

Pancakes and Problems: Things get spiced . . . vanilla chai-spiced.

Hello! It has been AGES since my last post and if you follow this blog, you might be wondering to yourself, “Ummmm, Whit, didn’t you like, make a big deal about unveiling a new and improved, self-hosted blog?” Yes! I sure did. Here’s the long of the short of it: I hired a designer via Etsy. The designer was less than awesome. I got my buddy, Yosef from This American Bite on the case but he’s super swamped and I’m anxious to get back to blogging, especially with Thanksgiving just around the corner so I made an executive decision to take a step back and hold off until after the holiday season. Here’s hoping . . .

In the meantime, I’m back to posting and it feels so right. Since I last posted to this blog, a lot of fun things have happened. I was asked to become a permanent blogger for the Times of Israel (posts can be found [here](#) and [here](#)). I also had another post over at Kveller.com (find it [here](#)), was interviewed by the Huffington Post for an article on meditation (that can be found [here](#)) and I’ve been asked to do my very first cooking demo for a synagogue here in North Miami Beach (details to follow). I’ve also been swamped at work, took the family and went to LA for 3 days and hosted our very first Simchat Torah Wing Ding (9 lbs. of wings, 4 different kinds of flavors, and lots of hungry friends. It’s how we Southern Jews celebrate the completion of reading the Torah). Life has been lovely and chaotic, to say the least.

In all the time since I last posted, I’ve also been doing a lot of reading and of course, a lot of thinking. Before I stepped off-line for a bit, I wrote a post that sparked a lot of debate/comments/criticism/assumptions. I had been having a

lot of mixed feelings and confusion over my voice as a writer as well as my place on the blogosphere. The post (found [here](#)) was supposed to be about just that—reflections on where I fit in as a blogger as well as a space to vent some frustrations about what can happen when folks make assumptions on the choices other people make or rather, the assumption that other people even HAVE a choice. Of course, the irony is that it was completely misread as a judgement piece on other people's choices as well as a knock to mothers who stay at home. It was celebrated by mama's who work out of the home and ripped apart by mama's who work in the home. I was accused of being 'intense' (as if that's a bad thing?). I was accused of judging people's choices (an act of which is against everything I believe to be whole and true, both as a social worker and a human being, though I do not claim to be void of the fault of judgement from time to time). It was rough y'all.



Lazy Sundays

I've been reflecting on this piece off and on since I posted it all those months ago. I take full responsibility for my part in it's misinterpretation and have been questioning how it was written ever since—was I inarticulate? Could I have been more clear in defining 'privilege' as I see it? Should I have even used that word? And while I was trying to find clarity in the piece by owning it and moving forward, I read two blog posts from two separate bloggers that I felt brought me right back to square one. The first was from fellow Kveller.com writer, Tamara Reese entitled, "Tell a Friend: You're a Good Mama" (found [here](#)) and "You're a stay-at-home mom? What do you DO all day?" by Matt Walsh (found [here](#)). The first post was a gorgeous and emotional story about the author's observations of new parents and how she looked at the mother, who was apologizing to folks in a restaurant for the fact that her newborn was crying, and told her "You're a good mom". Tamara goes on to tell the story of how someone did that for her once and it was all she could do to not break down when she heard it; not realizing she needed to hear it so badly. Matt Walsh on the other hand, wrote a post proclaiming his love and admiration for his wife, who works in the home as a stay-at-home-mom. His tone was harsh (that's OK, it's his blog. He gets to do that) in that he supports the hell outta his wife and in making the statement that as an employee, we are all just a number. I don't disagree with him. It's harsh, but I completely agree. I feel that daily. But that's beside the point. Both of these bloggers mentioned 'mommy wars'. Both of these bloggers felt the need to uplift mamas. They put themselves out there to speak on behalf of an entire population of people who, on the day-to-day basis, feel completely vulnerable and I thought to myself, well, why? Not, 'Why do women feel vulnerable'. I get that. I completely get that. But why are there 'mommy wars' (man, that term makes me want to vomit)? Why do so many of us bloggers feel the need to go on a rant (me included and yes, I get the irony of this

