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PRESS RELEASE

Debra Borden, *The Sous Therapist*, Mends Marital Discord Via Cooking Therapy

For years, Debra Borden paid little attention to the fact that she'd been using cooking as a way to organize, manage, and either emotionally excavate or soothe her experiences. Assembling foods to work through her emotions had always come naturally to her. Eventually, though, she realized that food preparation might have a place in her clinical practice, especially with clients who had a hard time with a one-on-one, direct conversation. So, she became a pioneer in another legitimate modality: cooking therapy.

She found that it worked in a way similar to art, music, or equine therapy, except that it was more accessible. When she shared it with clients, there were some misses, such as the time she brought shellfish into an Orthodox Jewish home or the time it took her client with ADHD so long to thicken the pudding that he escaped from the kitchen to the more immediate gratification of his Xbox. But these failures provided Borden with opportunities to learn from her mistakes and refine her techniques. Over time, she discovered that cooking therapy was overwhelmingly successful.

In her new book, *Cook Your Marriage Happy* (CYH Press, 2018), Borden explains that cooking therapy helps diffuse negative emotions and makes it easier to discuss such issues as fairness, perspective, responsibility, and gratitude. It's less about the recipe, and more about engaging in an activity that requires focus, tuning in, and mastery.

Additionally, cooking therapy is also ripe with metaphor. "For example," Borden suggests, "why not have a side of self-esteem with that salmon? And 'draining' can be super powerful! As the excess liquid goes out of the dish, remind yourself that you're willing to lose what dilutes your marriage, and reserve the best of everything."

A self-described "Sous Therapist," Borden created her book to share with readers how they can work through their marital discord in the privacy of their own kitchens. She organized *Cook Your Marriage Happy* into therapy sessions for specific relationship goals, including Cook Your Stale Marriage Happy, Cook Your Maybe-I-Made-a-Mistake Marriage Happy, Cook Your Financially Frustrated Marriage Happy, and more. Each therapy session offers three recipes with emotionally resonant names such as Miss You Mucho Mini Muffins, Life Is Sweet and Sour Meatballs, From Boiling to Bliss Cake, and Tune-In and Talk to Me Tacos.

Borden has found that the things you do in the kitchen or with a recipe are remarkably indicative of how you address the challenges or obstacles in your relationships. "With guided prompts and process," she says, "you can uncover your strengths and barriers in a strong, tangible way."

She emphasizes that everyone can benefit from therapy sessions in the kitchen, and master chef skills are not required. "Even if there is a fiasco, you can reframe the 'disaster' as an opportunity to discuss embarrassment, mistakes, and perspective," she promises. "Solution-focused therapy with attainable goals," Borden concludes, begins with a single dish."

Cook Your Marriage Happy
By Debra Borden, LCSW (The Sous Therapist)
CYH Press
ISBN: 978-0-9998718-0-5
February 2018
www.cookyourselfhappy.com

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About the Author

Debra Borden is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in NY and NJ, and is the author of two novels, *Lucky Me* and *A Little Bit Married*. Her essays and articles have appeared in *Women's Health Magazine* and *The New York Times*. This book is the first in the COOK YOURSELF HAPPY® series.

Debra received an English degree from the University of Michigan and a Masters in Social Work from Fordham University. In addition to counseling, Debra has been a liaison and continues to be a resource for individuals, families, and professionals seeking psychiatric and substance abuse help. She is a pioneer in the field of cooking therapy.

She lives with her ever-changing, but always sustaining, Sous family in New York and New Jersey. Visit her online at www.cookyourselfhappy.com.

Suggested Interview Questions

1. You describe yourself as a "Sous Therapist." What does that mean?
2. How did you stumble upon cooking therapy?
3. Can you explain how cooking therapy works?
4. How does it improve upon more traditional therapies?
5. Does it require exceptional cooking skills?
6. Who can benefit from cooking therapy?
7. What happens during the therapy sessions you describe in *Cook Your Marriage Happy*?
8. What types of marital problems can couples expect to work on?
9. What's an example of a recipe you use during a therapy session?
10. What lessons can couples learn?