

S2E13 Minna Dubin FINAL

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Rage is also useful in giving you the energy to create change larger than just your little home[00:01:00]

[00:01:12] **Kaitlin:** today here at the podcast. We are really excited to share with you a conversation with Minna Dubin. Minna and I had the great privilege to meet by way of the Artist Residency and Motherhood group, which I've mentioned on the podcast in the past. And Minna and I have actually met in person a number of times, and we've shared in retreat spaces and in working residencies.

So I am particularly excited to share this conversation with you. Minna is the author of the book, *Mom Rage: The Everyday Crisis of Modern Motherhood*, which is out from Seal Press this week. It's hitting shelves. So it's perfect timing to listen to this conversation, get excited about the ongoing conversation that she will [00:02:00] be having about *Mom Rage* and to read the book.

Her writing has been featured in the New York times salon parents, the Philadelphia inquirer romper, the forward. Hobart, Mother Magazine, and Literary Mama. She's the recipient of an Artist Enrichment Grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. As a leading feminist voice on *MomRage*, Minna has appeared on MSNBC, Good Morning America, The Tamron Hall Show, NBC 10 Boston, and NPR.

She lives in Berkeley, California with her husband, her two children, and no pets, she says, enough is enough. I couldn't agree more. I wish we didn't have the cat we had. No, I shouldn't say that. I do love the cat. I swear. I love the cat. It is a lot to care for children and pets and partners and families.

So to that end, this conversation was illuminating, enlightening, relieving. So we hope that you enjoy it as much as we did.

[00:03:00]

[00:03:11] **Kaitlin:** So we're here to talk about your book. I am excited to dig in and learn more about the process of the book for you, how you came to this book, but also in general, how you came to writing because I don't know that that's something that is deeply investigated in this book. So I'd love to hear more about that and your connection to you as a creative person as well and the formats that you choose to be creative and what that means to you.

Because I think that's something that's really integral to this particular podcast. So what struck me actually, as I was reading was that it was slightly different than I expected in terms of format. It felt political, philosophical, and practical to me. So it was like all of those things all at once. So I'd love to hear how you came to that [00:04:00] structure.

[00:04:00] **Minna:** Yeah, I did not come to the structure through any sort of thoughtful nature. I am definitely like a free writer. I'm someone who sits down at the computer and just writes until I get to the place that it needs to be. I write myself to the end. Originally, I thought that this book was going to be much more telling each mother's story.

My first draft had, like, ten pages... Swaths of one single mother's story and then the next single mother's story and they were all in italics and my editor was just like, oh, no, no one wants to read 10 pages of italics. But I think I'm particularly fascinated by people and by people's stories. And I was, I don't know—I just didn't—I didn't quite have the vision of how the book would be.

And so the structure of mixing in my story, mother's stories, and then making this philosophical argument, and [00:05:00] also there's this self help piece of how do you deal with your own rage in the home, regardless of the societal piece. It all just sort of came out organically. I did not have a grand structure, and I think that's why every chapter is a little bit different.

It's not very formulaic. The middle three chapters are much more about my story and how I dealt with my rage in the home. And then the rest of the book is more from a societal perspective of how this is society's fault, not the mom's fault. I'm really trying to balance both, which is sort of a hard thing to do cause I'm saying our rage is warranted. And then I'm also saying, eh, it's not really so great to be screaming in your home. You know what I mean? I'm trying to hold both and give solutions. as best I can for both. So, yeah. But it still felt very important to me to hold on to story, both mine and the mom's.

Like, even though I no longer have 10 pages of a mother's story in there, making sure that I highlighted both my story and the mom's stories felt

[00:06:00] really important, because I feel like as a mom, that's what you actually want to read, if you're a raging mom, is you want to hear other moms stories so that you see yourself.

We all want to be seen, and that felt important to me to provide. Yeah,

[00:06:13] **Kaitlin:** I liked that because I also felt that there were moments when we came back to a particular story and then it added nuance to that story, right? Or there was an additional point or plot point for that particular individual's story.

And I, I really connected with that too. And I'm really impressed that You didn't have the structure in place, but that it came about organically cause it really works. So you're balancing a lot at once, but you did it. You definitely did it

[00:06:41] **Minna:** successfully. Yeah. I mean, I think I felt pressure because there isn't a book like this about Mob Ridge and I just felt like it needed to do all the things and I wanted it to do all the things.

And so I did have a very big task in front of me. So thanks for saying

[00:06:56] **Kaitlin:** that. Is this the book that you felt like you needed? as
[00:07:00] a person going through this experience.

[00:07:01] **Minna:** You mean, do I wish I had this book like eight years ago? Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I wish I had this book. Yeah, I think it would have provided me a lot of relief and maybe would have put a pin in the balloon of my self hatred somewhat.

Yeah.

