

Goodbye Superwoman

We've been aiming too high for too long. It's time to wave goodbye to the do-it-all superwoman and come to terms with our flaws, writes Jamie Khoo

She wears matching lingerie, has a gap between her thighs and can still fit into her mini-skirts from 1988. She wakes at 6am for yoga (regardless of when she went to bed), drinks two litres of water a day and can meditate without thinking about what she'll have for dinner. She will eloquently discuss the crisis in Syria in one breath, and Chanel's latest collection in the next. Her husband is adoring, wealthy and never grows a pot belly, and her children are clever and well-behaved. When she makes a to-do list she actually crosses everything off it. She has it all under control, all the time, and looks flawless while doing it.

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Sound familiar? If you grew up reading women's magazines or watching soap operas then the Superwoman will need no introduction. She is the woman who has been making us feel bad about ourselves for far too long, but we're here to tell you it's time to get real.

Here's the thing: if the Superwoman was being honest she would tell you that she is over-the-top exhausted. And if we were being honest, we'd admit that hanging out with a Superwoman can be about as exciting as a tour through Pleasantville – pleasant, certainly, but also mind-numbingly dull and even a little bit scary. Humans bond over their shared vulnerabilities; if you don't show us any, how do we know you're not a robot?

At the other end of the spectrum is the Anti-Superwoman. She crashes haphazardly through life, constantly bumping into things and tripping over herself. Some of our favourite fictional characters are Anti-Superwomen, from the clumsily endearing Mindy Kaling, to

stumbling, mumbling Miranda Hart, to self-destructive Hannah Horvath of *Girls*. Every mishap the aspiring Superwoman fears, the Anti-Superwoman accepts. But given the choice between spending a day with these ladies or with a Superwoman, there's no doubting who we'd choose. The Anti-Superwoman's frailties and gaffes are precisely what make her endearing, keeping us addicted to her stories and making us laugh until our mascara runs.

It's time to embrace the girl who can never get the frizz out of her hair, who belches after one too many beers, who turns up to meetings 10 minutes late, then realises she forgot to bring a pen. That doesn't mean abandoning our dreams and ambitions, or not giving things

our best, it just means giving up on the idea of being 'perfect' (because really, who decides what perfect looks like anyway?) and celebrating the flaws and inadequacies in all of us. These are what make us interesting. These are what make us human. And these are what make us damn good fun to be around.

We can't help wondering if the pursuit of perfection is a female obsession. Take a quick look at what drives the other half of the population and you'll see a very different reality. How often does a man beat himself up over missing the school run, not making it to that dawn Pilates class or not reaching his daily water quota? Exactly. And when men do mess up, aren't they more likely to just gloss over it and move on?

Little Miss Perfect could learn a lesson or two from Mr Messy. And the lesson is this: stop keeping up appearances and let chaos reign occasionally. The idea of having it all while doing it all is a noble but impossible one.



> Chelsea Handler, talk-show host



> Lena Dunham, creator and star of *Girls*



> Actress and funny girl, Rebel Wilson



> Laugh-a-minute comedian Miranda Hart



> Mindy Kaling of *The Mindy Project*

So join us as we splatter curry laksa all over ourselves at the dinner table, let the kids stay up past midnight and don't finish that report that's due at work. Instead we'll be sitting on the sofa, playing Candy Crush, watching *Game of Thrones*, and not doing the dishes. Or perhaps we'll just drink too much wine and go to sleep early. Whatever we do, we'll do it without guilt or apology. We're being who we are and loving it – chipped nails and all. □

5 WAYS TO FREE YOUR INNER ANTI-SUPERWOMAN

- 'Accidentally' bin your to-do list and sleep away the weekend instead.
- Eat chocolates for breakfast.
- Leave home without a bra.
- Fall over in yoga class.
- Pass off take-away as your own cooking.

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