post)? Why do so many of us bloggers feel the need to support or to criticize in the name of mommyhood? And then I wondered if it was all a vicious cycle. By blogging about parenting and our own experiences with it, in an effort to connect to like-minded parents, do we run the risk of alienating other parents who feel like they don't fit in line to exactly what it is you're blogging about. Meaning, if I blog as a mom who has a full-time job outside of the home as well, is it assumed that I don't support moms who work full-time inside the home? Am I aligning myself I didn't even know it?

I HIGHLY doubt that when my mom was raising two kids in the 80s and 90s she gave two poops about what style of parenting she ascribed to or whether or not she would be ridiculed if she bottle-fed or if co-slept with her baby or not. Her network of moms were not online but in her community or within her family and when she had a question about something baby-related, she didn't type it into 'Google' and have a million and one confusing and potentially alienating 'answers' or blogs pop up touting the benefits of this sleep method or this parenting style. She was just trying to do the best she could and survive. Dude, that's what we're all trying to do, right?



They take self-portraits

I worry that, as a blogger, I might be part of the problem. I might be putting something out there that's causing the escalation of vulnerability do to the assumption that I know what the hell I'm doing. I blog about my family and the trials and tribulations I go through as a parent who works outside the home because it's an outlet but I realize that I have not been clear, and I mean CRYSTAL clear, about one thing—I am not an expert at parenting nor do I claim to be. I studied early childhood development in social work school but I promise you this, the only thing I'm remotely close to being an expert in when it comes to parenting is parenting my own child and I'm fairly certain that I'm only about 70% expert on that. I worry that all us bloggers, well, we might be exacerbating an already vulnerable situation—parenting. I post pictures of my child on Instagram and those pictures are generally of her smiling and being happy. I don't post pictures of her when she's awake at 2AM with a fever or when she's having a meltdown for some reason because well, a) I don't have that kind of time and b) I don't want to post

pictures of her in that state. And yet, I do worry that by only posting us in the golden sunlight of Miami or hipster-ed out in our local coffee shop, I might be exacerbating that thing that might be sparking all these rants or 'mommy wars'-- that I've got it right and you should be me or that you should at least strive to be as seemingly cool, calm and collected as I am as a parent.

And thus, back to the original point and post. Folks knee-jerk reacted to that first post. Folks assumed because I write through one lens that I must be attacking or at least ridiculing the other. I can't promise I don't have a little bit more sympathy for working moms because I can relate more and I don't fault anyone for assuming that because it's true and that's OK. I think we all have junk. I think we all have guilt; such nasty, nasty guilt, and it makes us vulnerable and it makes us feel like we have to defend our choices. I also think we are all just trying to do what's best for the ones we love and are trying to survive.



Sometimes we do a little better than survive :)

Whole Wheat Chai-Spiced Vanilla Pancakes



The players

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1-2 Tbsp honey (you can also use regular ol' sugar)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 Tbsp (and a bit) of vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup almond milk
- 2 Tbsp coconut oil
- 1 egg
- ½ Tbsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp cardamom

- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground all spice



Hello lovers

How:

Whisk together flour, honey, baking powder, salt and spices in a small bowl. Meanwhile, in a separate bowl, whisk together almond milk, oil, vanilla and egg. Add flour mixture to liquid mixture and stir just to moisten. It's OK if there are a few lumps. Scoop out pancake batter using an ice cream scoop and pour out onto griddle or large frying pan. Cook pancakes on a griddle over medium heat. Pancakes are ready to flip once they start to bubble on top. Serve hot with big slap of butter.



Don't be afraid to sprinkle that glorious stack of pancakes with a dash of cinnamon.