[00:07:19] **Kaitlin:** So I have a question. This is more personal. So I remember one of our retreats, I think you said to me, you're like, you don't seem like you're someone who rages, which I felt was funny. Cause I'm like, Oh wow. Then you don't know me or I'm masking really well in this moment. And at the same time, I think it also made me personally think a little bit about what is my rage and how that looks different.

And people rage differently and they rage at different entities. Maybe we don't all rage at our children. I definitely rage at my partner way more than I rage at my children. If somehow feels more allowable and maybe he can take it better,

although he'll argue probably that he shouldn't be, which is fair as well.[00:08:00]

It was a nice moment. And I think the book as well, for me personally, it was a moment of, as I think it would be for all readers of. Doing that work and investigating and trying to understand your own triggers, because I loved that when you talked about, for example, the basement and how we act above the basement, whether it's the kitchen or whatever room we're in, but how the basement is informing us.

Is that something that you came to through therapy or your own work or through this book? Where did that structure itself

[00:08:28] **Minna:** come from? I really came to it through writing the book. So you're talking about the first chapter, which is called the house of mom rage. And I basically use the metaphor of upstairs mom range, which I think I call kitchen mom rage, which is the surface of mom rage.

It's like what mom rage looks like- a kid spills a bowl of Cheerios and we blow a gasket. Right. And so it looks like, wow, she has an anger problem because she's screaming over spilled Cheerios. Relax mom. And then there's basement mom rage, which is like, All of the stuff that's happening the hour [00:09:00] before, the day before, the week before, and the lifetime before, right, like our traumas and their patriarchies and their race and class, like everything's in there that's informing that moment, including the husband maybe being at work early every day and her having to do the morning work by herself every day.

Yeah, so I came to that metaphor while writing the book. I think I'm a visual thinker and so I needed the visual somehow for me of the basement versus upstairs in the kitchen. That was how I could conceive of these two different parts of Mom Rage. And it was definitely a struggle in the, it was a question in the editing process of whether I should mix this metaphor.

But I refused to give it away because I find it useful for me. So I figure if I find it useful, other moms are going to find it

[00:09:51] **Kaitlin:** useful. Yeah, I found it very useful. And I think that obviously it can mean very different things. So I think that it's such a nice container. I was also [00:10:00] curious, as you wrote this book and in your process as you wrestled, and I think that you do a really good job of.

Wrestling with this yourself in the book, but with your privileges, what you hold and how that has impacted your process versus what each individual mother that you also focus on in the book, but also in general comes to this with such a different history and how to hold that and how to hold space for that and how to investigate that I was really impressed with how you were able to do that.

If you wanted to speak about your process or how you. You came to be able to do that. I think really mindfully and Thoughtfully in

[00:10:41] **Minna:** this book. Thanks. It felt very important to me to move away from my story in this book and to use other mothers also to show that mom rage affects mothers from all different backgrounds and Even nationalities, which is why I interviewed moms from other countries And I think [00:11:00] that in terms of like, thank you for saying that I did it well, but I think part of it is that before I wrote about motherhood for 15 years or something, I wrote about identity, not motherhood specific.

So I wrote about race and class and gender and sexuality and religion, all of the things, right. Like give and take away social power. And, I studied race and ethnicity and post colonialism in writing memoir in college, right? So this is my background. And so I have been obsessed with identity and the way that it is secretly working underneath everything that's happening, every conversation, every relationship, romantic and platonic.

And so that's my background of work. That's what I've been writing about forever. And so in a way, this is just a continuation of that. It's just specifically about motherhood.

[00:11:49] **Kaitlin:** You do a really great job of highlighting that I think you talk about the individual and the institution and how the interplay of both come to highlight [00:12:00] where rage and power structures intersect.

That to me also, again, there's this alleviating feeling of Okay, this isn't just about me and what I'm feeling, but it's about what I'm carrying with me into this moment, like you say, and that's why I love the basement, I'm so glad you kept the basement metaphor because I think those are foundational things that we are handed at birth and before birth, right?

So whoever we are, that's what we come into motherhood with. And so to ignore that would be to do a huge disservice to how we interact with others on a daily basis. So I really appreciated that. But you even mentioned, you said,

there's one moment where you said, the rules are designed for me to fail. Was that background that you had, did that inform you as a person sitting with your rage?

Or was that something that the writing itself gave you? Like, where did you come to conceptualize? And how did that really make you feel like in your body? Does that work? Does it alleviate the stress or like, [00:13:00] how does it really change you on a daily basis? I'm curious how it changes your relationships with your children, with your

[00:13:04] **Minna:** partner.

I think I came to it through writing this book because I don't have a background in motherhood studies, but I think that being a mother and being someone who thinks a lot about identity and interactions. And then writing about it, because I think I do a lot of my processing through writing, got me to the place and all the research that I did for this book of realizing that modern motherhood is a setup for anger, which is one of the theses, I think, of this book.

