



Mamas' Stories

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CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY OF MOTHERHOOD



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GRATITUDE

This article series highlights the stories of women whose work and lifestyles are deeply connected to womanhood and motherhood. Olivia compassionately coaches women to connect with their bodies and minds. Mandy courageously guides women in embracing the magic of childbirth, while Paola celebrates the innocence and beauty of childhood through her children's clothing line. Anaïs shares her insightful journey of motherhood on her blog, and Miki helps parents foster strong bonds with their children and truly understand them.

I am infinitely grateful for your willingness to share your vulnerabilities and strengths with me. I haven't just retold your stories in my own words; I have also learned valuable lessons from each of you. Thank you for being my inspirations and muses.

Julia Teresani

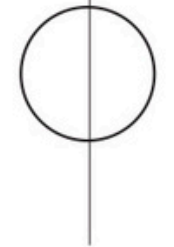


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A Story of Olivia: A Journey to Harmonize Work and Family

Author: Julia Teresani

Olivia originally comes from New Zealand, but her family has lived abroad for many years. She and her husband moved to Taiwan in 2014, where they spent four and a half years. After that, they moved to South Korea. Olivia says that life in Seoul was filled with joy but also many challenges, as this was the year of COVID-19. During this period, they welcomed their firstborn son, Alfie. As a first-time mother, Olivia says that living in a foreign country and being isolated was very tough. However, sharing the parent role with her husband, Ed, made it easier for her. She remembers how they learnt parenthood together, being just three of them there, and how grateful she is for her husband for being a supportive partner and a wonderful father.

In 2023, they relocated to Shanghai. Shanghai has become a home for them, and they are considering staying there for the foreseeable future. Their second child, Arlo, was born here. She says pregnancy with Arlo and bringing him into the world has been a different experience than with Alfie. Experiencing solitude in Seoul and being new parents was not easy, but now, being more experienced and having a community of families and supportive mothers in Shanghai makes the journey much smoother.

Before becoming a mother, Olivia was thoroughly absorbed in her work. She graduated from Political Science and worked for an extended period in a multinational publishing house in New Zealand. However, Olivia changed her career path and followed her passion for health and fitness. For over a decade now, she has worked as a female health and performance coach.



When I hear Olivia talking about her work, I realize that it is not just a job for her but something she's deeply passionate about: "I love women. I have a *deep passion* for women's health and helping them step into versions of themselves where they truly start caring, respecting, and leading with self-compassion, not self-criticism." She has a women's strength and fitness program called Grit and Grace, and does one-on-one coaching. She takes a holistic approach to flourishing health. She says that true transformation isn't just about food and exercise, but how we think about these things and the self-compassion we can cultivate along the way to support any change we are pursuing.

After becoming a mom, she realized that motherhood helped her achieve another level of being a coach, as now she can understand women from a new perspective. "I can access a new level of empathy. A mother's experience—how her body changes, identity, time, energy, purpose, and career—can never truly be understood until you're IN it! Helping women feel truly *seen, heard, and supported* in their experience with their bodies is so important!"

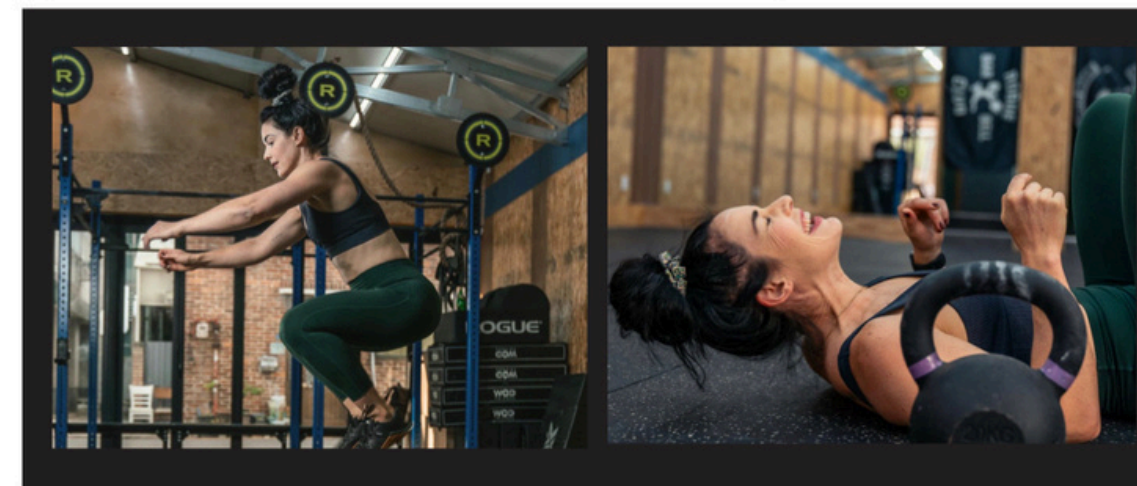
Alongside her coaching, she also launched a mentorship program where she teaches other coaches and trainers how to work effectively with female physiology and design strength and fitness programs for women.

