

Mixing COE

an opinion article by Dennis Brady

Whether you're fusing glass in a kiln or melting it with a torch, you can sometimes get away with using non-compatible glass. Sometimes.

You can also drive faster than the speed limit and not get ticketed. Sometimes. You can drive after having one drink too many and not get charged with impaired driving. Sometimes. You can use a mix of incompatible glass and not have it blow apart on you. Sometimes.

We each make our choices and take the risks attached to those choices. If you chose to take a risk, you should do it with the full knowledge of the possible consequences of that risk. Just because you, or someone you know, has got away with something hundreds of times, doesn't mean it's safe. Would you tell a 16 year old that just received their driver's license that it's okay to go over the posted speed limit, or it's okay to have "just one more beer" - because you've gotten away with it hundreds of times?

If you were allergic to peanuts but dearly loved the taste of them, would you tell yourself it would be okay to eat just a few peanuts, or convince yourself it would be okay to have peanuts in a meal if it wasn't more than 10% of the meal? Or, would you just accept that it's dangerous to eat peanuts in any quantity?

I have serious concerns for beadmakers or kilnformers that claim it's okay to use "just a little" noncompatible glass as long as it isn't too much. That's bunk. If glass is incompatible, it's incompatible in ANY quantity. Even the tiniest piece of glass that refuses to fuse can cause destruction. The problem with glass coming apart from incompatibility is that it doesn't always happen right away. It can happen in the kiln or in the flame. Sometimes. It can happen just after it has been annealed. Sometimes. It can also happen as much as a year later. Sometimes.

How much "sometimes" will you accept? Want my advice? Pick one COE. Any COE. Pick an assured, tested, and certified COE that you know you can trust to be compatible. Use that COE and none other. Never, ever (not even a tiny bit) include anything of any other COE. Never, ever use any glass that you aren't certain of the COE.

Also.....don't drive too fast, don't drink too much, and don't eat things you're allergic to.