I don't know that it actually impacts my relationship with my children. Knowing that, I don't know that it impacts my relationship with my children or my husband. It is one thing to understand something intellectually and it is another thing to have that impact your actions. I'm still upstairs in the kitchen with mom rage [00:14:00] sometimes.

When I get frustrated about something I'm not, I'm not constantly like doing the social overlay in my head. Rage is so quick. We're not always there that we can be like, I'm getting upset because you're being disrespectful and my patriarchy trigger's getting zinged. You know? Like, that's the ideal, right?

That's, that's what I hope that everyone can get to, but that's a real challenge. Even though I know it intellectually, I don't always do it.

[00:14:28] **Kaitlin:** And also, rage, as you say, is so necessary, especially in a political environment, that for me, sometimes I feel a lot of rage towards those structures, and sometimes that can be useful, and sometimes it can be really, it can just feel like you're that one person raging against the structure, right?

And so, how do you find community? When you have such a clear understanding now of those structures and how they impact your experience

[00:14:57] **Minna:** of motherhood I think [00:15:00] about rage as containing information, right? I talk about anger as a weathervane pointing you towards the places that need attention and healing and so I think rage can be useful in that way of teaching you what needs change in your life.

And it might be that you need more support or you need to not be in charge of bedtime every night or whatever You Rage is also useful in giving you the energy to create change larger larger than just your little home, but if you want to get involved in Whatever to create whatever change you want whether it's in your school system or on your block getting more community involved In terms of if my rage has helped me to get community On a smaller scale, I think having mom friends has been just wildly important, specifically mom friends who I can talk to about this, and that's taken some time because I think it takes a very long time to figure out, because at first you get mom friends who are like, oh well they had babies at the same time, so you [00:16:00] guys all hang out together, because it's super convenient and you're a mess, but your mom friends change over time.

As your kids grow up and they get friends and it's like, Oh, do you like those friends' mothers, and then the kids have play dates without you needing to be there. The mom friends dynamic just shifts over time because my oldest is 10 now. But anyway, I would just say that finding the friends who actually you can send that text to when you are losing your mind is super important for me.

And I absolutely love getting those texts from my friends. It is, it's just, I feel like it's like a balm to me when I get to support a friend who's like, I want to, whatever they, you know, and then in terms of a larger community, I feel like this work has brought me community online. Basically, I, I definitely feed off of the conversation that happens.

When I publish articles about it or when I post stuff about MomRage, there's definitely a feedback loop that happens and that feels really good. It's a different kind [00:17:00] of community. Internet community is different than texting your friend. But it's still really great.

[00:17:04] **Kaitlin:** Hmm. Let's talk about that for a second, because you were doing work with lists, and about

that process and how... You made the choice to, even to write the essay, where that came from, but in terms of the formats that your creative work takes, I'd love to hear more about

[00:17:24] **Minna:** that as well. Yeah, I'm historically a memoirist, an essayist, and a monologist. And then after I became a mom, writing was really hard.

I was with my kid a lot. There's just no, there's no brain space. There's no time space. And when my older kid was two, I put him in longer days of preschool and started sending myself to cafes and sitting down with a blank page. And all I could come up with basically was lists because that's like all I do in motherhood, I feel like, is make lists, grocery lists and to do [00:18:00] lists.

And that just felt like the format I could, I could manage at that time. And so I started making lists about motherhood, like Wazer was productive when my kid was at daycare today. Two things I say to my husband in the night. I mean, whatever. And then I needed to do something physical with my hands, so I would write the list on the computer, and then I would hand write them on these 5x7 cards, and then cut a pretty piece of decorative paper, the same size, and sew them together at the top with bookbinding thread, and then tie a ribbon to them, so they would hang.

So you'd have to lift the exterior, and underneath would be this gritty list. And I hung them. In public places around the bay area. I did it for three years. I did 150 of them and they're beautiful. Like they're, they're physically beautiful. Anyway, so one of them was called something like a street scene or something.

And that was this moment that I described in the first chapter of the book of this rage moment that I had with my kid that really, really scared me. It was the first moment I remember where I was like, I'm afraid of myself [00:19:00] a little bit. So I had this list and a lot of people responded to this list. The list got a big response.

And so that was my first moment of I can talk about this really scary thing and people know exactly what I'm talking about, which I didn't know that anyone- it was scary to put that list out. And then I wrote an essay. I elongated that list into this essay because I put the lists together. I made a book that never got published of these lists.

And then I added essays to them. So there's like 10 essays for this book that lives on my hard drive. And one of those essays was the rage essay that got published in the New York Times called The Rage Mothers Don't Talk About. That's what they titled it. And I, it got into there because Jessica Gross, who was, she was the lead editor of, of the parenting section.