She has been pre- and postnatally trained, and she hopes to help all women worldwide and here in Shanghai to navigate pregnancy and postpartum in a way that supports the mental and physical demands of motherhood.

Olivia is the mom of two boys, Alfie and Arlo. Alfie is two and a half years old, and Arlo is four months old.

"Motherhood fundamentally changes us at a cellular level—this change is something I tried to resist, which made my first couple of years with it tough."

She chose the word "*tumultuous*" to describe her experience as a mother. Olivia says that she never fully desired to become a mother. She feared that it would challenge her identity and her purpose. But she did desire to create a family with her husband. For many years, Olivia struggled with infertility (this was due to underfueling her body and overtraining, as an athlete).



She went through unsuccessful fertility treatments in New Zealand and Taiwan, and doctors kept telling her that she would not be able to get pregnant. Ultimately it was the decision to focus on her health that reversed her infertility. And here it is, the wonder and magic of life: she became pregnant naturally with Alfie in 2021. Olivia says that after becoming a mom to Alfie she struggled with the label of “mom.” She wanted to remain unchanged as “Olivia,” and wanted the role as a mother to change her life as little as possible. “My son Alfie was the most magical thing to have ever happened to me, AND I didn’t know how to be a mother and run a business (my first baby) simultaneously. I found some solid ground with my identity by labeling myself as ‘Alfie’s mum,’ not a ‘mother.’ I felt like I didn’t ‘fit in’ with what a mother was. Until I realized that I didn’t have to fit into anything but stay steadfast in how I wanted to be a mother regardless of external influences.”

In 2023, she got pregnant for the second time. “It was a total surprise,” she says. After 18 months postpartum and finally starting to feel herself again, Olivia realized she was pregnant just before moving to Shanghai. Olivia remembers this stressful period, arriving in China and living in a hotel room with a toddler during her first trimester. “I knew I had to make many internal changes with my work as I barely kept my head above water. Once again, I was scared, burnt out, and unsure if this was the right thing to do. I also couldn’t understand how I could love anyone else like I loved Alfie. Mentally, the second pregnancy was tough. Physically, I do not recommend moving to a new country and living in a hotel with a toddler for two months during your first trimester.”



But she also says that Shanghai gave her a community of mothers who are warm and open about the challenges they are experiencing. This place allows her to embrace her role as a mother. She chose “*soften*” as her word for 2024, even tattooing it on her arm, as a way to remind her to soften into the beauty that is the feminine energy of the mother role.

“I had a wonderful birth experience here with my second son, Arlo, and as soon as he tumbled into the world, I felt like my whole world had completely transformed. Alfie led the way, and Arlo unlocked the door to motherhood for me. The experience of having a new baby, but with wisdom and knowledge, and not being a first-time mother, is very different. There’s more ease in the practical things and all new challenges to navigate but more space for awe and wonderment of having a new baby.”

Olivia mentions that the things that help her most in motherhood are *compassion for herself and her children*. “A pillar of compassion is wisdom, which is learning from the past, and letting change be presence.” Another crucial point when it comes to motherhood is *self-care*. Despite all the busy times of being a parent, we must remember to care for ourselves. Our children can learn a lot from witnessing us choosing to care for ourselves.

“Motherhood is living in a constant paradox of love and grief, belonging and isolation, fulfillment and confusion, ease and overwhelm. Everything makes sense and doesn’t make sense simultaneously,” says Olivia.

