

Navigating
change

Seeing beauty

Finding joy

*Susanna Tan
Singapore*

**I CAN DO IT
WITH A
BROKEN
HEART**

I CAN DO IT
with a
Broken
Heart







This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Dutiful wives and
homemakers

Convent schools

Educated but not
encouraged to work

The 1960s – pivotal shift in the role of women

**WE CAN DO ANYTHING,
RIGHT BARBIE?**

"My whole philosophy of Barbie was that, through the doll, the girl could be anything she wanted to be. Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices."

- RUTH HANDLER, BARBIE CREATOR

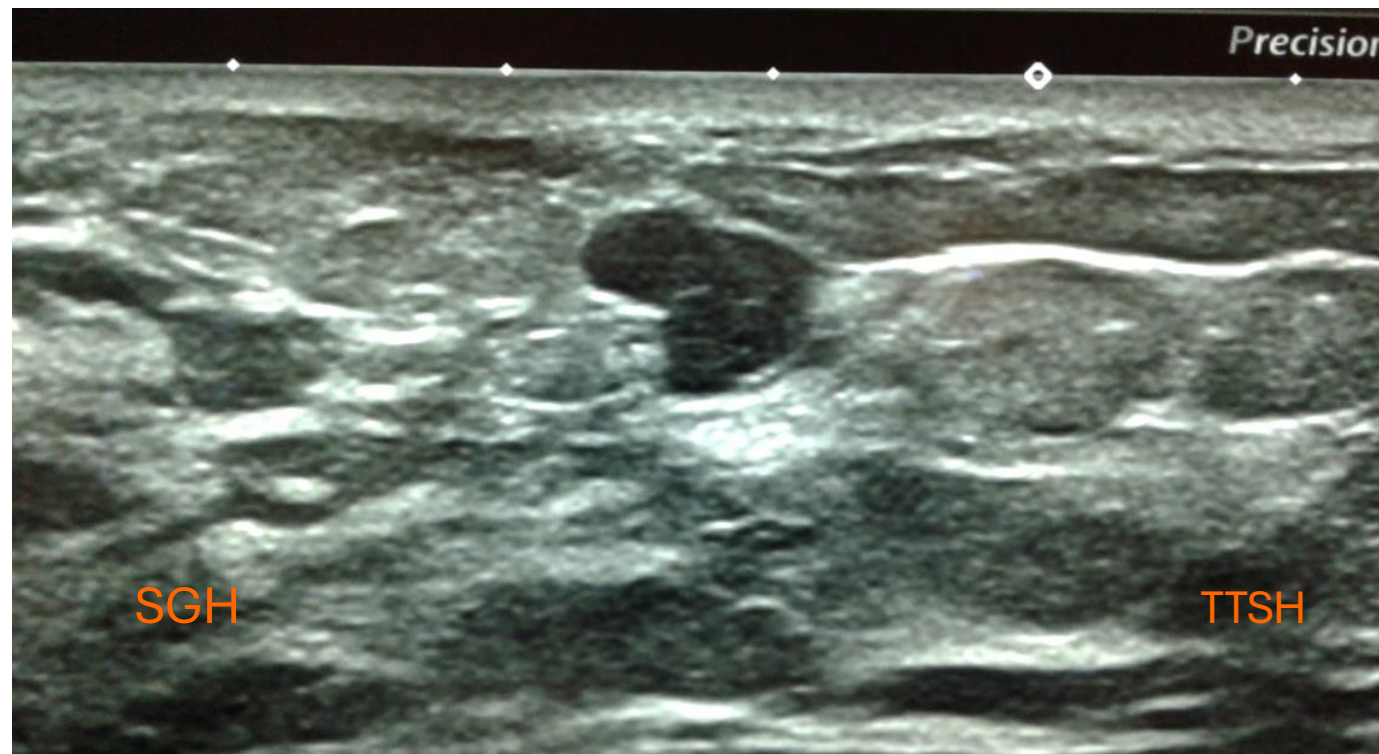
- feminist movement
- greater education
- workplace acceptance
- contraceptive access
- legal and political moves

