Published on *Happily Whole* (https://www.livinghappilywhole.com)



# From Struggle to Strawberry Salad

March 23, 2014, written by katie



***Right in the midst of life's messes, when nothing goes my way, I have a choice. I can sit and sip on my own personal cup of self-pity. Or, I can look for the lesson.***

As in so many of my life lessons I share here on Happily Whole, I recently saw my food failures as a metaphor for this very morsel of meaning... The lesson a recent recipe pointed out to me is so poignant , I wanted to share it here, too, for everyone to read. The recipe is a Member's recipe [1]...but here's how it all started:

I'd been hitting a wall of food creativity, rehashing the same ingredients trying to concoct something special. But it was more than that. I'd been bumming around for a few days actually. It wasn't just the most recent episode of a recipe not working out the way I'd hoped. The girls and I were just 'off', not working well together, arguing more than normal and just sort of struggling through our time together. You know what I mean, right? When you and your family are not just on different pages but your reading from completely different books.

Then came the unexpected car expenses, insurance issues and to top it all off I was experiencing an awful case of self-doubt. Convinced I was not a worthy mom let alone an effective single one, I started second guessing my ability to write, create good food, inspire wellness and, well, even to be an effective and engaged friend. Good for nuthin'...humph! That's about how I felt.

Looking back, I now see my slump was all about self-pity, no doubt involved. I'd been slipping in my prayer life, leaning too hard on my own abilities and leaning away from the mysterious ways of the Lord. I'd fallen hard into the trap of wanting to control it all myself and the only thing I succeeded in was worry and weariness leading to more personal problems.

You see, ***personal problems are the result when a peaceful purpose gets lost in the ways of the world***. It's only when we trust in God's unknown ways, in the wonders of what we do not know and when we open our hearts to His wisdom beyond our own understanding that we truly find beauty of being simply and joyfully satisfied...yeah, even when we're bumming about life's stresses and struggles.

After what seemed too long a time to be lost on the road of frustration, ***God grabbed my hand and my heart, gently regaining my attention with a reminder to find purpose in the mundane moments of the day when bigger things weren't going my way.*** He did it with the smile of another mother as I sat at library story time observing her admire her children. At first I felt jealous, perhaps even a bit defensive because my hardships were keeping me from that kind of giddy joy at story time! If things were all ironed out, I'd be smiling too just like that sweet mama.

Then, she turned towards me and said something sweet about the children, including mine. Whap! All defensiveness wore away as I realized I had been stubbornly ignoring my blessings just to remain in my little pity party.

Life is always going to throw us lemons. Expect it. Know it. ***And yeah, love it.*** Love the lemons...

Because it's in the simplest ingredients of every day, real life when God brings us back to this ironic reality allowing us to experience joy amidst troubles. Blessings are so often found in the rough because life really isn't ever anything but a little rough and sour around the edges.

Maybe it's just me. But real joy rests its little head in my heart so often alongside something a little sour. I'll take a few more lemons from time to time if it means me finding meaning in life and joy in the mundane!

So, with lemon juice dripping from my fingers, I finally set all my food failures and recipes flops aside and came up with something fresh and sweet for a springtime treat. The sweet result of a kitchen struggle! Ahhh...joy! Strawberry Beet Salad...with homemade herb balsamic dressing....oh and one more thing to top it off! Roasted walnuts for life's little crunch.

It's fresh, not too strong or savory. It's just a soft, semi-sweet, sorta savory salad for pleasant weather days when you need a heavy dose of health in the form of real food. The dressing came out of my hopes to use up some fresh herbs I'd bought for another purpose. It's a bright, fresh salad that picked up my mood post failure.

Let's just say this worked out for me. The girls gobbled it up too!

Joy in a bowl--something as sweet as a simple salad smiled back at me as a result of my kitchen catastrophes.  Yes, friends, look for joy in the simple things....even in the struggles!

So, here is it. [2]..a salad now for you that nourished my soul, reminded me of God's real-life promises

and will surely bless your body!

*Perhaps you want to consider a Happily Whole membership [1] to come along for the whole ride, recipes, workouts and all!*

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