The struggle of being a mom who’s present and doing a good job is a shared dilemma. The time that we have now with our kids will never be repeated. So, how do you juggle competing desires with work and being the mother you want to be? Do you need to sacrifice one for the other? Is it possible to find balance? These questions pop up in my head when I think about Olivia. She is a fantastic mother and a passionate coach. How does she balance them both in her life?

“I don’t think we can ever find *balance*. What does balance even mean? I think we can strive to continue to keep a curious mind and compassionate mind to see what is sustainable with time, energy, and desires and align our values (which can change!). It’s continuing to check in with yourself to see what is working and what is not; where am I being led by what I think I ‘should’ do and what I really want.”

However, she still finds it challenging because she cares so deeply and truly loves what she does. She mentioned that her values have changed so much since before becoming a mother. She started to spend her time more effectively and efficiently to make an impact in what she does while also dedicating time to her children and husband. “I certainly haven’t struck the right harmony yet, but I am just allowing myself to figure it out.”

Olivia says that she feels incredibly proud of the work she has done to heal her body and mind and how she brought her children into the world without any intervention or medication. She also feels proud of the effort she has put into creating the motherhood experience she has now, affirming to herself, “*I am a good mother.*” She hopes she can teach her boys how to cultivate compassion for themselves and others and how to receive it as well as develop resilience for challenges they face.

“I wish for them that they can be clear on their values but open and curious to change. What a privilege it is to raise these children to be wonderful members of society!”

A Story of Mandy, Pregnancy & Motherhood Coach

Author: Julia Teresani

I met Mandy during the launch of The Birth Experience Journal. She is a very passionate person who can make you believe every word she says.

Mandy has been working for many years in the creative and marketing industry. She ran her own small agency in Shanghai. Also, here in Shanghai, she created her family. She became a mother to Ella (5 years old) and Ralph (2,5 years old). After the birth of her daughter, Mandy changed the path of her career and started her birth education certification. During this time, she hosted live birth story sharing. She facilitated motherhood circles where she gathered mothers to share their experiences. She also ran group birth education programs.

Upon giving birth to Ralph, Mandy has progressed to create [The New School Of Motherhood](#), where she is coaching women 1 to 1 “to gain confidence in birth and motherhood.”



Mandy had a water birth with Ella. She describes the birth of Ella as a ‘transformative’ experience. The process was smooth and beyond her expectations. Mandy realized she was the only person in her friendship circle who intentionally delivered a baby without an epidural. She was in awe of this experience and wanted to understand why this wasn’t the norm. As a result, she decided to study birth education. Mandy wanted to encourage women to experience the same as she had. She says, “Now I know how naive I was as soon as I grasped the immense complexity involved in birth.”

Mandy hoped to have the same experience delivering Ralph as she had with Ella. But things went differently. Postpartum was very challenging, too. “I could not connect with Ralph. I doubted myself as a mother. I felt guilty most of the time for not having the power to bond with my second child,” says Mandy.

All of this brought her to the point of understanding what was happening. She realized that this was birth trauma, which was not healed. With the word ‘trauma’, Mandy describes a profound loss of safety on one or all three levels: physical, mental, and emotional. Processing and realizing it started to be a healing moment for her. When Ralph was about 12 months old, Mandy could finally start immersing herself in motherhood. She started to feel powerful as a mom. Healing her trauma gifted her a connection with her son, allowing them to know each other.

Mandy also shares she experienced a strong lack of a mother during her childhood period and a sense of understanding what it means to be mothered. She explains that this childhood trauma affected her life, and the birth trauma to Ralph has affected her motherhood journey.



All of it impacted her as a Birth Educator, and it brought her to another level, as a Motherhood Coach, coming to the idea of creating [The New School Of Motherhood](#).

Most of the time, we don’t really talk about how childbirth happens. We explain briefly how strong contractions were or how quick/long it took us to deliver a baby. Women often try to forget the pain and the stress.

Mandy is changing the perspective about birth itself. She explains that birth is much more complex. It is not just a baby being born; it is also a Mother being born. This moment shapes and transforms us. It affects our motherhood, which means our eternal life. The purpose of her [program](#) is to help other women understand what mother they want to become through childbirth. And provide them with tangible steps to achieve this, using birth preparation as a framework.

