

To you,

To you, it's been two years since the outbreak ended. Your babies aren't babies anymore, you are not living that contradictory life you were living anymore, your view is no longer from the annexe of a £2 million property, you are in a home. You are in a luxury home with your husband, 5 and 3 year old and you have completed the academic journey you were on during lockdown, with different people but still friends with all your previous group. You and your husband are madly in love, you can't be apart for longer than a day. The extended family are no longer impacting your marriage, both you and your husband have flourished and are now the power couple that everyone thought you were, except this time you actually are - it is no longer a Mr & Mrs Smith situation, we have been successful as individuals and now we have come together like a force. Your morning views are everything you talked about, you are content. Your children are in the independent school you wanted them in and you have devoted yourself to your family before anything else first. You were always a mother first and didn't really understand what it meant to be a wife, but now you are wife too. You have worked through all your difficulties and past traumas. You have made a journey to heal. You have told the world about your research and people now contact you because they appreciate your work. You are not even questioning it because you now understand that you are enough, although imposter syndrome still makes an appearance every so often. You have never been so stable, there are even talks about a third baby, the baby you didn't think you wanted - yes, there are daily difficulties and your husband still has extreme reactions but you have a home - the home you dreamed of, you have another room to run to when things get tough. You have access to everything like never before. You have broken all cultural barriers and you are now viewed as a different person in your own family - your struggle to challenge cultural biases has paid off and so have those podcasts you started. Your children are still the way you envisioned them two years ago - they are kind, they are spoken to in a kind manner and they question everything. You did all that. Nobody else, you stayed in a complex system and you took it as an opportunity to work on yourself and the pandemic took everything out of you and despite those horrid confrontations you had to have with family members, it all paid off because those boundaries remain and you know exactly where you stand. While those family members haven't changed, you have learned to maintain healthy boundaries around them and continue to work on yourself. Your children are still your own and nobody has influenced their negative ways of thinking upon them. Especially around racism, gender roles and sexuality - you are still passionate about no one having the right to expect your children to maintain cultural roles. You did OK, your marriage and family unit became stable - like you wanted it and you still continue to enhance your own career too. And you still drink copious amounts of caffeine but at least you sleep a bit more!!