



DOCTOR, MOTHER, AUTHOR... WITH THE multiple hats she wears, Low Chai Ling well deserves the title of supermum. Yet the attractive doctor is loth to call herself that. "Fact is, I think it is even harder for a woman to give up her job to stay at home and devote all her time to her children. That for me is a supermum. Any woman with a child will understand the kind of worry, guilt, happiness, sadness, joy and anxiety that goes hand in hand with raising a child," she says, adding "to bring up a child successfully is already an achievement in itself. I am proud of my mother, and I hope my children will be proud of me in time to come."

Still, Chai Ling who runs two aesthetic clinics specialising in cosmetic dermatology manages her different roles with aplomb. When she is working, she gives all her attention to her patients. "I don't think about anything else and most of the time, I don't even take calls or answer my mobile phone. I also don't have lunch as lunch hour is the busiest time."

That certainly contradicts her advice to her patients to have small regular meals, but it can't be helped as many of her patients only have the time to see her then. Believing in the importance of a healthy body, she makes it a point to eat well in the morning, fitting in a spot of yoga or a session at the gym before her day begins. Says the mother of two, "What I really enjoy about it is that if my two-and-a half year old daughter, Tyan, is awake, she will follow me to the gym with her bottle of milk and toy to keep me company."

"Tyan is at a chatty age, and when I exercise, she entertains me by telling me about her dreams, her day and so on. I really treasure those moments since I don't get to see much of her (and her younger brother, Aidan, who is one this year) after I leave for work."

To ensure she devotes every minute to her children and husband when she can, she never brings her work home or even watch television. "When my day at work ends, it ends in the office."



## The Multi-tasker

If Dr Low Chai Ling were a professional juggler, she would do very well indeed. She tells Sunuja Naidu how she copes with her varied tasks

Being a working mum with so many different interests has given me a more balanced view of life. It allows me to be open to new ideas – if my children want to grow up to be a writer or a yoga teacher, I will be just as happy as if they had chosen to be a doctor or lawyer. I really don't think there is one path to success

Unless I have meetings with my editorial team that runs my newsletters and websites, I will always make it a point to have dinner at home with them. This is when we can really catch up and spend quality time together."

During the weekends (she works half day on Saturdays but not on Sundays), she and her husband engage the children in a range of activities like singing songs, colouring and playing games. "It's an ineffable feeling just watching them move around and doing the activities they love," she says.

"Sometimes, when I look at my children, I feel guilty about not being able to spend as much time with them as I would have liked. It gets worse when I have to travel overseas to give talks at conferences. It's not that I don't have the option of being a full-time mum but I believe when you are a doctor running your own practice, you are committed to your patients from day one. As such, I have to make sacrifices to make sure my patients are well taken care of.

"Thankfully, I have great parents and in-laws who are just so amazing with my children. They give them so much love and attention and I know they are never lacking in affection. I really can't ask for more."

This allows her to pursue other interests such as writing. After the children go to bed, Chai Ling stays up for an hour or two to pen some of her thoughts for her second book on aesthetics. Her first book is called *In Full Bloom: How to Look Fabulous Before and After Pregnancy*, focusing on what pregnant women could do to look good. Having been a pregnant mother twice, she has gone through some of the problems expectant mothers have battled with

such as skin and body problems because of hormonal and emotional changes.

"Being in the aesthetics line, I emphatically believe that it is important to take good care of our skin and bodies – which is why I exercise regularly (sometimes I teach my little ones yoga too!), eat healthy (we try to eat organic at home) and what's equally important is that I don't smoke.

"I am more than aware of the irreversible and damaging effects of smoking. It not only harms people around you but also causes cancers and skin to lose its elasticity and develop more wrinkles at a younger age." As an aesthetic doctor, as well as an ambassador for the Health Promotion Board's Fresh Air for Women programme, she encourages more women to give up smoking, and integrate wellness and beauty in their lives.

"Being a working mum with so many different interests has certainly given me a more balanced view of life. It allows me to be open to new ideas – if my children want to grow up to be a writer or a yoga teacher, I will be just as happy as if they had chosen to be a doctor or lawyer. I really don't think there is one path to success. I feel that life is too short to limit them to any one path." 