During her 1-on-1 sessions, Mandy tries to help women realize what it means “to listen to yourself: your body, your mind, your heart, your spirit” and how that can support you during birth. “During the birth, we need to feel safe for our prefrontal cortex to switch off so we can tune into our raw animal instincts. This means our nervous system should stay in a very relaxed state. When this happens, birth will be efficient and effective.” If we feel safe, it will help us release the proper hormones, for instance, oxytocin, the hormone of love, to fight the pain. If a woman is too scared or stressed, high levels of stress hormones can slow oxytocin, which may provoke more intense feelings of pain.

"For mammals to give birth, they need to stay in a safe, calm, dark, and undisturbed place. The moment we take a car to the hospital, it stops being our safe place. Then we arrive at the place with lots of light, with lots of people we see for the first time. It is way too far from what we need physiologically." Mandy says that modern birth is very medicalized and approaches birth from the lens of pathology. We're always looking for something wrong without truly understanding that birth is a normal physiological process. Caregivers are trying to do their best, but it's far from an empowering experience. Mandy states she is not encouraging women to deliver at home. She is encouraging them to understand physiology as a baseline so that we know how to return to feelings of safety for better birthing experiences.

Also, people who are around you are playing a very crucial role. Mandy teaches women what 'support' truly means, and what kind of support they need to receive at the moment of birth. "You need to surround yourself with people who will believe in your power and strength. You do not want someone next to you who will question you."

The presence of a partner during childbirth is a relatively new concept. For centuries, men were not part of birth. Only starting from the 80s, and only in certain countries, did hospitals allow the father's presence. However, we often hear men say they felt useless during birth. Knowing how to support women can become very beneficial and can strengthen the relationship. Mandy shares a story of a friend who delivered a baby at home, and her husband was the first person who took a baby in his arms. By knowing his role and his part during the childbirth, they created a very significant moment for their family.



I believe that Mandy's experience can give an opportunity to women to see the magic of birth by turning this moment into the powerful event of your life that prepares you for the rest of motherhood.

Designing Childhood: A Story of Paola

Author: Julia Teresani Photos: Paola Talamini Minotto

Paola is from Italy, Treviso. She graduated with a degree in economics and worked in the fashion industry. While working for Benetton, she had the opportunity to relocate to China. They decided to move with her husband, who followed her. As Paola's contract was nearing its end, she chose to extend her stay in China. Following that idea, she resigned from Benetton and started her journey with Burberry in the kids' division. Paola successfully established 20 stores for kids from the ground up in China.

She spent nearly 18 years in this Asian part of the world. Also there, her daughter, Olivia, was born. Shanghai is home to Paola's family now, and they want to stay there for the upcoming years. She notes that the city offers a safe and convenient living environment for them. "Shanghai allows children to remain children for longer. It is a safe place where they are not afraid to stay home alone. Our daughter can walk the streets with her friends, knowing it is safe."

Becoming a mom inspired her to start her blog, "Pink Dumpling," where Paola wrote about kids' fashion and travel with her family. Later, she established her fashion consulting agency called "The Pink Dumpling."



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It is fair to call Paola a true *momprenneur*. She is a partner and Brand Director of the clothing brand “C’era una volta.” C’era una volta means “once upon a time” in Italian. Their pieces are truly divine and gorgeous, reminiscent of fairy tale themes. Paola shares a story about how she met the designer and the soul of the brand, Emanuella. “One day, I had coffee at Baker and Spice, a popular coffee shop in Shanghai. I heard a woman across the table talking about the clothes she designed for children. I jumped into the conversation with her. Emanuella invited me home to show me the collection. I immediately fell in love with all the pieces and bought an entire collection for my 1.5-year-old daughter.” After their meeting, Paola became the brain of the brand, helping to develop and bring it on a larger scale. Paola says the brand DNA goes to the personal history, to their childhood. “In Italy, our mothers dressed us in classic pieces handed down through the family. They were *authentic, high quality, and timeless*. That’s what we try to do in C’era una volta. We aim to create timeless pieces that people can pass down through generations.” They create clothing for children who embrace their childhood. “Most brands try to dress kids like adults. That is not what we want to do. We value the genuine way of being a kid. We want to show the *innocence of childhood* through our clothes. Celebrate the sweetness of being a child.” Together with Emanuella, they create a fairy tale story through their clothing. They are writers in the realm of fashion.



Her daughter, Olivia, is 11 years old, a creative, kind, independent girl.

Paola shares that Olivia was always an easy-going child. She slept through the night at a very early stage. She would always be cooperative and never cause them any trouble.

