

Graceful Living November, 2008

Note From Grace

The advent of November ushers in one of the most delightful as well as stressful times of year. We all anticipate the fabulous repasts that holiday meals and parties provide, yet many of us move through this season feeling stressed and sometimes unhappy. We, at Graceful Living, hope that this issue can offer you some insight into one of the ways to alleviate some of these feelings. A little forethought can go a long way during this season, allowing you to enjoy it to its fullest while feeling healthy and happy at the same time.



THE SWEET LIFE

*Everye white will have its blacke,
And everye sweete its soure.*

- Thomas Percy, *Reliques--Sir Curline*

There have been many articles written concerning our need for inner peace and relaxation, but during this remarkable time of the year and history, even the most experienced “peace makers” are finding themselves challenged by the many factors that seem to have conspired to create just the opposite. Fortunately, we have many options available to us that can enhance this quest for a more stress-free life.

We know of the wonderful affects of such practices as yoga and meditation. We know that exercise can alleviate stress. We are aware that music, whether for listening, singing or dancing can

calm the most agitated spirit. We've been told to get a pet or a hobby, stop and smell the roses and imagine ourselves in a beautiful peaceful environment. With these wonderful ideas and practices, we can also assist our quest for calm by choosing our foods more carefully.

Our most favorite "food," especially during the holiday season, is, of course, sugar. It's quite a stretch to call sugar a food. In fact, the molecular structure of white sugar so closely resembles the structure of cocaine that I feel it's much less of a stretch to call it a drug. My own experience has certainly lent credibility to this because of the compulsion to eat "another cookie" or even an entire box of cookies, once the first one has been consumed. The wonderful sweet taste that we all enjoy is the only taste that we're born with and it appears that we spend the rest of our lives trying to satisfy it. Surely, taste is a factor here but we can see that there is more at work than just deliciousness.

Since cane sugar is considered a simple sugar, upon consumption the pancreas is kicked into immediate action, pumping out insulin in order to utilize the sugar. Unfortunately, long after the sugar is assimilated, the pancreas keeps producing insulin, creating what is known as the "sugar blues" or low blood sugar. When this occurs, the natural response is, of course, to eat more sugar, and the cycle continues.

Blood sugar fluctuations can create a myriad of symptoms ranging from anxiety and panic attacks to nausea and a lack of energy. When in the throes of the sugar blues, stress becomes more pronounced, thinking less clear and the increase of aches and pains.

Now, I'm not going to suggest that during this joyful time of year that you never enjoy holiday treats. It simply would be best to couple them with foods that are more substantial and perhaps

savory in nature. If you know that you are going to an event offering some sweet tasty morsels, it would be beneficial for you to ground yourself with perhaps some whole grain, which provides the balance of complex sugars, and even some vegetables to provide an alkalizing effect to counteract the acidic reaction that occurs from eating grains and sugars.

Though raw, unrefined cane sugar is certainly a treat, it has not been refined to the point of being a drug. When doing your own baking you can be sure that unrefined sugar accomplishes the same enjoyment as the refined. It can be used in all of your tried and true recipes with no noticeable difference in the finished product.

Though simple in nature maple syrup and raw honey can also provide the necessary sweetness that you are looking for. Yes, there would need to be an adjustment between the liquid and dry ingredients, but many a recipe has been altered to incorporate these liquid sweeteners

You may even decide to temper the simple sugar affects by combining it with one of the complex sugars such as rice syrup, barley malt syrup or sorghum syrup. These complex sugars are much more easy on our systems, providing us with a more long-term, steady energy. Unfortunately most people haven't adapted to these slow-acting sugars.

If, during this season, you find yourself feeling stressed, tired or blue, that cookie may provide you with instant energy and satisfaction but know that there is a “downside” just around the corner. This downside can certainly leave you feeling more stress, more tired and certainly less emotionally stable. Your experience during the holiday season can be greatly enhanced just by taking this one suggestion into consideration.



Testimonial

Like many, my wife and I turned to Grace when all traditional medical options had been exhausted. In December 1996, our son, Nicholas, was 22-months-old. He was about in the 90th percentile in height and about the 10th percentile in weight. The only thing he seemed able to keep down was Pedialyte.

