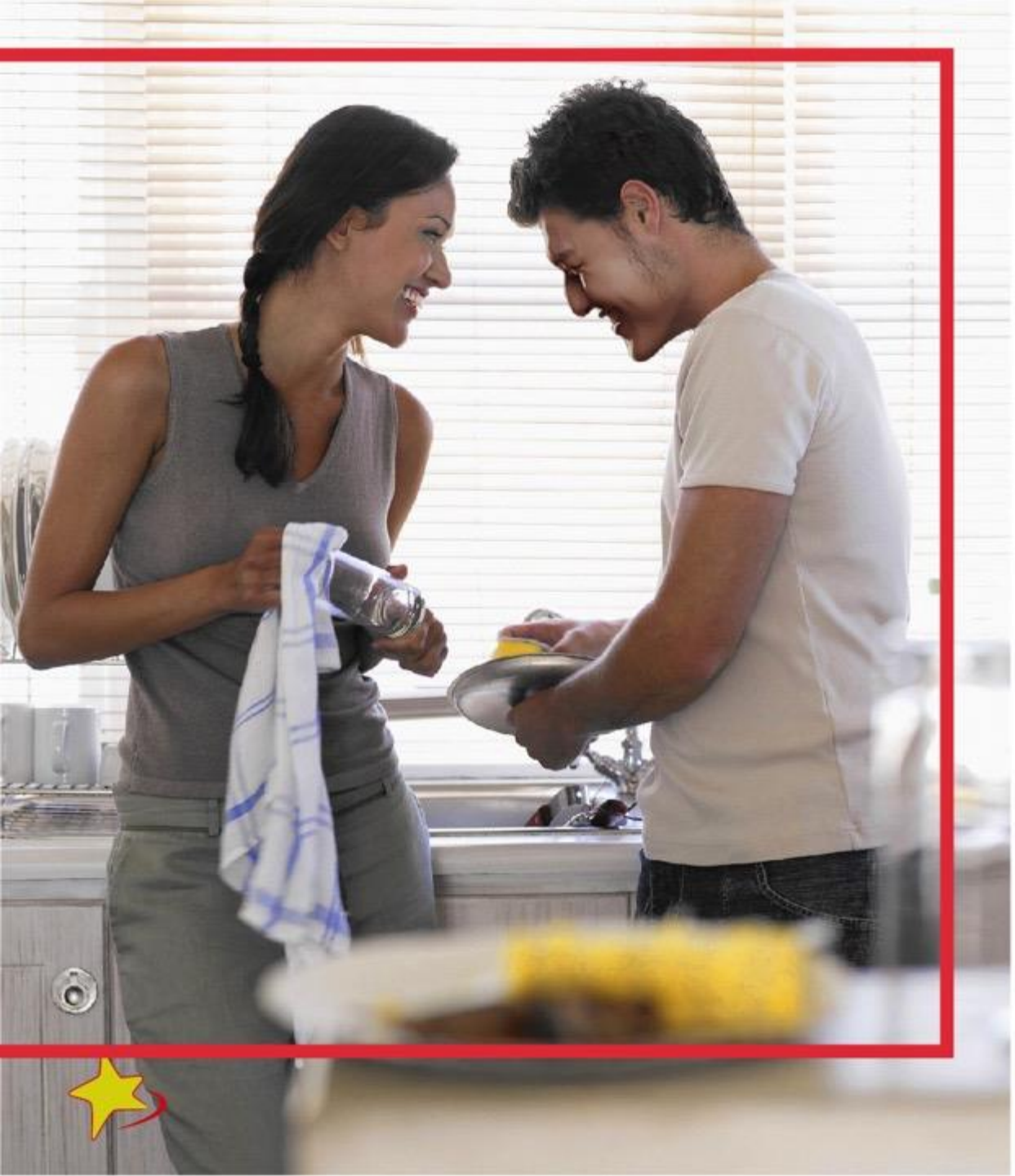

CHANGING IDEAS
ABOUT FAMILY AND GENDER ROLES AT HOME

- Not about who should do it, but about who can do it best
- Role of Dad in childcare is increasing, especially in Malay families (e.g. putting the kids to bed)

> My father doesn't even know how to boil water, my mother did everything. For me, I can't remember the last time I did laundry. My husband takes care of that.
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

> My husband will get the kids up in the morning. It's completely different to how my father was.
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

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THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY

STEREOTYPE

Always hungry for information and ask google everything

REALITY

Information Tsunami has lead to new ways of filtering information

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CONSTANT FLOW OF INFORMATION

HAS HONED HER ABILITY TO CANCEL THE NOISE

- In communications this has led to a more honed ability to filter out the constructed and the fake. This extends to other sources of information

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SHE SETTLES FOR **SIMPLIFIED SHORTHAND**

While communicators go for long hand elaborate messages, she uses simplified shorthand filters. “Free from”, “free range”, “natural” etc becomes organic/natural/healthy.

