

# The Broken Cookies Plate

By Anna Von Reitz



Every year, no matter what you do, you bake cookies and some of them break. So, you have a whole plate of broken cookies in the kitchen, while their unbroken cousins are on the sideboard for the guests.

This is called "The Broken Cookies Plate" which causes endless grammar arguments. Is it a plate that is broken, or a plate full of broken cookies, or a plate intended to hold broken cookies, or, or, or.... but in our house, everyone knows that it's the repository for all damaged desserts.

Broken cookies, smashed cream puffs, and gooey caramel imperfections all land on this one plate, and despite all good sense and decorum to the contrary, it is always the most popular cookie platter in the house. Always.

Everyone loves broken cookies. They are more approachable, less substantial, and perhaps, that missing corner of the lemon bar or one absent raisin on a rum tart invites the subliminal idea that they contain fewer calories.

We have observed this phenomenon for many years and have no cause to think that our house is unique in this respect. We have gone so far as to advance "The Broken Cookie Theory" --- that is, that the edibility of a cookie is enhanced by a factor of three, if it is broken into three pieces.

This year, there was no time to bake anything. None. Nada.

We were not dismayed when The Minnesota Assembly decided to bake a dozen kinds of Christmas cookies and send them all the way to Alaska just in time for the holidays. And doubly not dismayed when ten of the twelve packages had a broken cookie or two.

(Thank you!)

While the guests were picking among the dainties, the hosts were having their share, quietly observing the fact that broken cookies taste the same as those that are intact.

Sometimes it's our broken hearts that fill the Broken Cookies Plate of life, that make us feel compassion, that teach us humility, and give us vision to see beyond mere appearances.

A haughty young man saw a drunk staggering along the wintry street just before Christmas. He wrinkled his nose and said, "What purpose does such a man have?"

"He gives us an opportunity to feel compassion and to do good works," we replied without blinking. "The poor and the sick and the miserable teach us compassion, just like our own sufferings."

The rapid, practical, non-rhetorical reply startled our young friend right out of his complacent assumptions.

As soon as we learn to have compassion without the need for suffering -- our own or anyone else's -- suffering will disappear.

Until then, we have our share of misery and our Broken Cookies to teach us what we need to learn.

Whether you are a Christian or a Muslim or a Buddhist, the lessons are the same:

Learn the mysteries of compassion, so that it grows in this world. Study it and nurture it. Learn its lessons well.

Value the "Broken Cookies".

Sometimes people try to fix broken cookies and are upset when they discover that this is not possible, no matter how they try to paste and glue the parts together, no matter how frustrated they get.

A broken cookie is a broken cookie.

The same may be true of the other kinds of Broken Cookies we encounter; some may be beyond repair, while others may mysteriously recover from what ails them, from resources hidden within.

Invest your compassion freely, without any expectations of recovery. It's okay to ask for miracles, but accept the Broken Cookies in your life for what they are, as they are.

Love is a decision. So decide in their favor. Accept as is. This doesn't mean you support them in self-destructive behaviors. It means you love them and see their beauty anyway.

Just because.

When you learn to do this, the miracle that will surely happen, is a miracle --- not for them --- but for you. You catch a glimpse of the love of our Creator. You learn what unconditional love is.

The real McCoy.

This understanding sets you free from what passes for "love" in the world of Barbie dolls and Disney heroes.

Love is not a quid pro quo. It is not a good bargain, not a matter of what someone else can add to your world at a price you can afford. Love isn't commercial at all.

Love doesn't care if you're broken or perfect. Love sees beyond the fashion cycle. Love simply is, eternal, the same; love stays and bends and sways as the years fly away.

And then one day, you are staring at the Broken Cookies Plate and the beauty of it all overwhelms you, and you know that this broken imperfection is perfect after all.

When life gets challenging and you don't know what comes next, and all the terrors of unpaid bills and unknown futures and sudden turns come to visit, when you are alone and staring at the ceiling --- know this: love remains steadfast. Love is right there beside you.

Open your arms to the great Unseen and ask for what you think you need, but let that Greater Wisdom guide you. Sometimes what you need is a blind cat, or a crippled dog or a broken cookie, and not what the tabloids advertise at all. Sometimes what you need is something so unimaginable, so grand, that you can't even imagine it.

Just stand there before the love that created you, that knows you far better than you know yourself, and ask for help, and help will come. Be sure of that.

Granna

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