

# The Intelligencer. Wheeling News-Register

## It's My Party, I'll Bring the Cake

September 10, 2018

Dear Annie: I'm planning my birthday party. I'm renting out a room in a beautiful bar/event space downtown. I've got about 15 friends coming. Recently, in passing, I mentioned to one of my friends that I'd ordered a cake from a bakery for the occasion. She said, "*You're getting your own cake? You shouldn't do that! That's sad!*" I told her I was happy to do it. And no, I don't think she said that because she was planning on making me a cake. I think she was just appalled by the idea of someone's providing her own birthday cake.

To me, it just makes sense. I know I like having cake with friends on my birthday, and when I know I'd really like something, I like to take care of it myself. I can't expect anyone else to read my mind and do something for me. And I would never ask a friend to make me a cake, because that just seems deranged. Plus, I don't want to put anyone through the trouble. I am a big girl and can make my own cake. But does bringing cake to my own birthday party make me a control freak? — Happy to Share

Dear Happy to Share: It's wonderful that you're so self-sufficient, but sometimes it's about allowing our loved ones to do things for us. I wouldn't be so sure that your friend wasn't planning on bringing you a cake. That may be exactly why she reacted with such dismay. Still, that's no reason to cancel your order at the bakery. If no one springs a sweet surprise on you, you'll be glad you took care of that. And if someone does, well, no party ever suffered from too much cake.

Dear Annie: I'd like to add to your response to "*Realist, Not Pessimist*," who's despairing about the state of the world, because I have made the same cynical mistake of believing there is no hope for mankind. I recently discovered that this idea is entirely wrong. Though we still face huge challenges, humankind has made incredible progress, including having longer life spans, more education and fewer wars globally than at any other time in history. "*Realist, Not Pessimist*" should check out <https://ourworldindata.org> and <https://humanprogress.org>, which track the many ways life, on average, has improved. Recent books such as "*Enlightenment Now*," "*Factfulness*" and "*It's Better Than It Looks*" detail this progress and lift the spirits of everyone who reads them. Search for human progress and you can find hundreds of articles explaining problems we've solved and improvements we've made. There's no need to give in to cynicism when a little knowledge can cure that pessimism and inspire all of us to do what we can to contribute toward humanity's growth. — Former Pessimist, Now Fact-Based Optimist

Dear Former Pessimist: Thank you for sharing further proof that "*realism*" and "*optimism*" aren't antonyms. Your change of attitude is inspiring.