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# **How to Overcome your Fear of Cooking 5 Tips to Break through your Fear**

## **Introduction**

I was extremely fortunate to have a mother who not only loved to cook but was also an excellent cook. She was cooking from Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking long before it became a popular movie. Bea, as others know her, was born in London, England. She also learned cooking through the famous Cordon Bleu Cooking School.

Okay, this report is supposed to take away your fear, and I've probably increased your blood pressure right now. Stay with me. The point of telling you about my mother is that there was no Food Network back then. You learned how to cook the old fashioned way – through doing it! Cooking, experimenting and following recipes out of cook books.

There's an old joke that musicians use and it applies here. How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice.

There is also an acronym for F.E.A.R. – False Evidence that Appears Real.

When we are afraid we tend to freeze like a deer in headlights. If we are learning something new, our brain gets overwhelmed. When we have to deal with too much information that we are not familiar with, we tend to ease our anxiety by doing nothing.

Also, when we tackle something new, it is the fear of the unknown. We don't know what to expect. Our confidence gets shaken so we take the easy way out and that is not tackling the project.

Over the past year I have been on the steepest learning curve of my life. I have learned how to put up websites and write and manage all of the content you see on them. When I began this process, I was scared to death! I didn't know what I was doing. I had to learn a whole new vocabulary and technical stuff.

A year later, guess what? I no longer feel like a deer in headlights. I almost feel like I qualify to be a Geek! While, I have not mastered the Internet, I am a lot further along - All because I broke through my fear.

I'm here to tell you that cooking is easy. Yes, easy!

Can you tell I'm a little passionate about this fear and cooking stuff?

Let me give you what I promised. Five tips to break through your fear.

## **Tip Number 1 – Start**

You may say, "Jackie, duh?" No, it's not duh. You must start! Make the decision that you are going to learn how cook, cook more often or tackle that complicated recipe you always thought about.

Just starting will give you tremendous confidence and a feeling of accomplishment.

If you are a Star Wars fan, Yoda the wisest of Jedi Masters says, "Don't try – Do."

## **Tip Number 2 – Don't Start With Something Complicated**

If you are just starting out don't start with a recipe with 9,000 ingredients. (Okay, I don't know of one, but I wanted to make a point.)

Find a recipe that has 4-6 ingredients. I have a friend who is a pastry chef, boy can she cook – who told me that all you need are 4 fresh ingredients to make something spectacular.

## **Tip Number 3 – Don't be Afraid to Make Mistakes**

You will make mistakes. You will burn things, under cook things, forget an ingredient, put the wrong ingredient in something, etc., etc.

Forgive yourself and move on.

The other night I decided to cook steaks inside (as opposed to grilling) because it was cold and rainy. I'd seen a chef on Food Network demonstrate how to cook a restaurant style steak and decided to try it.

Well, my steak came out okay because I like it on the more done side, but my husband's I ruined for him. It was way over cooked. This was filet mignon and was not a tiny investment. "Okay and ruined" are not acceptable with such a good piece of meat.

Was I disappointed? Yes. I mean, come on, two steaks? I can tackle a 22 pound turkey with my eyes closed. It was the first time I tried this recipe and it didn't turn out. So, I forgave myself and decided that I would rather just grill the steaks in the future.

I would much rather experiment and perfect some exotic Thai dishes than cook the greatest steak in the world.

When I worked in radio sales we used to have a big client party that we called, Just Desserts. We had a buffet of desserts from all of the best restaurants in town. There was one exquisitely, decadent chocolate cake that stood about eight inches high. I tasted it and almost spit it out. Whoever made it must have put a cup of salt instead of sugar in the recipe! We had to throw it away.

So - my fearful ones - disasters happen to everyone. Just move on.

## **Tip Number 4 – Be Patient – A Watched Pot Doesn't Boil – But your Impatience Will**

Okay, this is something that I still don't practice well in all things and that is patience. We all tend to want everything NOW. Our society is wired that way. We have microwave ovens and instant everything. (So we want to believe.)

You can't cook without patience. Rice is going to take 20-30 minutes. Please don't say you use rice that cooks in a minute. Okay, I guess, if you only have a minute then you must cook it.

I have never lived in a residence that had a gas stove. I have only had access to an electric cook top. For me, the electric cook top heated up so fast that I had to turn it down almost immediately. What this did for me was teach me patience.

Cooking is like having a baby. You can't say I'm going to take some short cuts and have this baby in three months. No! You can't have a baby in three months! You have to let the process happen and the baby, if all goes as expected, will be ready in nine months.

Fortunately, recipes don't take nine months, but you have to have patience. When you cook a roux, you have to wait for all of the stages that turn the ingredients into a thickening base for sauces. This takes patience and watchfulness.

Bread dough is going to take its time to rise for the yeast to do its work.

Cooking is science and math. The right ingredients cooked at the right time create something amazing.

Okay, don't let me scare you again. Although I love science, I hate math. But, the point is, the reason ingredients are measured and recipes are formed work off of science. That's why patience is needed so that all of these items can work together to produce the desired dish.

The last note about patience is to be patient with your self. Anything you learn how to do in life doesn't happen over night. Repetition is what creates a skill.

## **Tip Number 5 – Practice, Practice, Practice**

Did I say practice?

We are building your confidence level here, so practice cooking for your self, a close friend or your family before tackling something too big.

I know that we are very busy. It's not always possible to cook dinner. Resist the temptation to always go out or to pick up something already prepared.

Without practice, you will never get better.

I tend to go through stages of cooking all of the time and then hardly cooking at all.

I make one exception. Every Sunday, I do my best to make sure that we have a proper Sunday dinner.

# **My Final Thoughts about Food and Cooking and Why I'm so Passionate about the Two**

To cook something isn't just to be able to eat something. Preparing and serving a meal is about fellowship, bonding, and sharing time together. Food is love. When you cook, think more in terms of lovingly preparing food to offer as a gift to others.

In other cultures around the world, hospitality is everything. Sharing a meal is making a sacred connection.

Fear no more! What are you waiting for? Get cooking!

To Freedom from Fear!

***Jackie Trottmann***

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