Now Olivia is entering the teenage era, where she starts to be more independent, which is reflected in her style and her hobbies. She loves music, especially collecting CDs. She studied kung fu for four years under a skilled master. Paola explains that kung fu embodies beautiful values extending beyond the physical. Training begins with a powerful mantra rooted in respect for elders and emphasizes discipline and humility. Kung fu is more than a martial art. It is a way of life that shapes character. Eventually, it will have a significant impact on the character of her daughter.



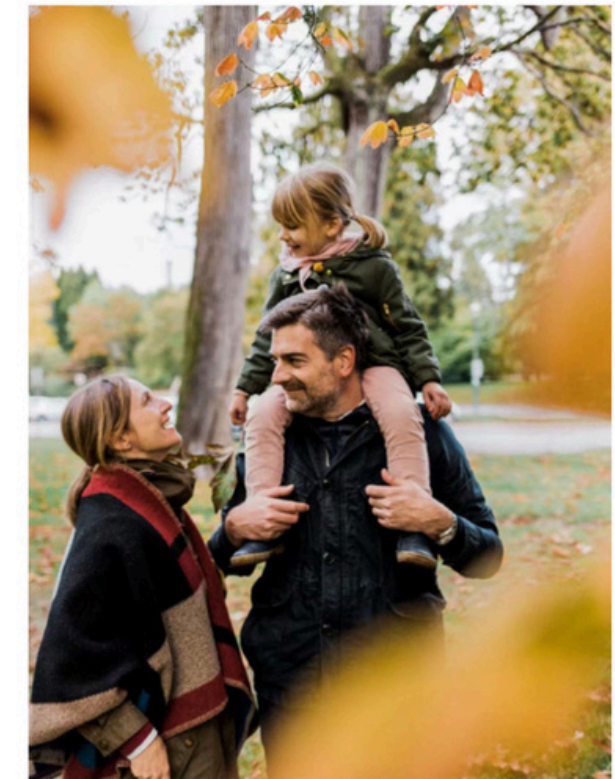
Paola believes that *creativity* plays a significant role in child development, which is why she tries to keep Olivia away from the digital world. For instance, her daughter doesn’t have a mobile phone. Her focus is more rooted in the real things rather than the online world.

She notes that guilt is a common feeling among working mothers when discussing the challenges of motherhood. Paola expresses that balancing work and motherhood was one of the most tricky parts of being a mother. According to her, she was concerned about not spending enough time with her daughter, worrying that it could affect their relationship. “Our worries continue to be similar even now. We constantly ask ourselves if we are good parents and we spend enough time with her.”

With her passion for the fashion world, Paola is not demanding that her daughter pursue her path. “Olivia has the power to be anyone she wants, as long as it brings her happiness.”

Letting your child *be a child*, celebrating her *creativity*, and *staying true to oneself* seems to be grounded in Paola’s way of parenting. It is also beautifully reflected in the values of her brand.

“Make the most of life and opportunities. Explore the world while still being connected to your family. Stay gentle, remain true to yourself.”



A Story of Anaïs: Mom of Two and Citizen of Many Worlds

Author: Julia Teresani



Anaïs derives her name from the French fragrance “Anaïs Anaïs” created by Cacharel. Our heroine comes from Venezuela, where she lived for nearly 20 years. She holds a language degree, which has opened many doors in her life: doors to various countries and peoples’ hearts. Anaïs is fluent in English, French and German. She spent many years teaching in language schools and working as a translator.

The first country where Anaïs moved from Venezuela was France. She had a student exchange in the French town of Limoges. Anaïs says that Limoges was just perfect for her, beautiful, and cozy.

She felt just at home there. While many European students were looking for an opportunity to study in the big cities, like Paris, Rome, or Madrid, she says, Limoges was exactly what she liked because, coming from Venezuela’s capital city Caracas, living in a city where you could walk everywhere felt refreshing.

After France, Anaïs moved to the United States, Ohio, where she translated a book into Spanish. This book “Letters to My Sisters: Plain Truths and Straightforward Advice from a Gynecologist” was written by M.d. Ngozi Osuagwu. As the name suggests, it’s a series of letters that discusses women’s health issues with personal approach.