We had been to several doctors over the previous year. Nicholas had stopped breastfeeding at 10 months, and at that point, his vomiting and diarrhea issues became more than just a random occurrence. Understand that my wife did not stop breastfeeding Nicholas. He just wouldn't take it anymore. There was no weaning. He went from drinking his typical amount one day to none the next. Anyway, as we introduced new foods to him, he kept vomiting. And even as he past a year and then 18 months, he never slept more than four hours at night – or any other time. My mother-in-law, my wife, and I rotated nights taking care of Nicholas, because it might take all night to get him comforted and back to sleep. He would cry as if he was in pain. We took him to one doctor after another for the next year. The most common prescription was the BRAT diet backed up with Pedialyte. He was tested for several possibilities. We had good health insurance and no expense was spared during that year.

The last specialist we saw could find nothing wrong with Nicholas. He proposed that Nicholas may just be “a bad baby” and might grow out of it. Incensed, we left his office.

My wife heard of Grace through someone at our church. Grace met Nicholas and immediately suggested that we try a plate of aduki beans. We had no idea even what aduki beans were.

That evening, my wife warmed up a can of aduki beans and gave Nicholas a small portion. He ate it – and the word to describe it really is – *greedily*. He wanted more. We were afraid to give him more because we both thought it was just more he was going to vomit. There was something else different though. He had always been a reluctant eater. No doubt he had made the connection between eating and vomiting. But he ate the aduki beans with gusto. He was given more. And then some more.

He did not vomit. He did sleep at least six hours, if not eight hours that night. It was a miracle.

It turned out that Nicholas was sensitive (some would use the term “allergic”) to white rice and toast – two of the components of the BRAT diet. That’s why he was always on this cycle of BRAT diet, upset stomach, and Pedialyte.

Anyway, this was the beginning of my acquaintance with Grace Justiss. She knew when she looked at his face – at the darkness under his eyes – what he needed.

I turned to Grace again in 2005 to help me help a friend with cancer. She knew a great deal more about many things and had put much of it together. She did not just help me help my friend, she helped me help me.

You see, most people – I presume – do not go to Grace until it is the last or almost the last resort. But Grace helped me realize a different way to live (and die) for all of us – whether we are *healthy* or not.

I think if I had written this a year ago, I would have told you how great Grace was; how much I believe in her; or how much I trust her. But Grace has helped me come to the real truths: Grace is

great because we are all great; I believe in Grace because I believe in myself and others; and I trust her because I trust myself and others.

Grace really is wonderful resource. If you listen to what she says and give it your all, I promise you an incredible experience.



RAISIN SQUARES

This delicious recipe was developed by Anne Marie Colbin, author of [Food and Healing](#) and [The Natural Gourmet](#). I've only changed a little bit of the instructions to make it a bit more user friendly. You may want to substitute another dried fruit for the raisins with equally wonderful results.

Filling:

3 cups Raisins
1 1/2 cups Water
1 Cinnamon Stick
3 TBSP. fresh Lemon Juice
1/4 cup Arrowroot or Kuzu dissolved in 2 TBSP. cool water

Crust:

3 cups Rolled Oats, buzzed either in a blender or food processor
2 cups Spelt Flour
1/4 tsp. Sea Salt
1/2 pound Organic Butter
1 cup Maple Syrup

To make the filling:

- 1) Combine the first 4 ingredients in a saucepan, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes.
- 2) Discard the cinnamon stick and puree the mixture in a blender or processor and return the mixture into the saucepan.
- 3) Add the dissolved arrowroot or kuzu and cook over a moderately high heat, stirring until thickened and clear. Set aside.

To make the crust:

- 1) Combine dry ingredients and using either a pastry blender or your fingers cut or rub the butter into the mixture until it has the appearance of coarse meal.
- 2) Slowly add the sweetener, mixing all the while, until you have a soft dough. Divide the dough in half.
- 3) Roll out one half of the dough between two pieces of wax paper. Remove the top paper and invert the bottom one onto an oiled pan. Trim the edges to make an even border.
- 4) Evenly spread the filling over the dough.
- 5) Roll out the other half of the dough as you did the first and invert it onto the filling. Once again trim the edges.
- 6) Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes or until lightly browned.
- 7) Cut into squares when pastry has cooled.



**With the Holidays upon us...Let us cater your special event including your favorite Holiday Sweets.
As always, gift certificates for personal consultations are available!!!**