Yoga & Mindful Motherhood with Liberté Chan

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IN THIS EPISODE

Former competitive figure skater and longtime television meteorologist Liberté Chan is navigating postpartum life — and turning an unexpected connection with her daughter into a brand-new program designed to strengthen mother/baby bonds. She returns to Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC to talk yoga, mindful motherhood, and her Mini & Me program.

About this transcript: *This transcript was created with AI-assisted transcription and reviewed by our team. It may not be 100% accurate — names, medical terms, and phrasing can occasionally be mis-transcribed. For exact wording, please listen to the episode audio.*

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Today's guest is a longtime television meteorologist, former competitive figure skater, and devoted student of yoga who recently entered a whole new chapter as a mother. Now she's navigating postpartum life, getting back on screen, and turning an unexpected connection with her daughter into a brand new program designed to help other families strengthen mother-baby bonds and build important life skills for today's pressure-filled world. I'm pregnancy-focused chiropractor Dr. Elliott Berlin, and you are listening to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. Liberty Chan, welcome back to the podcast.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Thank you so much for having me.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'll take whatever form I can get of your magical energy.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: You're too kind, and thank you for that lovely intro.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Ah, my pleasure. I mean, you've been on the podcast before, and I learned a lot from you. Every time I see you, I learn something from you, but you have something new up your sleeve. You don't have any sleeves. You have something new brewing, and it's very exciting. But before we get to there, last time I talked to you, you'd just become a mom. What was early motherhood and postpartum like for you?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: It was tough. Early motherhood, postpartum, I didn't have any depression or anything like that. It was just a lot all at once, and I felt very unprepared. I kept looking to experts and people who'd been parents before me. I kept texting new mom friends, and I think I probably reached out to you a few times, and Luis, my husband, has had three children prior to our current baby, so he gave me a lot of advice. But I kind of felt like I was in a world that was unlike any other I'd ever experienced. It was like this tiny human needed me 24-7, and she still does, and I didn't know what to do, how to take care of her. But I feel like now it's been about 16 months. I feel like I've gotten into a groove.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I mean, would you say the challenges were physical and sort of emotional, and not in a depressed way, just in a big learning curve, and when someone's, like you said, dependent on you, it's pressure?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: It's a lot, because you put yourself and all of your needs aside, because obviously she's number one, she's the priority. Now I'm trying to do a little bit more self-care and not forget about myself, and she has shown signs of a little bit of independence here and there, which is lovely. It's kind of bittersweet, actually. Like two weeks ago, she stopped breastfeeding. She just turned her head, and I was heartbroken. And I loved that connection and bond, but that was a sign of independence, so she's growing up, and I know that I'll get that little hit of oxytocin and bonding with her in a different way. But initially, it was 24-7, and yes, there were some physical challenges. I think my feet swelled up like I couldn't fit any of my shoes.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Now it's fine, but that really was painful. I think you actually helped me work through that. And then I had an elbow issue because I was carrying her outside. And then just emotionally, it was a lot. I'd never felt so much love for a tiny human in my life, and I feel like every day it just grows exponentially, which is lovely. You know, there's a learning curve, but you got the hang of it. Yeah, I feel like yesterday I got her to the park, I got her to music class, I had her dressed, her hair was done. That was a win.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And my hair was actually done. But you're also, on top of that, you're back to work, back on screen this time at CBS. And it's just something else to juggle.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Yeah, yeah. It's a lot. And I love being back on air, especially in a new space, and it's like a completely different green screen. It's this AR-VR, this augmented reality, virtual reality space, which it's like a huge green fishbowl. And you go in and it's very challenging because it's a whole new system that I have to learn. The same weather, the weather I can talk about, you know, all day, every day, but it's the way that it's presented is different. And so I had to train. So I felt like I was back in my small market days working and felt like a fish out of water. But now I've gotten into a groove.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: With all the new things, new responsibilities, new tasks, are you having to cut some of the things from your pre-mommy life?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Oh, gosh, yeah. I feel like the self-care and the sleep thing to go. But right now, I feel like, you know, she is sleeping through the night, you know, for the past three weeks. I just, you know, I hope that this continues and she doesn't have a major regression. But for the past three

