

COLOR Up: To Create the Life You Want to Live

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COLOR Up forwards fun ways to approach common situations.

Introducing a new approach to problem solving, *COLOR Up* by Karen A. Foss and Ann Skinner-Jones uses a unique color wheel analogy to help people step away from black-and-white thinking toward new, more colorful ways of understanding everyday situations.

Color, the book reveals, has meaning in so much of our lives, though its prominence oftentimes goes unnoticed. The text investigates why we paint rooms in our houses certain colors, why our street signs are the colors that they are, and how colors operate from country to country—all considerations that many tend not to give much thought to.

The text describes emotions and feelings in terms of color, too, as well as how colors impact moods and appetites, how we attach certain colors to certain memories, and more. All these factors considered, it comes to make sense that color also be used as a means to step out of deeply ingrained binary thought patterns.

Here, “color” becomes a mnemonic device: C stands for Connect, O is for Optimize, L is for Lighten, O is for Oops, and R is for Ripple. Each part demonstrates a different way of decision-making so that people are able to fully consider each available option instead of thinking in an all-or-nothing way. Through each section, activities are proposed for brainstorming and practicing colorful thinking. They include word associations, essay questions, and crafting.

The book’s concepts originated in a workshop, and many of its attendees’ experiences are shared to helpfully demonstrate real-life, creative applications. The book’s brightly colored pages are illustrated by Lehla Eldridge, whose whimsical sketches and helpful color wheel diagrams more fully demonstrate the book’s different techniques.

A small paint box denotes space for self-reflection, essay question answers, or emotional brainstorming. Quotes from well-known authors, educators, and philosophers are peppered throughout and help solidify the demonstrated ideas. Fascinating paragraphs throughout the chapters—labeled “COLORing Outside the Lines”—introduce social or cultural anecdotes about color, factual reasoning into why we tend to think the way we do, and how much color has an effect on our daily life.

The various, diverse parts of the book work together well. Imaginary scenarios are posed, making room for creative introspection, and black-and-white diagrams and sketches are additional fuel for meditation. Still, the techniques become repetitive and seem best suited to less serious scenarios; it is difficult to imagine using these activities to handle a real life crisis. There’s something that feels a bit too easy about the book’s conceptions.

The book's artistic approach to self-help and psychology is creative. *COLOR Up* forwards fun ways to approach common situations.

KATIE ASHER (September 28, 2018)

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