

Stir Gently

COOKING FOR ONE IN A TIME OF TRANSITION

Among the many challenges of adjusting to the loss of a spouse is eating well when you really don't feel like eating at all. The newly released cookbook "Stir Gently" - Cooking For One In A Time Of Transition produced and compiled by Worlein Funeral Home is a timeless resource for those suddenly finding themselves cooking for one or lost in the kitchen. The pages of "Stir Gently" include information on how healthy eating can play a role in healing after a loss and in overall good health. The book includes recipes for one as well as recipes from the heart – collected from loved ones who have experienced the challenges of cooking after the loss of a loved one. "Stir Gently" is a beautiful spiral bound 70-page cookbook. The washable cover is done in the colors of the Worlein logo – blue and white. Beautiful color photos as well as pages where new favorite recipes can be written add to the book's content.

The idea behind the cookbook is one that had been "simmering" for a while. After hearing AGAIN & AGAIN from grief support participants and during aftercare visits about the challenges of cooking for one & eating well after a loss we decided it was time to act.

While researching existing resources on cooking for one after a loss we discovered few books addressed this topic and the options were very limited. This solidified our decision to make our own resource/cookbook which would help survivors for years to come.

For many of the bereaved that we serve life centered around the kitchen and meal preparation. During our grief support sessions, it is often mentioned by survivors as a secondary loss that they have not only lost their spouse but also part of their identity as "cook" or "baker". Many stated that they were known for their delicious goodies or meals and now have no one to cook for and no one to compliment them. For many, especially men, they have lost the one who cooked for them or perhaps did the grocery shopping. In a recent aftercare visit an elderly gentleman stated, "I was married for over 60 years to someone 7 years younger than me – I thought I had a cook for life – now what?" He also had never done any grocery shopping.

Jen Haugen, a local registered dietician was our expert consultant for the informational section of "Stir Gently" – supplying valuable information on the importance of healthy eating and taking care of your body during a

difficult time. We met with Jen on August 21, 2019 and told her about our idea, she was very excited to be part of our project. Her expert advice in “Stir Gently” includes meal planning, how to purchase and store foods, how to adapt recipes & modify quantities etc. The book also includes easy to follow charts. All this information makes our cookbook “Stir Gently” a complete and user-friendly resource.

Many of the recipes in “Stir Gently” were submitted by past grief support group members who have experienced the challenge of cooking for one, families served by Worlein Funeral Home and Worlein Funeral Home staff.

The recipes in many cases were adapted for cooking for one and or include a cooking tip with possible substitutions etc.

Anna, our office manager did a fantastic job of setting up the book and we used a local printer, Brian Halverson at Diamond Ridge Printing to print the book.

The drawing on the cover was done by local artist Sandy Jones and we chose to title the book, “Stir Gently” – because it is a cooking term but also in thinking about the survivors whose lives have been “stirred up” by their loss and how they need to treat themselves gently.

The cookbook “Stir Gently” is something that can be easily reproduced if demand is great and a second edition is also a future possibility.

Our hope is that new “solo” cooks/eaters will be inspired to try cooking for one, be able to enjoy the meals that they shared with their loved ones and stay healthy.

“Stir Gently” has been widely distributed within our community and has been greatly received. “Stir Gently” is used as part of Worlein Continuing Care – our after-care program here at Worlein Funeral Home and is given to each family we serve. The book is a great addition to our grief resource library and is also available in our Little Free Library located on the grounds of Worlein Funeral Home. Which makes it easily accessible to the entire community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Stir Gently” has been given to our local libraries including the Austin Public Library and the Mower County Senior Center library. The cookbook has and will be distributed to past and future grief support group members and to those individuals who contributed to the book.

Because cookbooks are timeless “Stir Gently” – Cooking For One In A Time Of Transition will be a resource offered by Worlein Funeral Home to the bereaved in our community for years to come.