SHE SEES THROUGH PLASTIC PERFECT...AND RESONATES WITH REAL STRUGGLES. **REAL EXPERIENCES.**

- Actual experience is more authentic than an expert telling someone what to do
- Recognising my imperfections – acknowledging and accepting that motherhood is not about being perfect but about being 'good enough'

> "Back then I knew everything that was going on in the world, I was really well informed. Now I know nothing, and I only watch cartoons."
>
> ***Chinese first time Mum***

> "Before having kids I was always looking good. Now I can't achieve perfection any more, I'm resigned to looking like this."
>
> ***Malay first time Mum***

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SO WHAT?

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5 KEY LEARNING FOR BRANDS TALKING TO MUMS

- BE AUTHENTIC
- BLURRING LINES
- USE TECH AS AN ENABLER
- STAY AWAY FROM TIGER MUM VALUES
- PROVIDE A SENSE OF VALIDATION

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BE AUTHENTIC

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BE MORE REAL AND RELEVANT TO MOTHERHOOD

Consumers have more honed ability to filter out the constructed and the fake. This extends to other sources of information too.

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IMPERFECTION IS FINE

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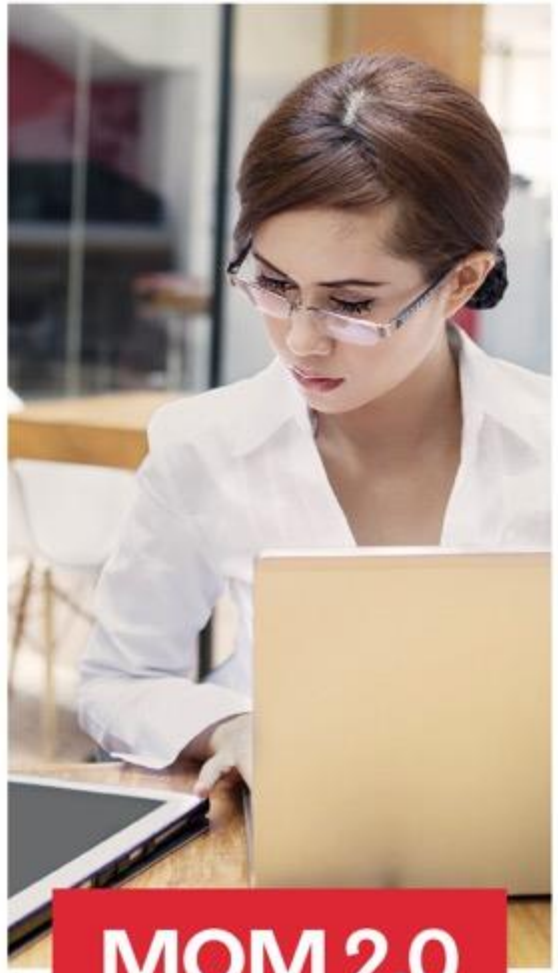
MOM 1.0

I'M A MOM AND
I'M PERFECT



MOM 2.0

I'M A MOM WITH
A CAREER

MOM 3.0

I'M A MOM AND
I'M HUMAN

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HER ASPIRATIONS

HER REALITY

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BLURRING LINES

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Millennial Moms want dad to be more actively involved in pregnancy and child rearing.

From taking the mickey out of dad to dad trying his best to split the chores.

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Millennial Moms don't want their kids' development to be restricted by preconceived gender identity – toys, books, colours etc

Less focus on racial identity as Millennial mums aspire bring up their kids in a more inclusive world.

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PERIODIC TABLE
OF THE ELEMENTS
PERIODIC TABLE
OF THE ELEMENTS

USE TECH AS AN ENABLER

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Gives her a sense of control on the journey of motherhood which can sometimes be overwhelming.

Makes her feel more independent and empowered – in terms of making life choices as a mother for her baby and also brand choices.

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NIVEA
PRESENTS

TECH ALSO FUELS MUM-PRENEURSHIP.

WEEKEND BAKERS. INSTAGRAM-DESIGNERS. SOCIAL MEDIA-SELLERS.

