

# Graceful Living March, 2009

## *Note from Grace*

Last fall I wrote about the transitional seasons of spring and fall. We adjusted our diets then in order to withstand the cold of winter and now we are being called upon to begin modifying our warming diets in preparation for the heat of summer. My spirit seems to effortlessly move in this direction as my desire for more salads and cooling preparations move more to the forefront of my mind.

Please remember that these transitions are often accompanied by some detoxing symptoms that, in spite of being a nuisance, are short-lived and a sign that our bodies are ready to move forward in cooperation with the season. Allowing the body to discharge the accumulated waste from the precious season is one of the great boons of our existence and places us, once more, in harmony with the earth itself.

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## *Energetic Food Preparation*

Laura Esquivel wrote a wonderful book entitled, *Like Water for Chocolate* which most clearly approaches the subject of the “energy of cooking.” This delightful novel is about a family in Mexico that lived in accordance with the tradition of the youngest daughter being required to eschew love and marriage in favor of taking care of the mother until the mother’s demise. Tita, the youngest daughter in the book, of course, fell in love only to realize that it was for naught in order for her to fulfill her obligations to her mother.

Well, her true love, Pedro, came up with the bright idea that he would marry her sister in order to be in close proximity to Tita. As with tradition, the family all resided in the family compound together. Tita, being the cook in the family, was required to prepare the wedding feast and present the couple with their beautiful wedding cake. She measured and stirred according to directions, but there was one added ingredient to this magnificent cake...her anguish. As the wedding couple and their guests ate the beautiful cake, they were all filled with Tita's anguish and the party broke up with everyone feeling as horrible as Tita herself was feeling.

As the story moved on, with Tita still fulfilling her job as cook, Pedro one day came home with a bouquet of roses to thank the cook for her wonderful care. After Tita's mother had thrown out the flowers, Tita was able to salvage the petals and for their evening meal prepared quail with rose petal sauce. This dish also had extra ingredients. These ingredients included her overwhelming love and desire for Pedro. I won't go into detail as to the results of eating this meal, but, once, again, the partakers were filled with Tita's feelings of love and desire...and acted accordingly.

This book clearly exemplifies the amazing amount of power we have when preparing our meals. Not only are we called upon to make beneficial food choices, but we are reminded that whatever feelings and energy we bring to our preparation are going to be imparted to everyone that participates in the eating. In my mind, it is imperative that we *consciously* prepare our meals, much in the same way that we *consciously* direct our lives.

I extend this understanding to determine the kind of music that I allow myself to listen to while preparing food. Dr. Emoto, author of [The Hidden Messages in Water](#), clearly illustrates how different types of music affect us, both positively and negatively. The music

doesn't have to just be classical or spiritual, it merely needs to be positive in nature.

Though this is my common practice, I pay special attention when I'm preparing food for someone whose dis-ease has translated into the physical symptoms of disease. I clear myself before entering the kitchen and monitor my thoughts and feelings closely while accomplishing the actual preparation. I certainly want to infuse their food with the most pure and healing energy that I can muster.

If a person needs peace, I feel peace. If they need activating energy, I focus on that, with the idea that the energetic feelings accompany the corresponding food choices. This allows food preparation to move out of the realm of "chore" and into the realm of "meditation," perhaps benefiting me more than anyone. And isn't that the way of the Universe? Whatever we give is certainly what we are able to receive.

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#### MISO SOUP

There is no end to the ways that you can make miso soup. Traditionally eaten in Japan with seaweed and tofu, it has been embellished upon to reflect the eating preferences of many cultures. The darker misos are considered more strengthening (and warming) while the lighter ones are generally used in the summer months. I find the balance of vegetables and miso to be consistently rewarding; so, I most frequently prepare a vegetable soup that has the addition of miso paste to the broth.

Miso is a live food. It contains the lactobacillus bacteria, so necessary for proper intestinal functioning; as well as, active enzymes that also aid in the digestion of food. This accounts for the fact that the miso paste is added at the end of cooking. I make it a practice to turn off the heat *before* I add the miso. When reheating the soup, only bring it up to the boiling point. This is one time you want to keep the bugs alive.

Vary this recipe in any way that you desire.

Chop 1 or more of the following vegetables:

Onions	Carrots	Celery
Broccoli	Squash	Cauliflower
Cabbage	Kale	Daikon
Collards	Zucchini	Radish
Bok Choy	Turnips	Mushrooms
Garlic	Chinese Cabbage	
Snow Peas	Shallots	Leeks
	Ginger	Green Beans

Place vegetables in a sauce pan, cover them with water and bring them to a boil. Simmer for about 3 or 4 minutes. Turn off the heat.

Generally speaking, add one half teaspoon of miso paste, per cup of soup, and mix well, making sure the miso is thoroughly diluted. The amount of miso may be varied according to taste. It is good to remember that miso is fermented using salt; therefore, it is best to use a light hand when adding it to your soup.

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Just a reminder that I will be conducting a workshop on Nutrition for babies and children at Yoga Ananda Yoga and Wellness Center on Wednesday, March 11, 2009. For more information or to sign up, please call Yoga Ananda at 680-7344.

Also a reminder that Graceful Living is now preparing foods for twice-weekly pick-up. We use organic and locally grown ingredients whenever possible, filtered and energized water...and conscious preparation. If interested, please call Grace at 350-1541.

Have you visited our web site? It can be found at [www.gracejustiss.com](http://www.gracejustiss.com).