

dear friends & family,

this year was marked by significant global events, which gave us new perspective. more than ever, we feel lucky to have each of you in our lives, as part of our community.

we selected "ikigai" as our guiding theme for the year, a japanese concept that represents one's reason for being and sense of purpose in life. this theme was reinforced in our [summer trip to japan](#), where we found many aspects of the culture that resonated with us and provided a lens to reflect on 2023.

we'd love to hear about the moments that made your year special. please reach out!

with love,

♥ mansi + sush + niam

***kaizen*** means "continuous improvement." it is a philosophy that encourages constant, incremental improvements in all aspects of life.

this year, we made a conscious effort to invest in ourselves. although having a kid has been even more fulfilling than we could have imagined, it's also been challenging in some ways. we finally decided to try physical therapy — mansi, for pelvic floor recovery, and sush, for back and neck pain. we also committed to couple's therapy, exploring ways in which becoming parents had transformed our relationship.

on a long-ish drive from sacramento to san francisco, we defined the shared values that are most important to us as we raise niam. these include: human connection, joy, awe, patience, persistence, and open-mindedness.

***omotenashi*** captures the japanese approach to hospitality. it means providing service with great respect and utmost care.

we love to host, and fortunately, we had a lot to celebrate! we kicked off the year with a [weekend full of surprises](#) for \*mona's 60th birthday and closed it with a [nature-themed event](#) for \*\*malika and \*\*\*vivek's engagement. we hosted a ["corporate" game night](#) and a [halloween costume party](#) for sush's team. and at least *some* of our jokes landed when we co-mc'ed a cousin's wedding reception, and we're now available for 2024 gigs... wink, wink malika. but really, niam stole the show with [his dance moves](#).

\*mona = mansi's mom

\*\*malika = sush's sister

\*\*\*vivek = our now brother-in-law (welcome to the family!)

***kotodama*** literally means "the spirit of words," reflecting the deep respect for language in japanese culture.

large language models became mainstream, and we fully embraced our chatgpt subscription. we're bullish on how generative ai can reshape the way we work and live. sush's top questions this year were:

- *what are good ways to challenge two year olds that are interested in puzzles, music and dancing?*
- *can you please analyze my journal and tell me what you think of me? don't hold back.*
- *is larry david like the character he plays?*
- *are black holes holes?*

mansi has always been a wordophile... and after multiple rejections, she finally got accepted to publish a crossword puzzle in the new york times... keep an eye out for her friday grid to be released in 2024! and we're starting to see niam's personality blossom through language. his vocabulary has exploded from "mama" to an adorable mix of english, hindi, telugu, gujarati, and lot of niam-ese. his favorite word this year? "purple" — which is what he calls his [purple-colored fruit smoothies](#), lovingly made over facetime with his uncle neil.

***ikigai*** refers to one's sense of purpose in life. it's the intersection of what you love, what you are good at, and what the world needs.

this year, mansi embarked on an exciting new chapter with [parentaly](#), where she's passionately forging a better working environment for new parents. it's a role that not only aligns with her professional skills but also resonates deeply with her personal values.

our engagement with \*\*\*\*minds matter also evolved. after a decade of hands-on mentoring and program management, we transitioned to more strategic roles. mansi joined the board of minds matter nyc, while sushil assumed an affectionate and impactful position as a "board hubby."

sushil's journey with [liink](#) also reached new heights this year, and he's excited about the continued evolution of his career.

\*\*\*\*minds matter empowers low-income, high-achieving students to attend college and pursue their career ambitions

***kansha*** is a sense of gratitude and appreciation. it's about recognizing and being thankful for the good in one's life and can be a source of deep joy and contentment.

2023 took us to many places, but we're especially grateful for the [time we had as a family in our apartment](#), most days between 6pm and 7:30pm. this is when niam, brimming with energy, becomes the center of our world, and we hit pause at work. whether we're playing hide and seek, teaching niam to cook, picking up packages, cozying up with some books, or having impromptu dance parties, these moments with him are pure joy. side note: we may have [turned niam into a swiftie](#)...

stepping back, this year has reinforced a valuable lesson: through the inevitable ups and downs of life and the ever-changing global landscape, our friends and family are a steadfast pillar of support. for this unwavering strength and love, we are so grateful. thank you!

a few of our favorites from this year:

- bollywood film: [rocky aur rani](#)
- thought starter: [do what you love](#)
- vegan yogurt: [cocojune](#)
- grocery service: [weeee!](#)
- wfh clothing: [vuori sweatpants](#)
- infant gift: [baby sangeet](#)
- “diaper” bag: [cotopaxi tasra 16l](#)
- software product: [letterloop](#)
- transport mode: [east river ferry](#)
- cultural event: [biophony soundgarden](#)

