

## **Submission for Critical Dietetics Conference**

### **Submitted as an individual paper**

“You and your ideas matter”: Working with students toward social justice

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Once upon a time, one of my brothers told me, “The *problem* with you, is you actually think you can change the world”. Recently, another brother advised that I shouldn’t work so hard, and focus on what matters in life. Turns out what matters to me is, through my work, moving toward social justice. I bring this ethos to my role as a facilitator of learning, frequently encouraging students that the world and a profession where people practice in support of social justice needs their energy, ideas, and empathy. I have reflected on how I came to this perspective since I was not socialized to believe I mattered nor that I could have influence. I believe this has not been through traditional ‘mentoring’ by people rather, it has to do with questioning life experiences including expectations of marriage, motherhood, juggling career and all else, grief, loss. This journey has also led me to question the limited view of dietetics I was taught, and what is considered professional (i.e., non-emotive) behaviour. This session will focus on the important role we have to play with each other in mentoring a professionalism that embraces emotionality and empathy as a step toward social justice.