Anaïs’s husband, Marco, is from Canada. At the time, they were already dating, and Marco was lucky to have cheap tickets through a friend who worked for AirCanada to visit her, which allowed them to maintain a long-distance relationship for a while. Eventually, they decided to get married, and that marked Canada as her next destination. Anaïs moved to Guelph, Ontario, where she taught English to refugees, starting from the alphabet level. She shared that it was an interesting experience not only to teach people a language from scratch, but to also help them start a new life in Canada. .

Soon, Marco began seeking opportunities to move to Europe. After attending a conference in Lyon, he was given the chance to join a PhD team in Germany. Consequently, Anaïs and Marco relocated to Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany, in 2014. Although Anaïs had never considered Germany an ideal destination, she soon realized it was a wonderful place to live. They ended up spending a delightful ten years there, and Germany became a home for their family. Anaïs resumed her teaching career at a language school, where she enjoyed meeting new people and learning about German culture. Her students attended her classes not only to learn the language but also to share their personal stories. “They would tell me about their lives while I corrected their grammar,” Anaïs said with a smile.

Anaïs laughs that Europeans don’t get married as early as she and Marco did, so people in Germany were often shocked that they married so early.

In 2022 Anaïs and Marco decided to put down roots in Germany by buying a house and doing an extreme renovation on their own. Two years later, after their dream home was finally ready, Marco, a chemist, was offered the possibility to relocate to Shanghai, China. Anaïs said, “It was an easy decision for our family. Both my husband and I are free spirits who don’t mind moving around the world. So, Shanghai was a very intriguing place for us to go. We can always go back to our dream house in Germany.” They moved to China in August 2024.

To Anaïs, multiculturalism is a natural part of her family life. Currently, her entire family resides in Europe. Her parents live in Spain, while her oldest sister, a fashion blogger, is based in Belgium, where she is raising her two sons. The youngest sister resides in Germany. Anaïs’s husband holds Swiss-Canadian citizenship.

The various cultures they have experienced and the different nationalities that shape their identities are beautifully reflected in their lifestyle and the way they raise their children.



Anaïs and Marco are raising two wonderful boys, Felix and Victor. Felix is four years old and is currently in kindergarten, while Victor is 17 months old. Anaïs shares an interesting story about Felix's experience in China. Although Felix has Canadian and Venezuelan roots, he identifies as Swiss. One day, he came home from kindergarten and excitedly explained that they were learning about flags. He said his flag was white and red. Anaïs initially thought he was referring to the Canadian flag, but when he showed her the flag he meant, it turned out to be the Swiss flag. Since Felix holds a Swiss passport while living in China, his kindergarten is assuming he is Swiss.

Anaïs explains that despite everything, she tries to help him integrated into Venezuelan culture. She mentions that arepas are a typical breakfast food they enjoy at home. They prepare it buffet-style, allowing everyone to eat it with their favorite toppings. One day, during a parent day at Felix's school, Anaïs had the idea to teach his classmates how to cook arepas. Felix felt proud that day. His mom came to the school to cook one of his favorite dishes together with him.

When it comes to parenting, Anaïs embraces gentle parenting. She explains, "Of course, it doesn't always work, and there are challenging moments, but I always remind myself that my child isn't 'giving' me a hard time; he's 'having' a hard time." She believes that having a consistent routine and explaining situations to children is crucial. "We moved to China when Felix was three. I know that's young, but I found it important to explain to him what was happening and why we were leaving his home."



Effective communication with your child truly helps, and Anaïs notes that she has never experienced a significant meltdown from Felix. She attributes this to her practice of explaining changes and acknowledging his feelings. "We do breathing exercises, which Felix loves. When he has a tough moment, we sit together, breathe, hug and let the frustration go away."

China is a very digital country. You don't need to leave home; everything can be delivered to your door. Anaïs expresses that she misses the 'supermarket experience.' She often takes her kids to the store to shop together, and they love it. She tries to keep them away from the digital world as much as possible and encourages them to explore their surroundings and to be creative with what they have.

One of their favourite activities to do together at home is to look out the window and play "veo veo qué ves" (I spy with my little eye). She says it's a great activity for speech development.

As of today, Anaïs resides in Shanghai with her family. She is an active mother who frequently writes for the ShanghaiMamas organization, helping them with their social media content. Additionally, she has created her own [social media account](#), where she shares her daily adventures in Shanghai, travel tips, and advice for other families living abroad. You can find her on wechat, [instagram](#) and rednote.