It was a new section. And she had put a call out, basically being like, I'm looking for the hard stories of motherhood. And I saw that and I was like, I have a hard story [00:20:00] and got it into her hands. And she published it. And basically the rest is history on that, that essay is basically the reason why I have this book.

[00:20:10] **Kaitlin:** Here's a hard question, or maybe not. Are there any other lists or essays that, like you said, this one was published and that was the book? Is there something else that you're like, Oh, I wish that one. Could I write about that?

[00:20:24] **Minna:** At some point, there's part of me that's like, Oh, I should probably go back to those essays and edit them and try and make them their best version and try and publish them because I think they're all really good.

But no, I don't have another one that I wish I wrote a book about that topic. I didn't want to write a book about this topic. It's just, I wrote a whole book about all of motherhood. I didn't write Mom Rage. I didn't have some burning desire to write a mom rage book, but it seemed that from the response I got from the New York Times [00:21:00] pieces, it seemed that this was the book that the world needed.

And it did seem like, well, if someone's going to write the book, it might as well be me.

[00:21:21] **Kaitlin:** Your essay came out before the pandemic, right?

[00:21:24] **Minna:** It came out before the pandemic and then was republished during the pandemic. And

[00:21:30] **Kaitlin:** I think people were at their bare minimum in motherhood and Yeah. Feeling the big feelings even more so.

[00:21:40] **Minna:** For sure. And then I started getting all of these emails from moms in the pandemic, even though the essay had been published like six months before.

And so then I realized that mom rage was at a peak because of the pandemic. And so then I pitched New York Times Parenting, we need to write about mom rage in a pandemic. Like this is a [00:22:00] whole nother thing. And so that's how the second piece in the New York Times came about. Gotcha. Okay.

[00:22:05] **Kaitlin:** Yeah.

[00:22:06] **Minna:** Interesting. Yeah. It was sort of simultaneous. Like, I started getting all these, these emails and then they just republished the same article. Gotcha. Okay. They republished it in April and then in July I published an, not an essay, but a reported article where I interviewed people about what their experience was like with MomRage in a pandemic.

So they're separate things. Gotcha.

[00:22:27] **Kaitlin:** And then when did the book contract come about?

[00:22:31] **Minna:** Almost immediately after the July, 2020 reported article in the New York Times agents started reaching out to me saying, do you want to write a book? And then I ended up picking one who I really liked and I felt like understood exactly what I was doing and writing about.

And we worked on the proposal for six months and then in the beginning of 2021 we sent out the proposal and then by that [00:23:00] spring we had a deal with Seal Press. So then you wrote it within...I had one year to write that book. No. And I definitely took longer than that. I took more like two years or no.

Really? No. I really started in June 2021, and I turned in the final draft December 2022. So a year and a half. OK. I wrote the book in a year and a half.

[00:23:27] **Kaitlin:** That's really impressive. It's a lot. All the interviews of the individuals that you Site in the year and you felt yeah,

[00:23:36] **Minna:** that's a lot. It was a lot.

I was crazy. I've been crazy. I like stopped parenting. I was

[00:23:42] **Kaitlin:** gonna say and your children were how old?

[00:23:45] **Minna:** My daughter was three when the pandemic started. She was in preschool. Okay,

[00:23:50] **Kaitlin:** how old are

[00:23:51] **Minna:** they now? Now they are six and ten. They're school aged. Okay. Yeah, but it was a lot And I definitely stepped down from being the

primary [00:24:00] parent during writing this book Hmm.

Well,

[00:24:04] **Kaitlin:** You were writing a book. That's right. You were doing outside of the homework, and so. It was work that needed your attention at that time, in a different way. Yeah. You mentioned this in the book about other models for motherhood outside of the US. So for example, you talk about Iceland and the red stockings, which I absolutely loved because I actually have this personal connection to Iceland.

So I had Icelandic au pairs as a kid and I always just was fascinated by Iceland having a female president, for example, like when I was like, wait, what? This is awesome. It felt like this model of. Humanity that was different and also in Iceland, I don't know if you know this, I was also really fascinated that families tend to form and the family structure is very, in some ways different than it is here in that people tend to partner and have a child very young, I'd [00:25:00] say, compared to what is the average even in the US, probably around, I don't know what their average is, but 20, 21, 22, didn't get married.

and would either get married to that partner later or may not stay with that partner. And interestingly, I don't know if you say it in this book or if I saw it elsewhere, that the divorce rate in Iceland is quite low. Although I was talking to, we actually have an Icelandic friend here right now with us for a few months, and I was talking to her about it.

And I was like, but maybe that's not accurate because maybe people just don't get married. So then the divorce, do you see what I'm saying for the divorce rate wouldn't catch? That's not from my book. Yeah, I know. Okay. Well, anyways, I'm really curious also when we look at those structural components to look at other societies and say, how does this impact the individual experiences of motherhood when you see in your work that felt hopeful?

