

MY LOVE OF COOKING...

By Denise Cowburn-Levy



Food has always been a BIG thing in our family – we celebrate everything and as often as possible. Life is too short not to, and we are so blessed to live an abundant life.

Food allows me to show love for others in an easy way, a physical manifestation of what I can't always put into words. It is my language of love, personal and from my heart, and it is very powerful. The communal preparation and eating of food brings people together, and I find that this can dissolve any tensions that may be going on in the family. Our kitchen has always been the heart of the home.

What fascinates me over and over again is the ability of food and wine to heighten any experience and to bring people together. No matter how tiring your day has been, how many things you had to deal with, the stress and the pressure, when you grab that knife, pull out a wooden board and begin to chop, something happens.

We become grounded and focused, as when we have a sharp knife in our hand, or we are tasting a sauce to see exactly what it needs to make it perfect, we have to be very present, something

we all strive for in our hectic lives. For a short while, the outside world ceases to exist, and we leave anything that was bothering us way behind.

This gathering of the clan around the table is a tradition that was clearly born many generations ago. Food memories are powerful, and a mere whiff of cinnamon and warm spices can transport me back in a sec to another time and place. I see myself standing on a stool, "helping" Mom with the Christmas cake at that kitchen table, long wooden spoon in hand and small fingers dipping surreptitiously into the batter whenever I thought she wasn't looking.

When I see the freshest of produce glistening on the market shelves, and as I walk through aroma filled spice markets, with the splashes of bright colours and gorgeous textures, intuitively I start to compose a symphony in my head. Like a conductor, I cue in the various ingredients, carefully chosen, in perfect order and sequence, and a masterpiece is created.

I just had a profound realization....I am NOT a cook, I am a composer. Or am I a conductor? My instruments are the different ingredients I choose with care to put into the dish. I feel like a sorceress, brewing a magic potion, or a perhaps a magician with a wand in hand, as I call in the next ingredient to add into the mix, in the perfect timing, to create a balanced and harmonious melody of a meal.

Then there is the importance of the setting of THE TABLE, the ritual and the ceremony attached to eating consciously. Make it special, make it beautiful. Keep it simple, or go all out glamour... be creative, play! I am very much for making this an occasion where possible.

Now I encourage you to head for the kitchen, have some fun and make that magic happen!

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