"Embrace the weirdness. Whatever makes you different, is what makes you YOU. Trying to hide it to fit in or to make certain people like you, will never bring you joy. By embracing these things that make you different, you will not only become the best version of yourself, but also attract the people who will compliment you in the best ways."



Three Kids, Countless Lessons: Miki's Journey as a Mom and Parenting Coach

Author: Julia Teresani

Miki has a Spanish mother and an Italian father. She was raised in northern Italy, near Switzerland. When she was 17 years old, her mother was diagnosed with cancer and sadly passed away a year later. Miki reflects, "My dad was depressed, and I wanted to stay close to him to support him." As a result, she studied Marketing in Milan while continuing to live at home.

She excelled in basketball and soon became a basketball coach at a Montessori school. Her interest in children's education began at that time. She shares, "I learned a very valuable lesson: you don't need to earn respect. You don't need to be an adult to be respected. Kids need to be respected too. It made me realize how differently I was raised."



Miki's mother is from Segovia. Miki felt the urge to explore her mother's roots. As a result, she decided to move to Madrid, Spain. She initially worked for TripAdvisor, but her passion for education proved to be more compelling. Consequently, she chose to leave that position and began working at a Montessori school, teaching and working with marketing.

Soon, she got an opportunity to relocate to Germany, where she spent two years, and then moved back to Madrid, where she opened her consulting marketing agency. It was also in Madrid that she met her husband. Less than a year later, she became pregnant, and in 2017, they welcomed their daughter, Chloe.

Miki's husband received an offer to move to Beijing, China, where they lived for eight months before relocating to Shanghai. Her husband's work is in gastronomy, which led to an opportunity for them to move to a small island in Thailand. Soon they discovered that they were expecting twins! Miki struggled to imagine delivering her twins on an island that lacked proper hospital facilities. Therefore, they decided to move back to China, where they live now.

Miki shared that while she was pregnant with Chloe, she wanted to fully embrace her pregnancy. To do this, she became a birth and postpartum doula, as well as a lactation consultant. It helped her to deliver Chloe naturally, without an epidural, and described it as a beautiful experience.

Her second pregnancy was very different; there were more complications, and she had to undergo a C-section. She says, "Sometimes, you need to accept things as they are. I had many tools that could have helped me deliver these babies beautifully, naturally, but the circumstances were different, so I needed to accept the situation as it was."

In 2020, her twins, Gala and Noel, were born. She needed to continue working, so she kept all her sessions even after their arrival. "Often, I needed to interrupt my sessions to calm my crying babies. But it was very important to me to keep working," she said.

Being a parenting coach taught her a valuable lesson that she hoped to share: "We want things to go perfectly and smoothly, but sometimes imperfection is perfection."

In parallel, she became a Holistic Sleeping Coach. Also, as a mother, she developed a greater desire to understand children, which led her to obtain certification in educating children of different ages.

Miki states that becoming a mother of three has made her realize the importance of loving each child according to their unique personality and needs. You cannot love them all in the same way; instead, you must love each of them individually based on who they are and the type of love they require.

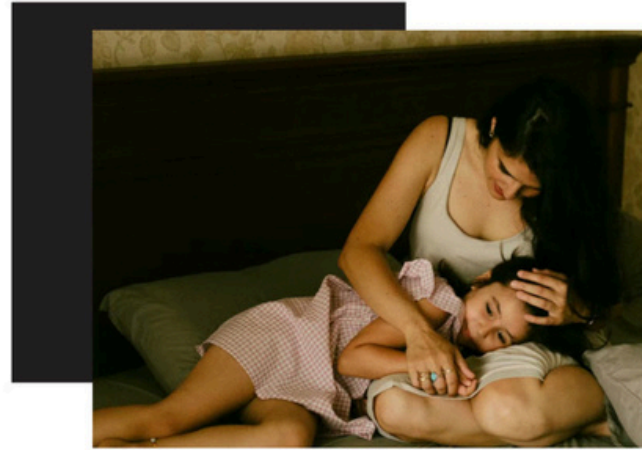
"My three kids are completely different from each other. My oldest, Chloe, is a hypersensitive child who is very physical and needy, but also very sociable. My daughter, Gala, is more logical and independent. My son, Noel, is a boy with a big heart. He is very brave and constantly tests my limits."