Singapore medical
school quota
for women (1979-2003):

1/3

I can do it

Radiology



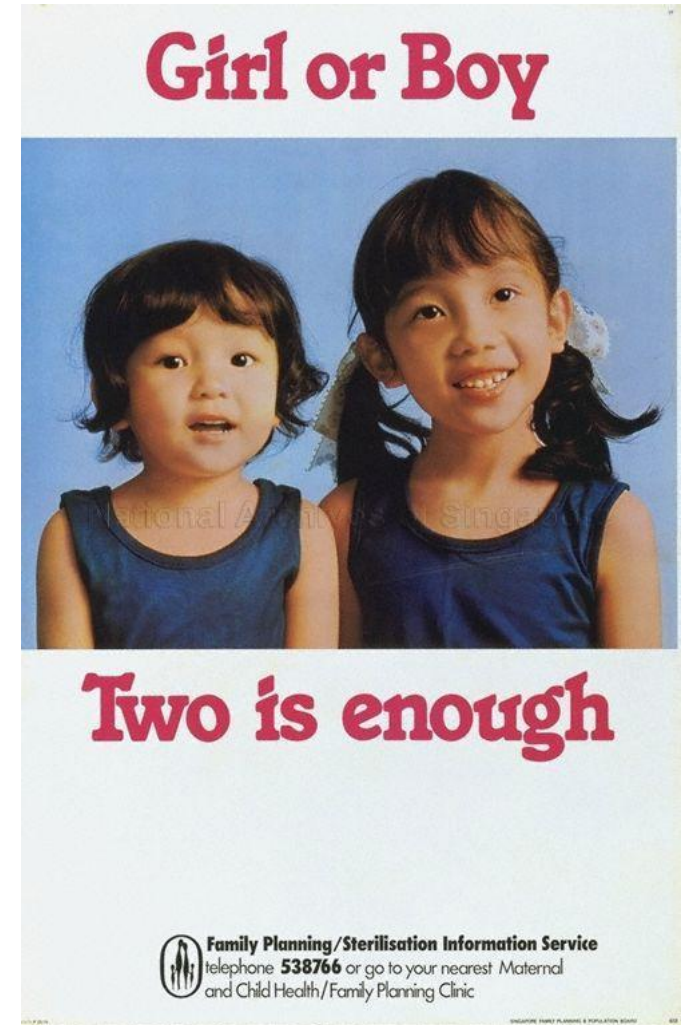


Further study ...

Back in Singapore

- I can do it
- Growing ultrasound
- Perhaps I can't...

Singapore's
family planning
policies
till 1987



...and then
there were 4





The Straits Times

March 1, 2026

“There is safety in walking the standard path, but ... the detours of my life have shown me the joy that often hides in plain sight, just off the beaten track.

My time is precious. It doesn't always have to be productive. It just has to be joyful.”

FINDING
Joy

Finding Joy is an Opinion series about the things that bring us satisfaction, fulfilment and meaning. If you have a submission with pictures or videos to share, e-mail us at stopinion@sph.com.sg.

I can do it...

- ‘Women hold up half the sky’ (Mao Tse-tung)¹
- Removal of medical school quota²
- Today, women make up about 33% of radiologists in Singapore
- ‘Sandwich’ generation
- A ‘super-aged’ society^{*}

¹ Gan YH, Archuleta S. Holding up half the sky: women in Singapore medicine. [accessed 15 April 2026]. <https://www.sma.org.sg/news/2020/February/holding-up-half-the-sky-women-in-singapore-medicine>

² Evelyn Lai Ming Ho. Women and the Road to Radiology Leadership: An Asian Perspective.[accessed 15 April 2026]. <https://doi.org/10.3348/kjr.2025.0140>

^{*} United Nations/WHO definition : > 20% aged 65 years and older

To all of you

...