weeks, she's been sleeping through the night, which has been life changing because sleep impacts everything. So that was lovely. So I guess self-care for me, I'm kind of a movement exercise fanatic. I love it. So before baby, I would go to, you know, two classes a day. I would do a spin class. I would do a yoga class every day, you know, or five days a week. And now it's I go to one class a day, if that.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: And if not, I work out, you know, at my house where we have a small gym. So, you know, movement is definitely daily. And I really try to carve out at least half an hour, you know, my body would be so happy if I did right today. Yes, yes, it's so important. But for me, it's more than just the physical. It's the mental that helps me show up for myself and then show up for her.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right. And one thing that's physical and mental is yoga. And you have a long history with yoga and it's carried you through a lot of different stages, I imagine, including this stage. Let's take a little break and we come back. We'll learn more about your yoga journey. Don't go anywhere. Welcome back. We're talking with Libertate Chan. OK, let's talk about yoga. When did you get started with yoga and how?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Mm hmm. I started yoga when I was 20 years old. Twenty twenty one, I think I had graduated early from college and I was back home living with my parents. And I was really depressed and I was really anxious. And my mom's like, I think you should try yoga class. Like, I think it helps with stress. And I was like, OK, you know, I'll try it. So I went to a class in Brentwood and it was just me. Like no one else showed up for the class. And I met this beautiful yogi instructor. She was probably in her 40s at the time, but looked like she was 25. And she just had like this amazing energy about her. Like she was so kind, so loving. Her name's Sydney. And we still talk here and there, but she doesn't teach anymore.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: But she gave me this class that just made me feel so good after practicing for like an hour and a half. And it was my first class. And I was like, oh, it does help with stress and anxiety. I'm not thinking about the future. I'm not thinking about the past. I'm just here right now. And that feels good.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, yeah. That that lovely feeling of presence.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: I was a competitive figure skater. And so I feel like the same feeling that I used to get on the ice where I wasn't thinking about the future or the past. And I was just very, very present and in my body. I felt like that on the mat. So I saw her that week. You know, I probably went to her class the day after and the day after that, because I just got hooked. I became obsessed with yoga and I followed her from studio to studio. And then about 10 years ago, I wanted to just deepen my knowledge of yoga. So I went and I took my teacher training. So I learned a lot more about the philosophy behind yoga and how it's more than just the physical practice. You know, it's this eight limb practice. And the first two limbs are these yamas and niyamas,

LIBERTÉ CHAN: which basically are the principles, the foundations of yoga. And I guess boiling it down for kid-friendly content, which is what I do in mindful minis, it's are you a nice person to yourself? Are you a nice person to others? And I think that's a beautiful way to live. I imagine as a figure skater getting into yoga, it starts off more physical.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, yeah. And then you could already tap into the way you described how you were present in the moment, which is so beneficial on the mind and spirit level. But then it sounds like when you did your teacher training, you delved much deeper into the full spectrum of the effects that can have on the mind, body and spirit at once.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Exactly. And I love that you brought up the mind, body and spirit because yoga, the word, the Sanskrit word, the root of it means union or to yoke. And that is, you know, the yoking, the union of the body, the mind and the spirit. And when all of that is aligned, it's such a beautiful place to be and to kind of navigate through the world. And it's hard to stay there.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Totally. It can be so helpful during different stages and challenges in life. Did your yoga practice change during pregnancy?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: So I think my practice changed a lot during pregnancy. I had to modify poses. I really just couldn't go as deep. And especially towards the end, when my belly got really, really big, my center of gravity, it just shifted. So that was kind of a weird feeling to experience. I also couldn't hold the poses for as long as I had before pregnancy because I was carrying so much extra weight and Mila was literally pushing up against my lungs and organs. So it became really hard to breathe and I had to take a lot more breaks just to catch my breath. So while I practiced all the way up until the day, I went into labor. My practice definitely looked and it felt different. That said, I had a fairly smooth delivery