She is raising her children in a free, non-competitive environment where communication and listening are emphasized. "I am not someone who yells; I reserve that for very critical situations," Miki explains. She acknowledges that she and her husband sometimes have different parenting approaches, for instance regarding screen time. However, this is perfectly fine. Their kids know what to expect from each parent and learn from both.

Miki recalls a day when she realized she was being observed—not just in how she behaves with her children, but also in how her children behave. This realization makes her laugh because, as a coach, she understands that things don't have to be perfect and that there isn't a tool for every situation. She believes that sometimes not having any tools can be a valuable lesson as well. After all, we are humans and don't need to strive for perfection.

One of the most challenging periods of her life was after she gave birth to twins. This experience occurred during the pandemic while they were in China, far from home and without any assistance. Miki needed to care for the newborn twins as well for her three-year-old, who needed her attention more than ever. To make matters worse, her husband was hospitalized for two months due to health complications. Miki describes this time as incredibly difficult, but she also emphasizes her natural ability to navigate tough situations. Instead of panicking, she devised a plan of action. She recounts a similar experience when her mother was diagnosed with cancer; upon receiving the news, she did not retreat into herself but focused on understanding what could be done to help.





As a mother of three, she frequently finds herself in situations where she is also learning.

One issue that triggers her is the fighting between her oldest daughter and her son, which often escalates into loud yelling. Miki shares a story about her youngest daughter, Gala, who was feeling anxious about starting kindergarten. One day, she came home and asked Miki to record a video for a homework assignment to help her prepare for school. Miki took Gala to another room to try recording this video, but they had to make five attempts because of the yelling in the background. At one point, Chloe and Noel entered the room. When Chloe saw Miki recording the video with Gala, she exclaimed, "You're so unfair, Mom! You're with her just because she wants to be perfect." Miki paused and the idea of involving her crossed her mind, so she responded, "Do you want to know what's happening here? Gala is scared; she's scared of kindergarten and doesn't feel ready." Suddenly, Chloe said, "I know what to do! Come on, Gala, I will teach you." Miki explains that involving her children in these situations often works. When they feel included rather than sidelined, they may react in surprising ways—just like Chloe did.

Another situation that comes to her mind is when her daughter, Gala shared that two girls, who were supposed to be her friends, called her ugly and said they didn't want to be friends anymore. Miki believes that no matter how much experience you have as a parenting coach with tools and effective responses, it still hurts deeply when someone tells your five-year-old daughter that she is ugly. She thinks that a proper reaction is essential, starting with acknowledging Gala's feelings and discussing them openly. Miki emphasized the importance of teaching Gala to express her feelings and not be afraid to tell others when they speak to her disrespectfully. She believes that giving children the ability to say, "Stop, I don't like that," is incredibly beneficial for their lives. Understanding and communicating feelings is crucial for children, especially as they grow.

On the other hand, Chloe is a sociable child who easily makes friends, but she has recently become quite selective. She had a conversation with Miki about friendship, focusing on the importance of being more open. This discussion ultimately led to a sleepover at her house, where many of Chloe's friends were invited to join and enjoy their time together.

Noel used to struggle with feelings of inadequacy, believing he couldn't do certain things. Miki explains that helping him understand his strengths and weaknesses has contributed to developing his healthy self-esteem. "For example, he excels in sports and has a big heart. He always thinks of his sisters; when I give him a biscuit, he instinctively divides it into three parts to share with them. I often tell him that he has a gentle heart."



MAMAS' STORIES

As adults, we often expect our children to behave a certain way simply because we tell them to. Miki emphasizes that simply telling them is not enough; we need to show them and set an example. She shares that Chloe was constantly switching between sports activities and never sticking with any of them. In response, Miki decided to commit to practicing yoga regularly. She noticed that when Chloe observed her dedication, she also changed her approach and was able to focus on one activity. We are our children's first teachers, and they learn from us at home.



“Believe in yourself. Believe in your potential, your dreams, and your abilities. Be proud of who you are; you are perfect exactly as you are. Love is all around you—embrace it, enjoy it, and shine brightly. Come back whenever you wish; I’ll always be here for you.”

“Thank you to my three greatest life teachers. Thank you to my children for being the missing pieces of my very own puzzle.”