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Can't Take a Compliment?

By Helen Ksyka

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"Putting ourselves down,
is an insult to our worth."
--Helen Ksyka

Have you ever noticed how women dodge compliments as if they're bullets?

You look terrific.
Oh, please; I'm a mess.

That's a beautiful blouse.
This old thing?

You did a super job.
Not really.

What a great dinner.
It was nothing.

It was nothing. That one really gets me. Why do you think we women are taken for granted and treated as if we can and should do it all? When we prepare a meal, a party, or holiday, believe me it's a big, fat something. If someone compliments us, we need to acknowledge that we knocked ourselves out, and say: thanks for noticing.

If you think I'm blowing this out of proportion, let me tell you how resisting compliments hurt one woman's business.

Can't Take a Compliment?

I spotted a top-notch brochure and knew I'd found the graphic artist I was looking for. When I contacted her and raved about the superb layout, color choices and her eye for detail, she not only found fault with every compliment, she cited additional flaws, hellbent on convincing me that the whole brochure could have been better.

Guess what? I ran for the hills. If she didn't think she was so hot, why the heck would I hire her? And you know something? When I studied her work, again, I started to believe that maybe she wasn't so talented after all. (But on the other hand, if she had just kept her mouth shut and accepted my compliments, I would have scrutinized no further, happy to be a new client.)

Perhaps recipients of compliments think that by undermining praise, it makes them appear humble. It doesn't. Instead it sends a message that screams: I'm not worthy. I feel ill at ease. I have no confidence.

And what about the people doling out the compliments? They feel they're going out of their way to show recognition, so even if the recipient rebuffs out of insecurity, it leaves the compliment-giver feeling unappreciated, frustrated, or duped that his or her observation wasn't very astute.

Now think about this for a minute. There's a steady supply of people who seize any opportunity to point out our weaknesses and shortcomings. They stomp on our ideas, dismiss our efforts, and diminish our dreams. So when compliments are handed to us on silver platters, why, oh why would we pass up positive reinforcement?

Because it's an insidious habit, but it's a habit that can be consciously reversed with practice.

If we don't think we look so great today, but someone thinks we do, why knock it? If someone thinks we did an outstanding job, let's bask in the glory. We need to ditch the attitude: "I'm not perfect enough" and give credit to ourselves and to the people who acknowledge us and our efforts. We all deserve compliments. And we deserve to take them.

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Basil The Sweet Herb

By David McCarthy

Sweet Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Basil is my favorite of all the herbs because it is so versatile and easy to grow. Those of you who follow my recipes site will know that I like to grow my own herbs and as basil is normally ready to eat just 6–weeks after planting I naturally use it often.

Basil is an attractive annual, about 18 inches (450 mm) tall with light–green, fairly broad leaves. There are several species of cultivated basil, one having purple leaves, so it is also a decorative plant in your garden.

Basil grows easily from seed planted after all danger of frost has passed. Pinch stems when the plant reaches 18 inches (450 mm) tall to promote bushy, compact growth. Avoid lush growth as it may reduce the flavor.

Green leaves can be picked about 6 weeks following planting. It is best to cut leaves for drying just before flowers open. However, if you can use fresh the taste is far better and it is also an extra vegetable to compliment a healthy diet.

Spicy–scented basil leaves are one of the most popular of all herbs used in cooking. There are two particular ways I like to use basil; the first, and most common, is to mix it with pine nuts and a little garlic, a splash of balsamic vinegar and extra virgin olive oil in a blender to make Pesto. Pesto can be kept for a few days in the refrigerator. Use about 90% basil to 10% pine nuts.

The other way I like using basil is with freshly picked tomatoes, sliced, drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkled with chopped basil. This dish can be served alone as an appetizer or as part of a salad.

The other great thing about basil is that you should grow one basil plant between each tomato plant in your garden. The plants compliment each other and the basil acts as a deterrent to many of the bugs that like tomato. It never fails to amaze me the way nature has a habit of making complimentary plants that together protect each other in growth and them compliment each other on the table.

Top chef's use basil with all tomato dishes, whether cooked or raw. The other thing to remember about using olive oil is that it is an omega 3 oil and very good at promoting "good" cholesterol.

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David McCarthy writes articles about food and the affect it has on your health. His work can be read at

<http://www.recipesmania.com/>

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