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# Life Lessons Learned Along the Way: I Make the Best Potato Latkes

By Harvey R. Heller

*I have used this space to tell stories about who I am and to introduce you to our group. My stories aren't about me, but about people and events that have had a profound impact on me. For our last installment of 2016, I have chosen to share a special tradition.*

Traditional potato pancakes are a labor of love for me. Every year during Hanukkah we host the family and extended family for latkes (potato pancakes), vodka and old fashion gorging. While I have wondered how we came to host this tradition, the best rationale appears to be that no one else wants their house, clothes and skin to smell of the combination of onions and oil that lingers for days. This is such a labor of love that we don't notice. In fact, our guests come into the house from the winter chill in worn clothing and no coats (they leave them in their cars!). It took me a couple of years to realize that while they enjoyed the gig, and my latkes, they felt the need to protect their clothing from the smell of fried onion seeping in. I'll admit, the strong aroma can be picked up nearly a block away! It's been over 20 years and they keep returning.

I am not an accomplished chef by any measure. Other than a decent omelette, the latke is clearly the best thing I make. Twenty plus large potatoes, skin on, 12 big onions etc.

So what is so special?

Every year I try to improve them. More egg, more pepper, the aforementioned potato skin left on, (try gluten free flour, for added crispness!), not too thick, testing and redoing the batter while cooking, draining the liquid, and of course timing the production so that our guests get them hot, crisp, fresh and ready for their applesauce and/or sour cream topping.

It has occurred to me that what I do to these precious edibles is exactly what we strive to do every day in our practice. Some of this, less of that, constant attention

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to bring about a desired result; without the smell of course!

As this time of year comes around and we take stock here of what we have accomplished for our clients, by analogy, we hope we have made you a great “latke!” Enjoy the holidays and we will see you next year!

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