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THE MANY MOODS OF COLOR



THE PERSONAL COLOR PALETTE

Color has a far more profound affect on our mood than most people tend to realize. Color (whether in clothing, interiors, landscape or even sky) can change moods from sad to happy, from confusion to intelligence, or from fear to confidence. It can

actually be used to "level out" our emotions, or to create different moods. It should be recognized here, that particular colors may have different effects on various people.

Our response to a color may also be influenced by a number of different factors, such as our body's need for that particular color, a happy or sad memory attached to that color, family history, and often by a perceived popularity or a trend. The hope, therefore, is that we will learn to actually "tune in" to our inner self, and begin to create color palettes which will nurture and inspire us.

In every previous decade, there have been certain colors, or groups of colors which seemed to dominate every color palette in that decade. However in the "90's", the stopper has been pulled out, and uniqueness and personal preference are in! In this decade we have seen the emergence of the personal color palettes which focus on individual personalities and taste rather than blindly following the current trend. My relationship with each new client begins with extensive color profiles to determine colors which nurture and inspire the individual parties and which colors cause them to feel most secure. The next step is to determine the type of mood will best reflect their personality. By then, I am well on my way to creating their perfect palette.

There are no absolutes in the world of color. However, some colors seem to consistently evoke certain feelings, and I would like to explore a few of them for you. I like to divide them by the type of moods they create. We can also define them by naming places or items where they can be readily found. Some may surprise you.

Some colors make you want to get out of your chair and "do". Around others you want to nestle down and read. Some colors are articulate and must be listened to, while others are very quiet. There are a few

colors which seem to indicate that you have traveled or are well read. Yet other colors create a desire for closeness, intimacy and love.

Only a few of the colors listed would be used to create a particular mood in any one room. What I do is to select the colors from the list which best suit that person's unique palette, while maintaining the desired mood.

NURTURING NEUTRALS

**** WARM, SERENE, SECURE ****

The Nurturing Neutrals create a sense of peace and well-being. They foster quiet conversation with family and friends, and can dispel loneliness. They can be used all by themselves, or be combined with other "mood" colors. Entering a room done in the nurturing neutrals is like getting a gentle hug!

A frequent request from my clients is for colors which create a sense of peace and well-being. Throughout time, mankind has found a sense of peace and tranquility when in touch with "Mother Earth". Quite naturally, the colors which impart that sense of warmth and serenity come directly from the earth. As a matter of fact, each of the other moods will most often start from a foundation of nurturing neutrals!

Prominent in the Nurturing Neutrals are colors from the sea, such as sand, shell, coral, pearl, stone and seaweed. The most common theme requested by clients for mural paintings are focused around the ocean. I often hear the comment that "If we didn't have to work, we would live somewhere on the coast". Individual colors make sounds and combinations of colors interact with each other to create articulation ranging from almost undetectable to nearly deafening. The soft sounds ocean colors create are very comforting and nurturing.

Green is a color which helps us to adjust to new environments and situations, and it will always be found among the "nurturing neutrals". Green is the color of Peace. Interestingly, when students ask me to review the palettes they have done themselves or when clients ask me to come figure out why their room "just doesn't quite make it", the color I most often have to add is some form of green. Growing plants give us a sense that life is indeed going forward and that we are alive and well. Some plant life colors for this palette would be pine needle, lemon grass, fern, silver maple, bay laurel, moss green, mushroom, wheat, & cornsilk.

Blue is another important color in the Nurturing Neutrals because of its prevalence in nature. The largest mass of color which we see when looking at the horizon is the sky, and it is most often blue. Blues represented in the Nurturing Neutrals will range from winter sky or mountain stream, to midnight.

If your early childhood was anything like mine, going to your Grandparents' home was just the greatest. It seemed my grandmother was always either in the process of making something wonderful when we arrived, or just taking it out of the oven. Most of us have one or two (or even many) foods which make us feel nurtured and loved. From Grandma's (or any other) kitchen come such colors as buttermilk, maple sugar, coffee, tapioca pudding, ginger cookie, tea stain, peach cobbler, and linen napkin.

Black is the color of protection, so it may be used here. However, it is not one of the more friendly colors, and will best be used in moderation in the Nurturing Neutral Palette. The one exception is a palette

which is largely warm blacks, with the other “nurturing neutrals” added as accents. This can create a sense of utter sophistication, while remaining very friendly and nurturing.

Who can look at a picture of a baby animal and not smile? Something about a fawn or cub just makes us feel gentle and good. The soft neutral tones of their coats definitely nurture us. From the animal kingdom a few sample shades would be fawn, leopard cub, field mouse, meadowlark, and raccoon.

Another range of the brown tones which will often be found in the Nurturing Neutrals are the wood tones. There is something very comforting and protective about a tree, or a piece of the wood which comes from it. Hence colors such as oak plank, natural cherry, Philippine mahogany, mapa burl, birds eye maple, pine cone and river birch also find their way into the foundation of this palette.

Brown is a color which is perceived as nurturing, trustworthy, warm & friendly, so it may permeate the neutral palette. It is interesting to note here that in the 1970’s the American public had such a strong need for a sense of security and warmth, that for that decade almost all palettes consisted of Brown, Rust, Gold, and Avocado Green. Although these four colors indeed met that need, by the end of that decade, many people felt bored and even smothered. We just couldn’t get rid of those nurturing warm tones fast enough!

During the 80’s, no designer would have dared suggest a palette dominated by any of those four colors. However, in the process, the palettes were somewhat cold and the neutrals were usually cool grays. The palettes were still monotonous and contained only a few tones.

Now in the 1990’s, we have finally come of age. The combinations possible with the new neutrals will be endless. For the most part, colors in this type of palette will be of the same intensity or saturation, (and mostly in the medium range) with few deep tones or true pastels. Even the neutrals have become a vehicle for personal expression. No matter what the mood or personality, it will always come across at its best, when set against a background of neutrals.

The neutrals are somewhat like the furniture, and the other palettes we will be discussing are more like the accents or accessories. Some people enjoy more accessories than others, but everyone needs furniture. So it is with the neutrals in a palette.

INTELLECTUAL

**** SMART, WITTY, UNIQUE ****

These are colors which convey the message that the owner has traveled, is well read, and has something to say. These colors will command respect, but will not be overbearing at all. Like the “nurturing neutrals”, the “intellectual” palette will start with an earthy, warm base. However, they will not read as being nearly as friendly as those in the “nurturing” palettes. The colors themselves will seem to convey a mastery of the environment. Most of the colors in this palette will be of the same intensity or saturation. This will hold true even with the black/white contrast within the palette.

A sense of “communication” is important in creating an intellectual palette. The Bible says a man who does not tell all he knows is deemed wise. So it is with many of the colors in the intellectual palette. The will be somewhat out of the ordinary, with undertones that take a color expert to figure out. Interestingly,