Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

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This week's blog is part 1 of a 4-part series on the power of color. In part 1 we look at different colors and the significance of those colors.

Have you ever wondered about the influence that color plays out in our lives? Have you ever wondered about the impact that color has on our brains? The impact of colors on my brain started when I was a youngster. My favorite season was fall. I loved seeing the leaves turn different colors. In elementary school you were big time if you had Crayola's box of 64 crayons with its multitude of colors. I took real good care of my box of 64 crayons. The added value to the box of 64 crayons was the crayon sharpener in the back of the box – just saying. I even picked my favorite sports teams by the team colors and uniforms. As an adult, if I went to the racetrack, I picked winners by the color of the jockey's silks and the color of the horse. I was told to always bet on the gray horses.

It was not until later in my professional life that I became aware of how and why color has an impact on our brains. I read the book, **The Power of Color** by Morton Walker D.P.M. and was fascinated at all the information I had found out about color. I found out about how colors influence our emotions, health, memory, ability to learn new things, and what color symbolizes about our personality and the personality of others.

From my research I discovered which colors trigger certain emotions. For example, the different colors below may trigger the following emotions:

RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	PURPLE
Excitement	Optimistic	Happiness	Hope	Trust	Creativity
Energy	Uplifting	Enthusiasm	Growth	Honesty	Spirituality
Passion	Rejuvenating	Friendliness	Refreshing	Authority	Individuality
Action	Friendliness	Optimism	Balance	Serenity	Quality
Desire	Fun	Confidence	Reassuring	Intelligence	Royalty

Colors and emotions are closely linked. Warm colors can evoke different emotions than cool colors and bright colors can create different feelings than muted colors. It all depends on how the psychological effects of color are being used. Colors can make us feel happy or sad, and they can make us feel hungry or relaxed. The way different colors can affect emotions depends largely on a color's brightness, shade, tint, or tone and whether it is cool or warm toned. Let's look at the impact that some colors can have on how you feel.

Warm Colors
Red, orange, and yellow are next to each other on the color wheel and are all warm colors. Warm colors often evoke feelings of happiness, optimism, and energy. However, yellow, red, and orange can also have an attention-grabbing effect and signal danger or make you take action (think stop signs, hazard warnings and barrier tape). Red can also increase a person's appetite.

Cool Colors
Cool colors include green, blue, and purple. Cool colors are usually calming and soothing but can also express sadness. Purple is often used to help spark creativity as it is a mixture of blue (calm) and red (intense).

Happy Colors
Happy colors are bright, warm colors like yellow, orange, pink and red. Pastel colors like peach, light pink or lilac can also have an uplifting effect on your mood. The brighter and lighter a color, the happier and more optimistic it will make you feel. Another way colors can create happy emotions is by combining multiple primary and secondary colors together for a youthful, colorful effect.

Sad Colors
Sad colors are colors that are dark and muted. Gray is the quintessential sad color, but dark and muted cool colors like blue, green or neutrals like brown or beige can have a similar effect on feelings and emotions depending on how they are used. In Western cultures black is often considered the color of mourning, whereas in some East Asian countries it is white.

Calming Colors
Cool colors like blue and green can make you feel calm. Pastel colors and particularly cool toned pastels like baby blue, lilac and mint have a calming and relaxing effect. Neutrals like white, beige and gray can also make you feel calm. The fewer colors you combine and the simpler and more pared back a design is, the more calming it will feel.

Energizing Colors
Strong, bright colors and neon colors can have a powerful effect on emotions. Colors like bright red, bright yellow and neon green can feel energizing and make you feel more alert but can also be irritating on the eyes. These colors will grab your attention and stand out from their surroundings. Highly pigmented, strong colors like royal blue, turquoise, magenta, and emerald green can also have a stimulating effect and make you feel refreshed and energized.

Green symbolizes health, new beginnings, and wealth. Green is the easiest on the eyes and should be used to relax and create balance in a design. Green can also feel calming and relaxing. Businesses might use the color green to depict growth, security or inspire possibility.

Blue evokes feelings of calmness and spirituality as well as security and trust. Seeing the color blue causes the body to create chemicals that are calming. It is no surprise that it is the most favored of the colors. Dark blues are great for corporate designs because it helps give a professional feel, but using too much can create a cold, disengaged feeling. Light blues give a

more relaxing, friendly feel. Great examples are social sites like Facebook and Twitter who use lighter blues.

- Lighter shades of purple are often used to soothe or calm a viewer, hence why it is used in beauty products.

- Brown makes you feel down to earth. It creates a sense of stability and support. Brown is warm and friendly, practical, and dependable, and can also represent the old fashioned and well established.

- Black evokes power, luxury, elegance, but can also mean professionalism, neutrality, and simplicity. It is bold, powerful and is often used to evoke mystery. In certain contexts, and cultures, the color black can also refer to mourning or sadness.

- Gray feels serious and professional. It is a more mature, responsible color. Its positive connotations include formality and dependability, while the negative side can mean being overly conservative, conventional, and lacking in emotion. It is safe and quite subdued, serious, and reserved.

It is important to note that colors can be subjective—what might make one person feel cheerful can make another person feel irritated depending on the viewers' past experiences or cultural differences.

How do colors influence people? Color can play an important role in conveying information, creating certain moods, and even influencing the decisions people make. Color preferences also exert an influence on the objects people choose to purchase, the clothes they wear, and the way they decorate their environments.

Do you feel anxious in a yellow room? Does the color blue make you feel calm and relaxed? Artists and interior designers have long believed that color can dramatically affect moods, feelings, and emotions. "Colors, like features, follow the changes of the emotions," the artist Pablo Picasso once remarked.

Color is a powerful communication tool and can be used to signal action, influence, mood, and even influence physiological reactions. Certain colors have been associated with increased blood pressure, increased metabolism, and eyestrain. So how exactly does color work? How is color believed to impact mood and behavior?

Color psychology suggests that various shades can have a wide range of effects, from boosting our moods to causing anxiety. But could the color of the products you purchase ever say something about your personality? For example, could the color of the car you buy somehow relate to some underlying personality traits or quirks?

Your color preferences when purchasing items might say something about the type of image you may be trying to project. Color preferences, from the clothes you wear to the car you drive, can

sometimes make a statement about how we want other people to perceive us. Other factors such as age and gender can also influence the color choices we make.

- White: The color white can feel fresh and clean. This color is often used to evoke a sense of youth and modernity. I have known adults who have purchased nothing but white vehicles.
- Black: Black has been often described as a "powerful" color, which might be the reason why black is the most popular color for luxury vehicles. People often describe the color as sexy, powerful, mysterious, and even ominous.
- Silver: It is the third most popular color for vehicles and linked to a sense of innovation and modernity. High tech products are often silver, so the color is often linked to things that are new, modern, and cutting-edge.
- Red: Dreaming of a red vehicle? Red is a bold, attention-getting color, so preferring this type of car might mean you want to project an image of power, action, and confidence. People who drive red automobiles have a high probability of getting a citation for speeding. I have heard that automobile insurance is higher for those who drive red automobiles.
- Blue: People often describe blue as the color of stability and safety. Driving a blue car or SUV might indicate that you are dependable and trustworthy.
- Yellow: According to the experts, driving a yellow vehicle might mean that you are a happy person in general and perhaps a bit more willing than the average person to take risks.
- Gray: The experts suggest that people who drive gray cars do not want to stand out and instead prefer something a bit more subtle. Personally, I think my gray car hides the dirt more effectively.

Of course, the color selections we make are often influenced by factors including price, selection, and other practical concerns. Not only that, but color preferences can also change in time

Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly. Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

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