



THE COOKIE JAR

I learned about a provocative and fun relationship practice called *The Cookie Jar* back in my corporate days. One Saturday afternoon I was engaged in a project with my advertising colleague Bradley, who was married to Carolyn. Her nickname Moonbeam aptly describes what she was all about. Carolyn knew how to live. Bradley and I were immersed in his living room with creative storyboards for a new Molson advertising campaign. Carolyn breezed in from a dance aerobics class. Her sweat and smile filled the room. She touched my shoulder, kissed my cheek, then turned to Bradley.

“Honey, don’t forget the *Cookie Jar*.” She sauntered into the bathroom.

Bradley and I cracked open a couple of cold ones and continued to map out our plan. In the heat of our creative planning, Brad popped his head up.

“The *Cookie Jar*! Did she, did SHE say, the *Cookie Jar*!?!”

He dashed by me and grabbed a container resting on a window by the kitchen door. He held the jar in his lap and unscrewed the lid.

“You might have to go!” Bradley pointed toward the back door.

The jar contained what looked like scraps, small strips of white paper with handwriting on each. Brad opened the lid, closed his eyes, reached in and grabbed one piece of paper and read it silently, the way some kids open their Christmas presents all curled up in a corner of a room.

“AAArrrhhh!” He tossed the paper at me.

The words *mow the lawn* were written on the paper.

“In early February, remember those two brutal snow storms, we were digging out for, what, all week... it was Carolyn’s *Cookie Jar* week, and she pulls play *18 at Pebble Beach*. We got lucky, grabbed a flight that afternoon; gawd, just WALKING by the ocean on sixteen... She’s a pretty good golfer, you know.”

“So, with the *Cookie Jar*, you just... immediately, drop EVERYTHING, and do whatever you draw from the Jar?” I asked green with envy.

“Yup! That’s the *Cookie Jar*. Carolyn says married life can stagnate. Dry up. Relationships must be nurtured like a garden!” Bradley looked out the window. We could hear Moonbeam singing in the shower. Brad sat contemplating the jar.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“The *Cookie Jar* is mostly filled with wild and wonderful stuff. Every three months, Carolyn and I sit together and we each place about a dozen or so fun ideas... you know... juicy things to do together. ‘Keep things organized AND busting at the seams around here,’ Carolyn says. I love the *Cookie Jar*, but she sneaks in bummers, like mow the lawn, or paint the shed or plant tulips or...”

“It’s a double-dip day man!” Bradley grinned and reached his hand into the jar and read another note. “You gotta go!”

“What?”

“Go! Go! GO!!”

“Where?”

“NOW!!” Bradley scrambled to the bathroom.

The piece of paper fell to the floor. I moved a chair and picked it up. Written in Carolyn’s elegant penmanship were the words... Waiting in the shower.

I rode my bike home laughing out loud.

Couples engaged in the *life-affirming practice (LAP)* called *The Cookie Jar* enjoy each other. They know how to have fun. Vitality and spontaneity reign in the home. Like every practice suggested in *Be the Change*, The *Cookie Jar* is simple and accessible.

The Cookie Jar

- Find a jar with a lid.
- Sit down with your mate
- Get some paper and two pens.
- Write down fun, provocative things to do together.
- (Include a few housekeeping tasks too!)
- Fill the jar.
- Once a week, on an alternating basis, you and your
- partner reach into the jar and grab a cookie.
- Enjoy