



KAPITEL 23

## Bacon wrapped lobster with dates

*Af Lilja Bjarnadóttir*

I think everyone has been in a situation where they said something they regretted, and most of us have probably at one point gone into a situation without thinking through exactly what we want to say and accomplish. There is a natural tendency to wing it, and often the excuse that we tell ourselves is that we didn't have time to prepare.

But we can't take words back, and saying the wrong thing at the wrong time can have serious consequences. We run the risk of escalating a conflict or alienating people, which is the last

thing we want. The fear of making that mistake can lead people to avoid dealing with conflict in a proactive way, because they don't want to make matters worse. That fear often comes from not knowing how to prepare properly for important conversations.

Preparation always pays off and it can help you prevent mistakes when you are facing an important negotiation or a difficult conversation at work. Taking the time to define the outcome that you want is the most important, because if you don't have a clear goal in mind, how will you



know if you've reached it? For example, if you want to negotiate more money for a deal – how much more? If you get 10 DKR, is that enough? What about 1,000? Take the time to think about what the details could look like. Now that you've taken the time to set your aspirations and goals, you should also reflect on what kind of person you want to be during the conversation – if you've reflected on your own values before the conversation, you'll be less likely to say something you will regret.

But communication is a two-way street, and we know it's not all about us. Your preparation should reflect this and a good starting point is to consider what interests, wants and needs the other party might have. It can be helpful to adopt a curiosity mindset, and ask yourself questions like “What would it take to create a win-win outcome in this case?” and “What facts do I need to understand the other side better?” Think about what you can do for them, and how you want to approach the conversation. Here it's helpful to think about their feelings and what emotions you want them to experience. Don't be tempted to as-

sume you know what the other party is thinking – rather take the time to write down all the questions you want to ask them, and mentally prepare yourself to actively listen to the answers!

Finally, take the time to prepare the process itself, because the right environment for the conversation can make a key difference.

Think about where and when do you want the conversation to take place, find a place where you can both be comfortable, and have the necessary time to talk things through.

Preventing conflicts or mistakes is always a matter of careful preparation. And like a good appetizer, preparing the conversation will make the whole experience more enjoyable.

## Bacon wrapped lobster with dates

Preparing this appetizer takes a bit of work for each bite, but it sure is worth it!

Each bite is:

- 1 piece of lobster
- ½ - 1 date
- Half a strip of bacon

Tear up a strip of bacon in two halves and wrap around one piece of lobster and ½ - 1 date to hold them together. You can really play around with the ratio, if you have a big piece of lobster you might want to cut it in half, so that the bites are smaller. It can also be good to cut the date up in two halves and use only half of it if the lobster is small.

After you've wrapped all this deliciousness together, heat a pan with butter and fry for 2 minutes on all 4 sides, and begin by placing the loose end of the bacon on the bottom, which usually is enough to hold everything together. Alternatively, you can use a toothpick to do the job.

## About the author

Lilja Bjarnadóttir is a mediator and a lawyer and chairman of the board for Sátt, the Icelandic Mediation Association. She teaches Dispute Resolution at Reykjavík University and her company, The Road To Resolution, specializes in Conflict Resolution and Mediation for Icelandic companies.