Are there ways that we can model that in the U. S.? Are there lessons we can draw, and what does that look like? Or is that not applicable [00:26:00] in American society?

[00:26:01] **Minna:** I don't talk about Iceland in terms of the ways, like the example of the mother, in terms of the structure of the family. I was, like, specifically talking about this, the Women's Day off strike.

Mm hmm. The examples I use of other countries are mostly indigenous communities, I think. Mm. And in America, I think it's different just because it's a very different society here. In America, I think that we do have different communities that look at motherhood outside of the mainstream, or deal with motherhood outside of the mainstream.

And the three that I briefly highlight in the book are queer families, black families, and polyamorous families. And not necessarily that any of those three... Have a different motherhood structure, but that it's more common. Mm hmm based on their histories and some of it is like resiliency from oppression And some of it is culture [00:27:00] and in the polyamorous woman that I interviewed It was about just having more actually with all of them.

It's about- it's really about having more support, right? There's- the mother can be less primary because there's so many other support people to help hold and take care of the children. If you, like, take the mother off the throne as THE nurturer, then there's room for grandma and auntie and best friend and whoever.

Boyfriend and boyfriend's wife. Mm

[00:27:30] **Kaitlin:** hmm. And as you're saying that, I was thinking that, and I think it's underlying what you're saying, is that mother as a title, and you even talk about this a little bit in your book, especially in the US, implies a particular relationship and responsibility where mothering as a verb Yeah.

It's something that others can do. And you can form really important attachments as a child to other caregivers that are giving you something that your own, whether it's biological, foster, adoptive, or whatever reason, [00:28:00] the person that you call mother couldn't give you, and that's okay that that person can't give you that.

Right. But yeah, I love that moment in the book when you talk about, I think you're at the doctor's office or something. And. They say, mom, and you're like, what? And you're only mom. I have a dentist that calls and always calls like, Oh, hey mom. And I'm just like, I have a name. Like you have my name. Why are you?

It's right there. Why are you even assuming? You're assuming that I'm the mother of that child, but you don't just because I'm the parent number one or contact number one.

[00:28:29] **Minna:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think I talked about it in the prologue because I'm talking about gender and how I'm thinking about gender and who this book is for.

And I'm, yeah, I'm saying that mothering is about, it's about the work and that anyone can actually mother, but also that gender is not divorced from mom rage, that there is this misogyny and sexism part that makes mom rage happen. And so I use she, her pronouns in the book, even though I'm talking to anyone.

Who mothers [00:29:00] whether that's a grandmother or someone who's masculine identified or non binary Yeah. Mm hmm

[00:29:06] **Kaitlin:** a couple months ago. I interviewed a Professor at Notre Dame who wrote a book a lot about aloe parenting and animal societies. So her name is Darsha Narvaez and prior to reading your book, but also Early on in my motherhood journey, I read a lot of books that looked at communal care that looked at alloparenting and I think that's why that helped to give me the foundation of this rage that I feel is because this isn't even biologically how we are meant to raise children, right?

So when I took that off of my back, it helped me to. Not necessarily not feel that rage in that moment, but also just not beat myself up in the work that you were talking about in your book, right? About that shame spiral and about how. We feel when we feel alone in

[00:29:55] **Minna:** that rage. Yeah. And we get so isolated in America because there's so [00:30:00] much emphasis on the nuclear family.

And then if you're in a nuclear family and there's only two of you and one of them, especially in different sex relationships, if one of them is a father, the labor just falls on you and you're just so isolated. The way that we do family in America, it not only puts all the labor on the mom, but it puts all the labor on the mom and she's alone.

Mm hmm. Yeah.

[00:30:21] **Kaitlin:** As our friend, Patty, would say, why do you think that is? We know why that is.

[00:30:28] **Minna:** Who does that serve? Right.

[00:30:44] **Kaitlin:** I hate to put this on you, but what is the future of this work? This isn't a mom rage moment. This is something that has lived. In different iterations throughout history, but in this moment, what is the future in the U. S.? What do you see as possible? [00:31:00] What do you see as problematic? You know,

[00:31:02] **Minna:** I try to also look at the past with some hope when policies have been passed and then we lost them that to not look at it as everything is going down the tubes for abortion or during World War II when there were all of these government funded daycares and nurseries So that the women could work in factories and they were like six days a week all day long.

And they fed the children and it was like a few dollars a day. And also with Biden's build back better plan and the child tax credit, even though these have been wins and then became losses because we lost them, they're blueprints. That we still get to use for how to do it or how to do it better moving forward.

