

*Cooking Up! Cake, Soup and Inhibition*  
*The Brighton Alexander Technique College*  
*www.blurb.com, 2015*

by Lisa DeAngelis

*Cooking Up!* is a delightful, and entertaining blend of recipes and Alexander Technique directions, sprinkled with carefully chosen quotations, useful tips, and clever titles, phrases, and recipe names. I devoured each humorous take on a recipe category (“The Universal Constant in Sieving”), enjoyed reminders of the basics of the Alexander Technique (Whispered *ahs*), and chuckled at the book’s many adapted quotes, such as, “You can’t eat something you don’t know, if you keep on eating what you do know.”

I tried a few recipes, inhibiting rushing ahead as I normally would and instead carefully following the thorough instructions. And I’m glad I did! In addition to being quite clear, each recipe included some very nice reminders for maintaining “good use.” I can honestly say I will never juice a lemon without considering hands on the back of the chair again! Though I wasn’t able to try all the recipes (at least not yet), I enjoyed a few that were fresh and satisfying. In addition, I was pleased with the creative process of preparing these dishes, which seemed less stressful and more intentional than usual, and overall was quite rewarding!

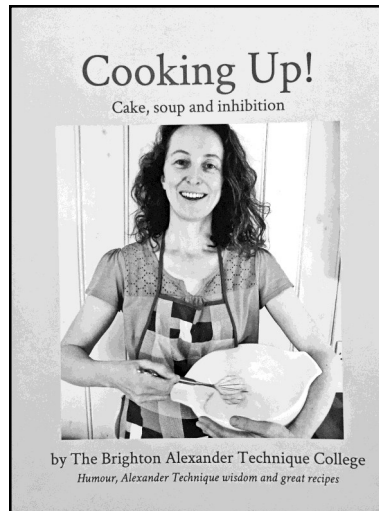
Recipes fall into humorous categories including “Semi-soup time,” “Whisking and Widening,” “Salads and the Beans Whereby” and “The Expanding Loaf.” They are all fairly health-conscious (except for, perhaps, Francesca’s Brownies!) with what can be described as clean and simple ingredient lists and instructions. But what really makes this book unique is the experience of cooking with awareness from preparation to enjoyment. Few sentences pass without a gentle reminder about coming back to your own use as you chop, blend, whisk, and bake—certainly a welcome reminder in what can be the rather end-gaining process of cooking.

Much of the humor in the book is specific to phrases and quotations in the world of the Alexander Technique. I imagine

the subtleties would likely be lost on a reader who doesn’t know Alexander Technique jargon. Nonetheless, the focus of this book is truly on the process (and enjoyment of cooking!) rather than simply the end results. The tips would be useful even to a Alexander Technique novice, and a glossary of terms and phrases at the end certainly allows for someone new to the Technique to come away with knowledge to incorporate in cooking and daily life.

I found the price of the book (\$35 for a paperback copy and \$45 for a hardback) to be a bit steep for its size (62 pages), but each copy is printed to order; and the story behind the creation of the book merits extra consideration: Carolyn Nicholls of The Brighton Alexander Technique College had her trainees compile this book as a practical exercise in media use, book production, and collaboration. The trainees either created or compiled all of the contents, including recipes and photos. It is clear that they have

found a way to pass along their developed understanding and creative application of the Alexander Technique in a manner that is fresh, fun, and superbly informative. I highly recommend enjoying a taste of this carefully crafted collection!



*Lisa DeAngelis (ATCU 2009) teaches privately in downtown Chicago and also at various workshops. In 2016 she will teach with Elm City Chamber Fest in New Haven, Connecticut and at DePauw University’s inaugural summer Alexander Technique workshop. Lisa chaired the 2013 ACGM in Chicago, and since then she has provided organizational and logistical support for a number of groups (she currently handles Events and Logistics for the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Young Professionals), and she is active in the AmSAT community.*