LIBERTÉ CHAN: and I was able to have her vaginally and my recovery. It was pretty quick. I feel like yoga just helped me maintain strength in my pelvic floor. And maybe more importantly, it just kept me deeply connected to my body and just aware of how I was feeling while I was pregnant and postpartum and yoga. You can practice yoga while you're washing your dishes. You can practice it while you're doing your laundry. It's just can you bring your full awareness into that present moment? And again, that feels really good. It kind of like activates that parasympathetic nervous system. And therefore, it lowers your stress and anxiety. So who doesn't know what the question was? But yeah, I kind of went on a tangent. Oh, yeah. So sorry to circle back.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: I feel like I'm speaking a mile a minute. I did have to physically change my practice a little bit because just your center of gravity changes. But I did practice headstands and handstands just because I feel like I I wouldn't recommend that to most people who do yoga. But I just feel like for me, I've been practicing for so long and it just felt like it was OK. And I practiced every day. So my body changed and I probably didn't hold the poses quite as much. But, you know, I modified a few poses, but I was able to practice up until the day I delivered.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. I hope you have pictures of that for us.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: I do. OK, great.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How about postpartum postpartum?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: I feel like it really helped me physically and mentally. But physically, like, you know, like you feel like your whole middle part of your body is disconnected. You know, it's like you have to rebuild your pelvic floor and you have this huge belly and then you push this baby out of you.

And things change and they get misaligned, I guess I can say. So I feel like it really helped to get my body back into alignment physically and then mentally. It just allowed me to find that beautiful magic space of presence when I felt like I didn't know what I was doing, raising this little baby, taking care of this little baby.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I feel like then something happened that you probably couldn't have planned for. Yoga practice they've been doing for more than 20 years started to become something that you shared with that little baby, with your daughter. Let's take a little break. When we come back, we'll find out what happened and what you're doing with it now that could benefit all of us. We'll be right back. Welcome back with Liberty Chance. I mean, you got lucky enough to be exposed to yoga at a pretty early time when it was helpful for you physically, when it was helpful for you emotionally. But then you got such a deep love for it that you became a practitioner and you used it to, I mean, you drew all the benefits of it

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: for the challenges of motherhood from pregnancy to labor and delivery, which we didn't even talk about, to postpartum. And then somehow your little girl started to say, I want some of that, too. What happened?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: You know, I feel like just practicing her while I was carrying her kind of just set her up on this path of, you know, she's going to be exposed to this outside the womb. She was exposed while she was inside the womb. Hopefully she'll like it. I'm not going to shove it on her. I'm not going to push it on her, but I will expose her to this practice and hopefully she'll love it, you know, maybe as much as me, or at least be willing to learn a little bit. But I guess going back to your question, which I forget it at the moment.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How did she express her interest to you?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: OK, so she started to within the first few months of her life, she started to just get into these poses naturally, like organically. She would sleep in baddha konasana. That's like reclined butterfly pose. And some of these sleep sacks are literally shaped like that so that they can sit or lay down and sleep in baddha konasana, this reclined butterfly pose. So that kind of piqued my interest. And then she would be on the changing table and do this happy baby pose. And I was like, oh, my gosh, she's a natural yogi. And then when she started to turn onto her belly, which is a huge milestone for babies, she started to do Cobra, you know, lift up her chest and her head. And then she started to strengthen her back.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: And then she started to use her arms and push up into seal pose. And I was like, oh, my gosh, Mila is a natural yogi. And then I started to look at other babies and I started to laugh because I'm like, well, all babies are natural yogi. They're all flexible. They all do these poses. And maybe, you know, babies have been around forever. Maybe yoga just kind of borrowed these poses from them. And, you know, we do child's pose. She now sleeps in child's pose quite often. So it's funny because it's like what came first, the chicken or the egg. But I just feel like these poses are so natural to everyone. So I look at my husband who's, you know, he's a little tight. He's not the most flexible person.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: He's very strong, but he is trying to work on his flexibility. So I always say to him, I say, Luis, you know, I know you say that you're not flexible, but you were at one point, right? When you came out of your mom's belly, you were doing all of these poses that Mila is doing. You were super flexible. You were super open. Let's just start tapping into that. And then I thought, well, if Mila is already this flexible and all babies are this flexible, why not kind of lean into that and nurture that and kind of just teach them yoga right from the get-go and teach them these skills of this body awareness and not always just about the poses. Of course, we'll do the poses, which are fun for her,