If it's been done, it means it can be done again. And so I think it's both, we need all these policies and I think we're getting closer. I feel like the conversation around motherhood is so much more present and it's possible that that's because I'm a mother and [00:32:00] I'm keyed into it, but I don't think so.

In terms of family leave and paid family leave, I just feel like that is a fight. Like the fact that Senator Warren, that was like one of her platforms was around family leave and preschool. I just feel like it's happening and it's happening slowly. It's happening state by state, but that's how things happen in America is they happen state by state and then they go federal and universal child care is happening state by state.

It's slow, but it's happening. And so. Um, I think that we are on a slow but positive upwards trajectory around some mother care policies like paid family leave and universal preschool. But I also think that like Iceland's Women's Day Off, we also have an incredible amount of power and we could be using it in different ways if we figured out how to organize ourselves.

In that day, I remember reading about it and just being so amazed because every woman said, I'm not going to work that day [00:33:00] and I'm not taking care of the children. And they left the house. And I think I write it in the book that the men went to work and they had to take the children because there was nobody to watch the children.

There was no school. The teachers weren't teaching. And on the news reports, you could hear the kids yammering and running around in the background. Because there was nothing, like, where were the kids going to go? They had to go with the dad to work. And I just think, we could just say no. I mean, it's more complicated than that, and there's definitely a lot of class issues around like, I can't take the day off my job.

But if there was a great organizing effort, I just feel like we have an immense amount of power.

[00:33:35] **Kaitlin:** I've seen attempts at that via social media. I understand some of the structural constraints, but as a whole, in terms of those who have the privileges and abilities to say no, is there something that's just so individualistic in this country that we just Why is it

[00:33:50] **Minna:** not happening?

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I don't know. I think it's very hard to do that. I think it can happen. I think it will happen. I, there's also so many people doing. [00:34:00] And organizations that are already doing this work, like the national domestic workers Alliance, because we're talking about motherhood, but then there's also all of the domestic workers that are doing the same invisible in home labor and care work that are mostly women of color and immigrants who are getting paid such a little amount of money.

And it's the same fight. It's just about recognizing and taking care of. are people who are doing care work. And so they're doing amazing work. There are organizations who are doing the work. I just, I think it's a slow moving process.

[00:34:34] **Kaitlin:** Well, thank you for giving me some hope, because I often feel really frustrated and I feel like, yeah, it's hard to see that incremental change, but you're right, it is there.

Even in California, here in the Bay, my child has been able to benefit from free TK. Right. Yes. It's not all child care, but it's that first step, like you said.

[00:34:54] **Minna:** Right. In California, four year olds. It's slowly moving where every year, three months earlier of [00:35:00] your birthday, you get to go if you're four. My daughter missed it, but, but yeah, it is, it is happening.

It is slowly happening for sure. And it's also happening in the home generationally. If I look at the sort of work. This, that my husband does in the

home, it, and even though I'm very, very close with my father, he is an amazing father and incredibly loving and he did the laundry. That was his job and he did the trash and he did so much more, I'm sure, but he never cooked a day in his life.

When I look at my home versus the one I grew up with in terms of gender and labor, it was much more equal in my home than it was in the one I grew up in. And I think that that's not a small thing. Because we're modeling that for the next generation, like, it is, labor is happening. And I don't think that that's happening necessarily across the country as, like, everyone's doing that, but I do think that there's change.

[00:35:51] **Kaitlin:** Mm hmm. And I think, to your point though, I'm curious about, and you talk about it in the book too, but about the invisible labor that your partner is [00:36:00] doing that I'm guessing that generations before did not happen in those heteronormative relationships. I think that's critical too. And I think that's the push where even I personally have to do a lot of work to ensure that to happen in my relationship, because for some reason that right, that's the most uncomfortable space.

The visible labor is, I feel like easier

[00:36:21] **Minna:** for a partner. Yeah, I just had an interesting conversation this morning. I was asking, does our son need to bring his cello home? Because his cello's at school. And, I mean, he has, he barely, he didn't practice his cello all summer. I don't think he actually cares that much about it.

And, I mean, he's in fifth grade, like, I don't care that much about it either. And, he can do whatever he wants in my mind. But, my husband was like, yeah, he has to bring it home. They said in the email that he has to practice two to three times a week. And I go, what email? And I go, I didn't get an email. And he was like, if I was you, you would be saying, why aren't you getting the emails?[00:37:00]

And I go, well, I do want to know that. Why am I not getting the emails? Can you forward it to me? And then I'll ask to be put on the email. Or do you just want to do the labor of every time you get an email telling me what the email says, like I gave him the choice. Cause that's how it's usually flipped, right?

I usually tell him what the email says. And he was like, I don't want to do that. And I was like, great, we'll forward me the email and I'll get myself on the list. But it was just so interesting to have it flipped for him to have the info and me

to not have the info. And I felt like even though it's just this tiniest moment in time, it is indicative of the ways that our marriage and labor split has shifted over the last few years.

