



KAPITEL 5

Brown rice pilaf

– with mushrooms, caramelised onions and yogurt

By Lisa Parkinson

I chose this recipe for its international flavours and interesting mixture of ingredients. Another similarity with mediation – depending on how much chili it contains – is that it can be very hot! It reminds me of a recent mediation with two couples in which the divorced parents each brought their new partner. The parents had one child, Stephen, aged 10, diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and dyspraxia. His mother, Emma, complained at her initial meeting that Stephen's father, James, had made little effort to see his son over the past 18 months.

She said he was not interested in the child

psychologist's reports and had declined her request for a meeting to resolve their difficulties. James explained at his initial meeting that following several incidents when Emma had been verbally abusive to his new partner, Juliana, he had felt the need to protect Juliana from Emma's attacks and had given priority to building his new relationship. James said he regretted having neglected Stephen and he was now anxious to see him regularly.

Emma and James both asked to bring their new partners to the mediation meeting. They felt that better communication and co-operation between both couples would help the parents work

together for Stephen's benefit. The first mediation meeting needed a clear structure in which the key ingredients (agenda) were identified and agreed.

These ingredients were listed in the order in which they would be added, with mutual acceptance of the 'cooking process' (speaking and listening, not interrupting). The main substance (brown basmati rice) was provided by Emma's informative and heartfelt account of Stephen's behaviour problems and difficulties at school.

There was an occasional mouthful of hot chili when one of the new partners made an unhelpful remark out of turn. But when reminded of the ground-rules, they quickly became compliant and helpful - the chili was chewed, not spat out! Fresh understanding was absorbed, good flavours were added and the meeting ended with spontaneous warmth, friendliness and readiness for the next meal!

Brown rice pilaf

Ingredients

- 200 gm brown basmati rice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

- 4 onions, finely sliced
- 400gm mushrooms
- 15 gm unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ small cinnamon stick
- 3 green cardamon pods, lightly crushed
- 1 – 2 red chilli peppers
- 350 ml vegetable stock
- large handful of parsley
- lemon juice to taste

1. Soak the rice for at least 20 minutes. Fry the onions gently in olive oil until soft, add mushrooms and cook until very soft and brown.

2. Melt butter in another pan and stir the spices in the pan for 2 minutes. Drain the rice and add to the pan, stirring to coat the rice with the spices. Add vegetable stock and cook 20 – 25 minutes until the rice is cooked and the liquid absorbed.

3. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley, with seasoning and lemon juice to taste. Serve with Greek yogurt and more parsley if liked.

About the author

Lisa Parkinson is a grandmother in the family of mediators and her own family, with four grandchildren (the eldest aged 26). In 1978 she co-founded the first mediation service in the UK and in 1981 the first national association of family mediators. In 1988 Lisa, Henry Brown and four other family lawyers founded the Family Mediators Association. Lisa was also a founder member of World Mediation Forum in 1995. Opportuni-

ties to provide mediation training in many countries have been a privilege and delight. Lisa's book, *Family Mediation*, is in its 3rd English edition and seven foreign language editions, the latest in Turkish. Lisa and a colleague organise a biennial residential weekend on *Mediation, Science and the Arts* with mediator friends from around ten countries, including Russia. Mediation links continue to strengthen!