



# INTERVIEW WITH HALE SOFIA SCHATZ

*Hale Sofia Schatz, who has been writing a monthly column for you, is in the process of preparing a something bigger for the January issue. She is working on a special Detox Guide for all Elle readers. Hale Sofia as an author and nourishment consultant for more than 30 years, knows the importance of beginning a new year. She is preparing to share and support those of you who want to turn a new page in your life.*

**ELLE:** The book you are preparing especially for ELLE readers, what it is about?

**HSS:** I am preparing a healthy detox and cleansing guide to help support people in their process towards greater understanding of this natural process for the body, mind and spirit. The more people understand the whole process, the more they will be able to make better choices in the kinds of cleanses that may be most appropriate for each individual. The detox process should not be one of extremes for the body, but, one that supports the body towards greater integration and wholeness and vitality in one's everyday life.

**What is the source of your interest in healthy food / healthy living? How did everything began? What is the starting point in your career as nutrition?**

It all began with my birth here in Turkey and my first eight years of living here with my family and my large extended family of grandmother and aunts and cousins. Even as a very young child of 3 or 4 years old, I was very aware of what people ate and how my own body did not always want the same foods. I did not eat meat, butter, or macaroni products as a small child. My mother and grandmother were very alarmed and thought



that I would not get enough nutrition. We moved to America in 1958 and I went to the university in the late 1960's just when everything was in revolution. This was a very ripe period for me to delve into greater experimentation with health, fasting and consciousness. I learned some very important lessons during these years that I have continued to develop and teach for the last 30 plus years in my own consultation practice in Boston, MA. You have to read my book, *Buda Size Yemege Gelse*, for more details of this period.

**Your have an unusual name, Hale Sofia... What is the story behind this name?**

Hale is my given name and Sofia is my spiritual name. Sofia refers to the feminine wisdom in the world, which transcends cultures. I feel very connected to this name because the work that I offer emerges from the deeper truths which have been available for thousands of years.

**What is most precious memory related to your childhood?**

I have many memories of my childhood in Turkiye. But, mostly I remember how I felt deeply sorry for all the cats in the streets and would bring food to many of them and also try to adopt them. My grandmother, who lived with us, hated cats, but, allowed me to adopt one fluffy tiger with beautiful green eyes.

**If we come back to the book, why do you care some much about these kind of things and the more important, why do you care some much about sharing all this info with other people?**

I feel my work is very much about integrating the wisdom of the east and the west. In addition, it is about supporting people in Turkey to not forget (unuturmamak) the rich fertile connection to the land and what it provides for us. I am a bridge between the east and west. I am a go-between within cultures, cross-pollinating as does a bee.

**What else do you do (except writing books)?**

Besides writing, I have a Cleanse Training Program for aspiring guides in this process, I teach workshops worldwide, and maintain a small private clientele both in Boston and via telephone internationally.

**Is it easy to change and become o completely new person? For instance, I try hard for two years but I only made I very small /insignificant progress. Should I gave up or insist?**

It is not easy to change. Our life goal is not to become totally different but to become more who

we really are. How do we do that? We become our true self through a process – sometimes a whole lifetime- of making small changes that ring true to us. Sometimes, this means going against the conventional pressures of what our family says, our friends, our colleagues. This takes much courage and support.

**Is nutrition as important and as affective as we are told lately?**

YES, YES, YES! Of course you are asking someone who has dedicated almost 40 years of her life to this. I see feeding ourselves as becoming more important than it used to be because of the advent of fast food, more processed food, and more stressed lifestyles. We are losing our connection to the earth, and if we don't have that, we are in trouble. I have seen what has been happening in the US, and Turkey is following with more chemicals, more hormones, and more GMO (genetically modified foods). This is creating more health problems at much earlier ages now.

**Tell us about your family: Do you try to apply them rules they complain about? Are you a good cook? Or do they prefer the fast food?**

I have been married for almost 33 years and have three grown children. My eldest is a son, 30 yrs old, my middle son is 27 yrs old, and my youngest is a daughter who is 22 yrs old. All of my children are great cooks and do not eat fast food. I was very strict with them when they were very young and gave them more and more freedom as they got older. My middle son has been a strict vegetarian for his whole life (including in utero). My daughter was a vegetarian until she moved to China 1 ½ years ago, and now eats meat. My oldest has eaten meat since he was 16 yrs. My husband occasionally eats chicken and fish. I have not eaten meat or chicken for about 40-45 years. I have been eating fish for the last 12 years since menopause. I am a fantastic cook. I love feeding people. It is one of my great delights in life.

