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THINGS LOVE &
WEDDINGS



FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD



HOW THE ACT OF PREPARING A MEAL IS MY “LOVE LANGUAGE”

With Katie McCall, owner of Two Wild Seeds bakery

Words of affirmation. Receiving gifts. Quality time. Physical touch. Acts of service.

If these phrases ring a bell, chances are you've already heard of “The 5 Love Languages” by Gary Chapman. A renowned relationship counselor, Chapman provides a simple premise: People with different personalities express love in different ways, and these “ways” are the Five Love Languages. Once we're aware of how we give and receive love, we can understand ourselves and our relationships more meaningfully.

A friend recently mentioned Chapman's theory, and I couldn't help but wonder: What was my love language? A quick Google search led me to the online quiz, and 30-odd questions later I

discovered my primary love language was acts of service.

The description was spot on — I've always thrived in friendships and relationships that rest on a pillar of volunteering time and energy to one another. And the more I thought about it, it seemed only natural that I, too, express my love to others through acts of service — particularly preparing food.

Today I proudly co-own a downtown St. Charles bakery, Two Wild Seeds, with my mom, Susan. While it took more than a decade to come full circle and cook professionally, we've had the pleasure of providing thousands of pastries and hundreds of cakes to serve as focal points for our customers' most special life celebrations.

RASPBERRY-ROSE PANNA COTTA WITH FRESH BERRIES

Recipe adapted from Giada De Laurentiis' “Everyday Italian” cookbook

SERVES 6

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tablespoon unflavored powdered gelatin
- 3 cups whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon rosewater
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons seedless raspberry jam
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Pinch of sea salt
- 2 cups assorted fresh berries

Place the milk in a small saucepan and sprinkle the gelatin over; let stand 5 minutes to soften the gelatin. Stir over medium heat until the gelatin dissolves but the milk does not boil, about 5 minutes. Add the cream, rosewater, honey, jam, sugar, and salt and stir a few minutes — or until the mixture becomes smooth and the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Pour the cream mixture into 6 decorative glasses, dividing equally. Cover and refrigerate until set, at least 6 hours and up to 2 days. When ready to serve, garnish with fresh berries and enjoy!





It's no surprise that I took such a liking to food. Growing up, my mom, an avid gardener, taught us the importance of fresh ingredients; my parents loved to entertain; we traveled and sampled new cuisine; and, above all, we always sat down to the dinner table with a home-cooked meal.

Yet, I didn't feel a true connection to the act of preparing food for others until I caught the stomach flu in high school. I spent an entire week horizontal on the couch, binge-watching Food Network. Aside from copious amounts of room temperature ginger ale, applesauce and lightly buttered toast, Giada De Laurentiis' show "Everyday Italian" was my only source of comfort. I was

in awe of her beauty, finesse and genuine passion for celebrating food.

With a newfound sense of energy, I tracked down her cookbook "Everyday Italian," read it cover to cover and then promptly convinced my older sister to help me cook a meal for our family. To this day, I remember the menu: cheese and rosemary breadsticks, ziti with asparagus, smoked mozzarella and prosciutto, and, for the pièce de résistance, panna cotta with fresh berries.

I can still hear the rhythmic clinking of spoons as my family scooped and scraped every last bit of heavenly cooked cream from their dessert glasses. And that's when it hit me: They were eating something that I made for them ...

something from nothing ... with my own two hands! It was in this moment that I felt a true, authentic purpose in life: to cook for others.

When I think about cooking, it's one of the most primal things a person can do; it calls us to gather around the table and share a human experience. For me, it can be a birthday cake for a customer I've never met, a backyard barbecue for friends and family, banana pancakes for my son's Sunday morning breakfast, or a piece of buttered toast to ease the stomach flu. When all else in the world seems turned upside down, I take a deep breath, roll up my sleeves and head to the kitchen. Because there's one thing I know for sure: Cooking with love is a language I'll always speak.

■ Katie McCall is a bona fide Midwestern girl. Raised on four acres of rural property in Yorkville, she was taught to respect nature and all of its bounty. From foraging morel mushrooms in the woods to picking wild raspberries for homemade jam, Katie feels most at home when in nature and preparing food for others. When she's not running the downtown St. Charles bakery Two Wild Seeds, she can be found nose-deep in cookbooks, exploring the outdoors with her family — and eating ... always eating.