LIBERTÉ CHAN: but also just kind of make her a little bit more aware of what her body's doing, this whole like attention and focus to how she's feeling on the inside. So that kind of just sent me down a path of I need to create videos. I need to create a video series. I need to create this mindful mini series. And how do I make this interesting or fun for kids? So I have this dog named Bala, which is short for Balasana. Her name is just the root of Balasana, which means child.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I did not know that till right now.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: So Bala is the Sanskrit root for child-like one or little one. And she's teeny tiny. You've seen her. She's like eight pounds.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, adorable.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Yeah, and she's adorable. So, you know, kids love animals and Mila loves Bala. So they're always together. And I thought, OK, how do I make these videos interesting? And how do I encourage kids to watch? And I'll go back to screen time in a second. But how do I get them interested in watching these videos so that they can learn a little bit of yoga? So I basically I took my real life dog yoga and I made her into an animated dog. And Bala is next to me doing these yoga flows and yoga postures and breathing exercises because, you know, kids love cartoons.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: They do love cartoons. And, you know, it's pretty powerful that you have this idea. And then also the animation idea for Bala. And then you executed it really well. Like sometimes it doesn't translate from what's in your head to what's on the screen all that well. But yours came out really great.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Thank you. Thank you. That means a lot.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And the series is called Mindful Minis. How did you decide what to put into each one?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: So I kind of broke it up into 15 mini flows. So you're not going to get a handstand. You're not going to get a headstand. You're going to get simple, accessible foundational poses. And they're going to be short flows. So mom can do it. Toddler can do it. Or young child can do it with mom, with dad, with caregiver, whoever wants to practice with them. They can also do it alone. But basically I just wanted them to get into their bodies, be able to do these postures. That's why I kept it pretty, I don't want to say basic, but accessible for most. And then it just kind of, I wanted mom and toddler or dad and toddler to be able to connect with each other. Because how much fun is it to watch something and practice it alongside your mini?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Like I love practicing yoga next to Mila. And all of a sudden, without me even asking her to do it, she started to, if I get into Downward Dog, she automatically does it. And then if I say, let's do yoga, she immediately goes down into Downward Dog or Tabletop, which are these natural poses for her. And she looks at me and babies and toddlers, they just want that connection. They want that reaction from you. So of course I applaud and I encourage her to practice next to me. And it's just kind of this fun, joyful moment that I can have with Mila. And I hope that other moms, dads, caregivers can have that as well with their littles.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And it seems a little intimidating because you've been doing yoga for 20 years.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Again, you're not going to get a handstand in any of these flows.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right, I'm just saying, do you need any yoga experience?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: No, no. Any beginner could start them. Any beginner can start. So, okay, so I should explain what else is on Mindful Mini. So there are these 15 mini flows that, you know, it's the movement, it's the flow, but it's basically going to be a flow that's four minutes or less. And you can stop at any time. You know, it's tabletop, it's cat-cow, it's going to be downward dog, maybe a warrior one, accessible poses, you know, seated baddha konasana, so butterfly pose. And a lot of these poses, like I said, they're natural for these toddlers. So you say you can't do it, but you did it when you were a baby and a toddler. So I bet you, you couldn't do it. Even if you're not, you know, an advanced yogi. So in addition to the flows,