**In the last few years it looks like people are getting more conscous about what they eat / buy / consume. Famous cooks like Jamie Oliver are pioneers in campaign like his (in UK schools) "Feed me better". What do you think made people "awake" and reconsider their way of eating?**

People are waking up on all levels. (Jamie and I have the same publisher in NY). We all are waking up because life is changing very fast and

we are poisoning ourselves with consuming substances that should not be called food. We have a great responsibility to the next generation whether we are parents or not. We have to feed our children and ourselves better.

**What is the ideal age to make a change (in anything)? Is there a “too late” thing in it?**

There is never a too late!!! I have worked with people in their 80's who have made powerful changes for their health and well being. We all have our own time. The secret is that we have to trust our own time not someone else's time. When someone really wants to change then the time is ripe.

**Tell us something even the closest of your people don't know about you: some phobias, fears, dreams...?**

I can get claustrophobic in closed places. I like an open window when I sleep, even in winter. I do not like the idea of going underwater scuba diving, it is very scary for me. I don't mind snorkeling, since it is on the top of the water. I used to have a fear of being lost in a crowd when I was a little girl.

**You often come to Turkey. What do you do here?**

I am now coming to Turkiye for 2 months in the spring and 2 months in the fall. I spend a 1/3 of the year here. I love it. I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to be able to teach and touch many people's lives in such powerful and positive directions. I also continue my own learning through travel and research into the villages and traditional cultures within Turkiye. My Turkish is getting better!

**Your favorite place (not city) in this world is...? Or your favorite activity? Describe us an ideal day.**

My favorite place is about 3000ft up on the slopes of the Haleakala volcano in Maui, Hawaii. The air is sweet, the pastures green, and the Pacific Ocean is below. An ideal day for me is to be up with the early morning sunshine and have a leisurely breakfast outside on the patio with my cats at my feet. I love to work in my garden for a few hours before I get to my writing or my teaching. I find that I have to touch the earth (toprak) regularly for my own balance. Also, what I learn from my plants is what I teach my clients. Healing is about connecting to the life force.

**Your future projects?**

I love to travel and I have many places that I have not yet been to. I will be teaching a program in Sydney Australia in February. I will take the opportunity to visit my daughter in Kunming, China. I am hoping to visit Vietnam, Laos and Thailand while I am there. Also, I am very interested in photography. I have a long-term photographic project that I have been working on for a few years. I probably need another 7 years before it is ready to come out.

**Your philosophy in life?**

I see life as process of allowing us to become a pearl. All the aggravations, all the irritations, all the necessary have-to's, all the pain, allow us to become who we are. The more we can smile and accept what is given, and the more we can trust, then life becomes good.

**When you feel really bad / down /pessimistic what do you do to feel good again?**

I just got stuck at JFK airport in NYC for 18 hours the other day after a 12-hour trip from Istanbul. I had to sleep on the floor of the airport. I was exhausted, angry, upset, and outraged. I allowed myself to let out the steam and my poor husband had to hear me out. After a hot shower, a good night's rest in my own bed, I realized how blessed I was to be home and the whole experience took on much less importance. I find that when I do get impatient or upset, I will look at it from 'above'. That is, that I will feel gratitude for this experience to allow me to grow and experience it in a way that I may not have been able to previously. Feeling grateful works every time.

**What are the sources of your inspiration, new knowledge?**

I am an avid reader of spiritual wisdom approaches. I am most recently delving into Taoist material.

**Is a New Year only a symbolic of a new page in our lives or...?**

Some cultural traditions designate dates other than January 1<sup>st</sup>. But, all traditions have a specific New Year time. It is necessary to begin anew. Life is a process of beginnings and endings. All the time. Every day, every week, every month, every season, etc. It is very important how we harness these new chapters of our lives. The more we pay attention, and the more willing we are, the more transformations we can generate.

**In short, in a few words, who is Hale Sofia Schatz?**

I am a gardener of life. I love the diversity of cultures, languages, visual images, tastes, sounds, and textures. I love how life is always a whole and always changing and growing. It is an amazing process, death and rebirth, recycling, composting. I love supporting and encouraging and tending the people /plants of this garden of life.