

Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

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Join Me Around the Table for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner!

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Cook like a chef or just look like one!

You can find lots more information on the web at www.susannye.com and www.susannye.wordpress.com

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Contact me at susanwnye@gmail.com

My niece Emily will be marching to the tune of pomp and circumstance at the end of the week. She is one of the more than three million smiling students collecting high school diplomas this spring. What wise (or not-so-wise) words can we share with these kids as they get ready for the next step in their journey? Here are a few of my thoughts:

"These have been the best years of our lives ..." Across the country, both happy-go-lucky class presidents and earnest valedictorians will begin or close their speeches with those words. I hope it's not true. Good years, even wonderful for some, but surely, the best cannot be behind you at eighteen.

It's up to you to find out what really matters. No, not to your parents, not to your friends but what matters to you. Now, more than ever, you have the opportunity to create your own best self. You didn't come with instructions and, even if you did, you probably wouldn't read them. It will take some experimenting and tinkering but you will uncover what truly drives and excites you.

Don't settle. Aim high and enjoy the ride. Sure, you'll falter from time to time. At some point, you'll probably stumble and fall flat on your face. That's what happens when you reach for the stars. Don't worry; the effort will be more than worth it.

What does it mean to aim high? You are the best person to determine how well you've achieved your goals. Personal satisfaction and success is just that, personal. Love what you do and you'll make more than a living; you'll make a life.

Strive to make good choices. Unfortunately, you can't help but make a few bad ones. However, you can improve the odds. Pay attention and learn from your mistakes and the mistakes of others. At work, at play or at home, if something doesn't seem quite right; trust your instinct. Especially if that voice in your head sounds an awful lot like your Nana. If you're still tempted, assume you'll get caught. If nothing else, it will make it easier to walk away.

Be bold, even fearless. No one ever said that courage was easy. If they did, they were lying. Courage is more than walking across the Grand Canyon on a tightrope. It is choosing to live a life filled with love, value and integrity.

Don't phone it in. Get out and enjoy each day live and in person. It's a big world with lots to experience and share; embrace it. And don't forget the fascinating and funny, infuriating, bumbling, stumbling, witty, wise and wonderful people that populate our imperfect world. Put away the machines and connect face-to-face to find true friendship.

Be kind. Like her grandmother, it's in Emily's nature to be kind. For others, it sometimes takes a bit of effort. Kindness is within everyone's reach. All it takes is the simple intention to be friendly, generous and considerate of others. What's so hard or not to like about that? Especially when you come to realize, and you will, that kindness leads to more kindness. Let's start a trend. We'll all be better off in a friendlier, more generous and considerate world.

And finally, be happy. May the good years be so numerous that you find it all but impossible to pinpoint the best ones of your life.

Congratulations and bon appétit!

Susan



Asparagus & Radish Salad

Light and bright, this salad will be a welcome addition to the buffet table at a graduation party or any spring celebration. Enjoy!



Serves 6-8

1 1/2 pounds asparagus, trimmed
 About 1 head (more or less depending on the size of the head) romaine lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
 Grated zest of 1 orange
 2 tablespoons roughly chopped mint
 2 tablespoons roughly chopped parsley
 2 tablespoons chopped chives
 12 radishes, trimmed and cut in thin wedges
 About 1/3 English cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
 Citrus Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat, add the asparagus and cook until

tender-crisp, 3-4 minutes. Drain the asparagus, rinse with cold water to stop the cooking, drain again and pat dry.

Put the romaine in a large bowl, sprinkle with the orange zest and herbs and toss to combine. Add the asparagus, radish, cucumber and enough vinaigrette to lightly coat and toss again. Transfer the salad to a large platter or individual plates and serve.

Citrus Vinaigrette

Juice of 1/2 orange
 1-2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 1-2 tablespoons minced red onion
 1 clove garlic, minced
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
 About 1/2 cup or to taste extra-virgin olive oil

Put the orange juice, vinegar, mustard, onion and garlic in a bowl or blender, season with salt and pepper and whisk or process to combine.

Slowly add the olive oil and whisk or process until smooth. Let the vinaigrette sit for at least 30 minutes to combine the flavors.

Can be made ahead, covered and stored in the refrigerator until ready to use. Cover and store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.