

COLOR MEHAPPY

What is your favorite color? That reflex answer of red, blue or green has become a lot more complicated than when we were in kindergarten

Studies show that color can evoke very strong emotional responses. The same color can stimulate totally different feelings in each of us. While the glow of yellow makes some people feel happy and optimistic, the same color can be jarring and unnerving to others. (It is the color of the smiley face and a caution light.) Red is a color of passion and energy and an attention grabber. (Note: fire engines and stop signs.) Blue, the color of sea and sky, is generally seen as fresh and peaceful, but to some it is cloudy and oppressive. The calming and reassuring color of green can be depressing to some people.

Life experiences also influence our comfort level for a color. Ex-military personal often

have a hard time seeing khaki and olive as rich neutrals. Navy blue or plaids are seldom favorites of parochial school graduates who wore uniforms. I've often heard objections to a color because it reminds the client of someone, or some place, they would rather not think of every day.

The brightness or dullness of a color (vermillion red vs. merlot) is called color intensity. The lightness or darkness (vermillion red vs. petal pink) is hue. These are where our true color preferences lie. Someone comfortable with the clear crisp colors of cherry red, sunshine yellow and grass green will not be as comfortable with merlot, mustard, olive leaf or petal pink, lemon kiss and mint mist.

Although our preference for specific colors may change through the years, we usually don't stray too far away from our basic intensity or hue preferences. People who are comfortable with earthy colors may be lured into trying a new brighter trendy color but are ready to change that look much sooner than they would have an earthy color pallet. The person who thrives in pastels or clear colors will not be happy surrounded by mustard and olive leaf.

As if discovering our own personal color group preferences don't present enough of a challenge, there is an association called The Color Marketing Group who meets twice a year to decide what colors will be available to us. The 1500 members are from different industries and have been getting together since 1962 to select 16 new colors that will become profitably marketable over the next two years. What if our favorite colors are not deemed marketable?

Is it any wonder that we are afraid of color? Builder Beige is popular not because it is beautiful but because it is safe. Forget safe, discover your personal comfort colors and embrace them. If you need help, seek the advice of a professional who will listen to you and assist you in the process. No colors are ever out of style, if they are the colors you love. They just may a little harder to find because of the CMG. ■

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