Huggies Grant Program for aspiring Mumpreneurs

Engaging Mums with targeted referral and affiliate marketing programs

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STAY AWAY FROM TIGER MUM VALUES

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The MMMs, want to bring up their kids, differently from their parents. Resilience and Emotional quotient emerging as the most desirable trait in kids to help them thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Less emphasis on success and winning and more on the importance of learning from failure.

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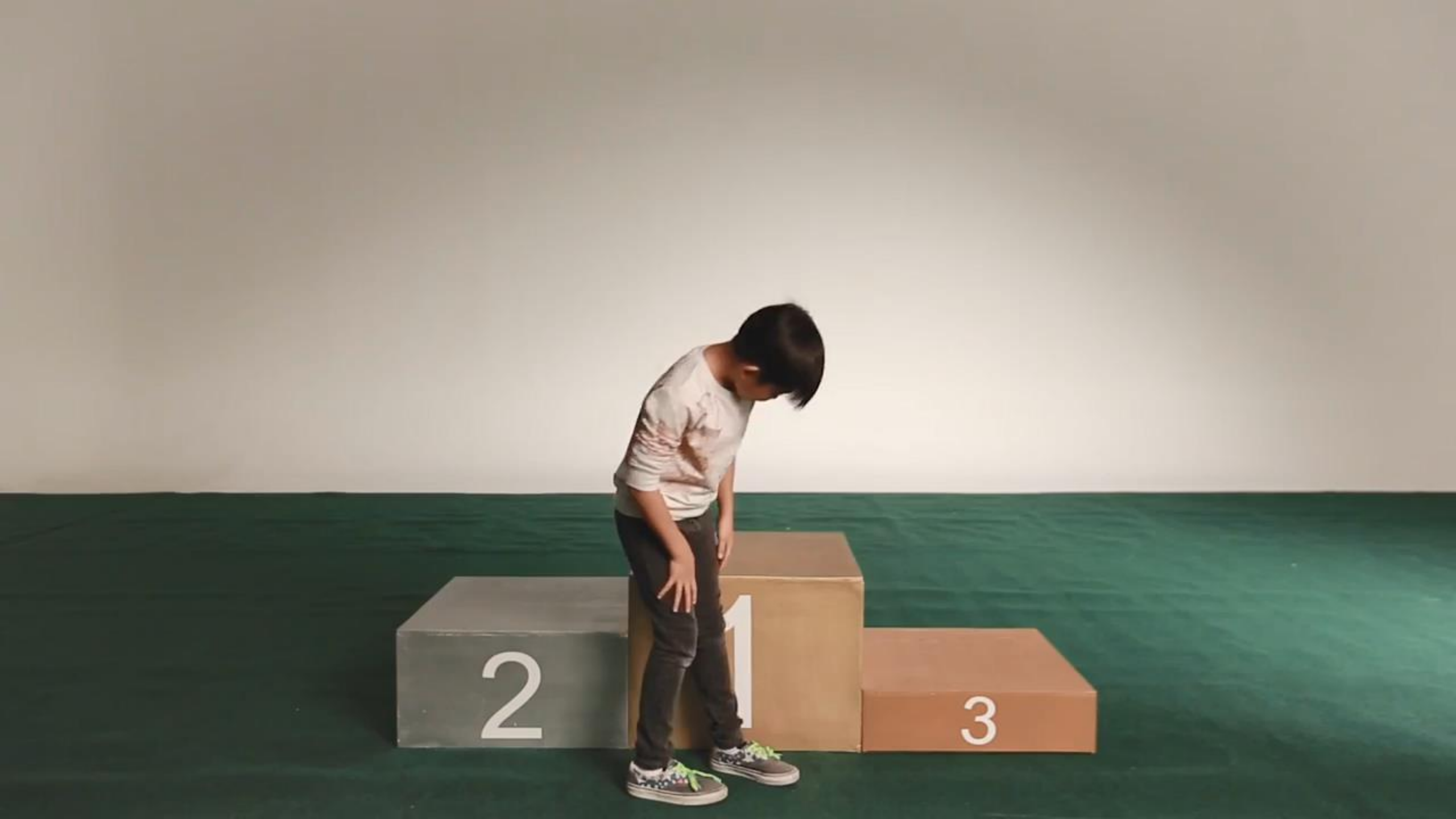
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PROVIDE A SENSE OF VALIDATION

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Millennial mothers suffer from lingering self doubt about their choices and seek validation at every step of the way across different walks of life.

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