[00:37:44] **Kaitlin:** Yeah, and you highlight this in the book a lot, but it's so exhausting, as I'm sure many listeners will agree, to hold all of that. The invisible labor is, for me, is just the part that's so exhausting. It's the thinking, it's the planning, it's the lists, as you [00:38:00] say. So how to shift that, I think, is really critical.

To me, I feel like that's even more critical than the laundry or the... Trash or the cooking. It's that constant running.

[00:38:12] **Minna:** Who's thinking about three months ahead? And the doctor and summer

[00:38:15] **Kaitlin:** camp and the Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. And the signups and the this. And do they have that and did they bring the jacket or did they not?

Do they have the emergency kit? Who signed the forms? Did they do the vaccines? Like it could go on, right, right.

[00:38:26] **Minna:** Is their name in their sweatshirt? Did they, did you remind them to ask the guy at the bus about his sweatshirt that he left there yesterday? Right.

[00:38:33] **Kaitlin:** Sometimes I'm just like, I'm not doing, I'm just not gonna do it.

I'm just not gonna do it and see what happens. But then there are also the things that you can't not do because they're unsafe, right? So it's the balance of like what are the things that you could not do and get away with and what are the things you cannot do and... Right, but it's

[00:38:46] **Minna:** complicated because if you say I'm not going to do it, you have to be okay with it not getting done.

Right. Or not getting done to your satisfaction. Right,

[00:38:54] **Kaitlin:** yeah. I know you talk in the book about parenting a child with sensory processing [00:39:00] disorder, about parenting neurodivergent

children. If you could talk a little bit more about that, because obviously there's a lot of interplay with the rage, but also with support and with structures and with society's support for neurodivergent children in general.

So I was curious about how you decided also to include that. I know obviously it's memoir, but how to do that appropriately in this book as

[00:39:19] **Minna:** well. Yeah, it felt super important to include it because I felt like a lot of my rage was related to it to some degree because I was just so flabbergasted at my kids behavior and not knowing how to handle it and feeling incredibly unprepared for like How do I deal with these behaviors that I don't understand in any way?

and two it was just the total societal lack of support around it. He was kicked out of preschool after preschool and no one said Hey, you should get this kid evaluated. There might be something else going on here. Nobody said that to me. It didn't occur to me. , and then just like, [00:40:00] what a blind path. I felt like I was on.

Mm. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know, okay, I have to get him evaluated. I didn't know that I could actually have the school evaluate him starting at age three. The public school can evaluate your kid for an IEP. And if they get it, then they can go to public preschool run by a special ed teacher. I just think of how many thousands of dollars we could have saved and how he could have been getting support so many years earlier.

It's just mind boggling. And then just navigating the public school system and the IEPs and then health insurance. Like part of my rage was how much time it took. I was taking him to so many specialists. I was getting him evaluated by so many people and I was on the phone with health insurance fighting for them to cover these specialists for what felt like half my day, every day for two years, it was so maddening.

And I just felt like. My problem is the problem of the [00:41:00] wealthy. Mm-hmm. , because who has time to do that? Mm-hmm. I was lucky that my job was mothering and writing and I could just not write, right? Mm-hmm. , like I could just throw my career away for a couple years and focus on getting him the care he needed, but it was, it makes me mad now to talk about it.

Mm-hmm. , how there's no setup for parents trying to get support for their kids if they're not neurotypical.

[00:41:23] **Kaitlin:** As you were talking, I just thought how it, as in all things in capitalist societies, falls on the individual to, to manage, or it's your, it's your fault. We as a society, as a community, don't say, how can we support you?

How can Um, whether it's that preschool saying, gosh, this doesn't feel right. What can I do to provide the accurate resources for

[00:41:46] **Minna:** you? Right. Motherhood is so much labor in general. And so this is this added unbelievable amount of labor. Once my son got into public school, into elementary school, I also noticed, which I read about in the [00:42:00] book about the PTA and room parents, that all the people doing that labor.

Also had kids who they felt like needed extra support. One mom is the mom of Asian kids and it was during the pandemic and there was all this racism about the coronavirus during that time. And so it was about getting structures in place when racist comments get said, like how does the school district handle this?

So she was taking care of her kids who the society wasn't supporting. And then another one was a mom of a son who has dyslexia. And so she's on the PTA and it's all about literacy programs. Everyone is just, I just feel like moms are doing. So much work because the society has disinvested from families.

That's my spiel.

[00:42:40] **Kaitlin:** And yet there's hope. And yet

[00:42:43] **Minna:** there's hope. Cause I'm like, where's the hope? Yeah. My kid is getting, I don't know, I guess is getting the support he needs. And, but I, it is really, it is really on parents. It is just, yeah, [00:43:00] but, but the awareness about neurodivergence and all of it is much more than it was 10 years ago.