LIBERTÉ CHAN: there are a couple videos on breath work. It's basically lion's breath and horse's breath, which I kind of just feel like helps channel all that energy and gets the wiggles out of kids. And then I do simplify the yamas and nyamas, those principles and ethics of yoga. You know, for example, ahimsa means non-harming, kindness. And I kind of just take the ancient practice of ahimsa, which is just kind of being a kind person. And I give like an example for a toddler, you know, it's like, can you share your toy with another toddler, with a friend? And Bal is next to me doing it. So there's breath work, there's the flows, there's the yamas and nyamas. And then lastly, there's the mudras. And I call them magical mudras,

LIBERTÉ CHAN: which, you know, are really just fun hand gestures. And they send these energetic signals to the body. So I have like the happy tummy mudra, which is the hand gesture that you do. And it kind of helps your belly feel better. So, you know, maybe after a snack time, you could do that with your little.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Such a great little toolkit for parents and little ones. How has the reaction been?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: It's been good. It's been really good. Everybody loves Bala. Every like the second they see Bala. I'm so glad that I had to find this AI editor because, you know, how do you create a real life dog into an animated dog and make them do yoga? I had never seen that before, but he was able to do that. So I think Bala is kind of the winning ticket.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think the combination is the winning ticket. You have a great energy and a passion for yoga and you have a great way of demonstrating the poses that's not intimidating. And then Bala just seals the deal. She does. She's like the little sprinkle on top. What do you have planned for Mindful Minis moving forward?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Good question. I have a couple of events lined up. So I want to do some mommy and me events. Of course, I have like Bala 2.0 version. Will Bala maybe she'll talk in the next few videos? Who knows? But I just feel like these videos are endless. You know, I can do so many different mini flows and create these moments of connection that you can have at home or in person if I end up doing more mommy and me events. But it's funny, I sent a few of the videos to some of my girlfriends and one of them has a son and he's three years old. And she put it on and they did one and it was over in like three minutes. And he's like, mom, again, again. And he did it like three more times. So I said, okay, we're going to do more.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: They had a lot of fun doing it. So I think it's just, you know, I hear really good feedback from moms and that's my target group.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So I feel like somebody, Mila is going to realize this whole thing started because you saw her squirming around into these positions naturally. What kind of things do you hope she understands about why you created Mindful Minis?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Mm, so my hope for Mindful Minis is to give kids these simple foundational tools for movement, mindfulness, breathing, and self-awareness that they can carry with them throughout their life. I think that by introducing these practices early on, they become natural tools kids can return to as they get older. I really just think it can help them navigate these big emotions that we all feel. I'm hoping Mindful Minis can move on to something bigger than just yoga videos. I'm hoping it can move into other wellness spaces like nutrition, we cook a lot, I bake a lot, but it's always kind of in a healthy fashion because I want her to get her nutrition. It could be that. I just hope that she is not super embarrassed that she's kind of the star

LIBERTÉ CHAN: and the inspiration maybe I'm hoping that she'll, I'm hoping she'll love it until maybe she's a teenager. And hopefully she'll want to practice alongside me for years and hopefully she'll invite her friends to do it as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And eventually her children.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Exactly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, right now we have Mindful Minis streaming on Informed Pregnancy Plus. Where can we find the home of Mindful Minis and where can we find you online?

LIBERTÉ CHAN: So there is a website. It's mindfulminis.us. You can find all the videos there. It's on YouTube, on my channel. I believe it's at Liberté Chan or maybe it's at the Liberté Chan. I should probably know that. And then I'm on Instagram at Liberté Chan or at Mindful Minis Official. So yeah, we'll see what happens next with it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Amazing. I'm really glad that you created it. I think if somebody was going to do it, you're the right person with the right energy, the right expertise and the creative vision that you were able to bring to screen in such a spectacular way. I recommend everybody listening go check it out. Liberté, thank you so much for joining me today and being on the podcast again. I'm going to figure out how to find out how to get you back yet another time because first of all, the audience loves you and it's always great to spend a little time with you.

LIBERTÉ CHAN: Oh, thank you so much. You're the best.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: My pleasure. At home, thanks for listening to Informed Pregnancy. For more pregnancy and parenting information just like this, visit us online at informedpregnancy.com.

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