[00:43:05] **Kaitlin:** So right, right. And being able to name that and then also to support and to have a child that can also name that. And also, in some ways, I think there's such more celebration of neurodivergence and hopefully Allows children going through that experience to not, I think when we grew up, especially there was such a behaviorist approach to childcare and to education that that shift can.

Look at children as individuals in a much different way, right? It's very hard to behave as a child in structures that are not at all humane to normal childhood development.

[00:43:45] **Minna:** That aren't set up for you and with people who don't understand you. Right. Yeah. And I think there's a hyper vigilance that I experienced for a very long time of are they treating him right?

Like, do they understand him? Is this being seen as a [00:44:00] behavior issue? Is it a behavior issue? Is it that? It's a lot to navigate. Mm hmm.

[00:44:04] **Kaitlin:** Mm hmm. Yeah, but I think similar in that sense to the basement in the kitchen metaphor in Mom Rage, I think there's so much of that in Neurodivergence, but even in education, who is that individual?

What do they take with them into that moment that is not about, Oh, your kid isn't sitting still at circle time, right? But that has a lot of other factors that are leading to that moment of the expectation of even having to sit still that's whatever it is.

[00:44:32] **Minna:** Totally. Totally They're like your kid is hiding under the train table every time it's circle time.

Oh Why do you think that is? I mean, I didn't know but now I know It was so overwhelming when everyone coming circle and mill around and there was so much noise and he was just like, ah

[00:44:47] **Kaitlin:** Yeah, yeah Yeah. I had my daughter in an environment that I later realized was just not a good place for her. And once we switched, her whole demeanor changed.

It was just like, Oh, okay. Environment does [00:45:00] play a role, especially for certain children who can't shift. They need a different structure or setting. You quote early on in the book, a Rebecca Solnit quote, she wrote, liberation is always in part a storytelling process, breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories.

I'd love to hear about that and especially in your vulnerability in this process because I found that really compelling and as you sit with this book as it is about to come out in the world and be such a public piece, how are you feeling?

[00:45:37] **Minna:** When you said that I got goosebumps, I'm mostly feeling really excited.

I'm not thinking about it too much because I don't want to be disappointed. I think, I think as a writer, who's having a first book come out, it's like, will anybody read it? Will anybody care? But I feel very excited for [00:46:00] people to hear the stories and to feel some freedom or empowerment to either tell their own story or make some changes in their lives.

And I think that I love that quote, because I do think that storytelling is liberatory, or has the potential anyway to be liberatory. And I think that the work I do, my writing is creative writing, I really do identify as a creative writer. But I think this book is particularly political, and so in my best case scenario, this book is a piece of liberation.

And I hope it gets seen that way. How was

[00:46:38] **Kaitlin:** it for you? Individually, how did it liberate you if you were to frame it in that way?

[00:46:44] **Minna:** When I wrote that first essay, I didn't even have the societal overlay piece in my head. I didn't even understand that mom rage was anything besides me being terrible. So , I feel like I [00:47:00] have liberated myself along with the help of all of the mothers I've talked to, that their stories really have helped to make me understand that this is.

just so, so, so much bigger than my little self and my little house that there's this huge thing happening. And so I feel like writing the book, not completely because I think I naturally lean towards self hatred, but it has freed me in many ways from even more.

[00:47:32] **Kaitlin:** Yeah. So do I dare ask what's next? Do you want to think that far ahead yet?

[00:47:38] **Minna:** No, I know what's next. I just haven't, I feel like I just can't get there because my head is so in this book and I'm just, I think hopefully in a couple months I'll get back to it, but the next book is a novel actually. I'm going to try my hand at fiction and it is a very sexy novel. Good. Yeah. And, and I thought the character [00:48:00] wasn't going to be a mom for a long time, but I think she has to be.

I don't know how to write it if it's not a mom. So I think she'll Yeah.

[00:48:06] **Kaitlin:** Yeah. Well, fun. Yeah. Awesome. Well, thank you, Minna. And I'm so excited that when this conversation comes out, listeners can become

readers and become supporters. So is there anything specifically that you want to share in terms of how to connect or what resources you would offer to a listener?

[00:48:27] **Minna:** Oh, sure. You should buy the book. It's anywhere you want. I mean, I did the audio book. So I would also for any listeners who prefer to listen, since you're listening to this podcast, I recommend the audio book as well. And you can find me on Instagram @ my full name, Minadubin. Yeah, that's it. Awesome. I'm happy to do your book clubs and whatever.

Contact me. Info's on the website, minadubin.com.

[00:48:51] **Kaitlin:** Oh, fun. Yeah, I like that. Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Minna. Yeah, thank

[00:48:56] **Minna:** you.[00:49:00]