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Ah, Sweet Memories – Part One

By Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein

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Finally! The colors of the leaves are changing, and now all too quickly. As I walk around my neighborhood enjoying the smells of autumn, combined with the reds, oranges and even maroons of some of the leaves, I think once more of all the autumns that have come and gone.

Surely for me, it is a special season. How does my memory hold on to this time of year? It is partly by color, and certainly by memory traces of weather conditions. I particularly think of gray days where it doesn't rain, as well as crisp clear days of brilliant blue sky, when I feel cold but so fresh and clear headed. Some of my autumn memories are tied into Halloween. There were those giant paper bags that I dumped onto the living room rug as a six year old. It seemed like millions of candy bars came tumbling out. There were Hershey Bars, Three Musketeers, Kisses and Life-Savers that lasted six months, along with lollipopseven loose changeand of course apples. I had to come back and forth to my house three times as the bag got so full. There were no plastic bags in those days.

Then there were the high school football games in Norwalk. My father was the Superintendent of Schools and liked to go to show support. I wanted to go to be popular and see the boys. Finally I was old enough to be invited to a game by a senior in high school. I thought I would die with joy. He was handsome and smart and I was only a freshman. We had a great time. I was nervous but still felt entranced. He put his arm around me as we walked. He knew everybody. When he dropped me home later I realized suddenly that my pants had a rip in them that was fairly large and noticeable. Now I really wanted to die!

Today I came across a wonderful story sent to me by a guest writer, Emily Doherty. She takes us in to her vivid memory bank, by color, by aroma, by setting and many other ways of delight. For example, Emily captures the essence of color beautifully by letting us take a peek into her vivid childhood memories. We really get a chance to see how she has been able to hold on to memories and bring them back to life as truly enchanted moments.

These moments are what I call in my first book, THE ENCHANTED SELF, A Positive Therapy, 'Positive Fingerprints of the Mind', unique to each of us. I hope that you enjoy her insight and joy as

Ah, Sweet Memories – Part One

she recounts her unique way of connecting with enchantment. I also hope that you experience, as I did by reading her story, that you have a real sense of having been there with her. Even though we all experience life a little differently, there is a joy in sharing and connecting that happens when we make our story real. Emily has done that for all of us! Enjoy.

Please enjoy this short exercise below and stay with me next week for part two of this article where you will get to read Emily's beautiful story about color and enchantment.

Ponderings: What does color mean to you? Can you play with positive memories about color, or perhaps the feel of beautiful fabric? Or the aromas that goes with special occasions? Give yourself a momentary treat and retreat to some pleasant sensations!

For me right now, I'm remembering the beautiful recital dress made out of lavender organdy that I danced in when I was six. It had ruffles and to this day I yearn for it. How I wish my mom had saved that little dress. There are lavender roses every year that are the exact shade. How happy I am when I see them.

I hope you treat yourself to a pleasant reverie and be blessed by some lovely way in which at least a part of it will come back or be reinvented in some way, as the roses took on the exact color for me!

Ah, Sweet Memories – Part Two
By Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein

Thank you for staying with me. Last week I shared some colorful autumn stories of my childhood that were truly enchanted moments. This week I hope you will enjoy part two as Emily shares her beautiful story about color and enchantment with us. Enjoy!

Featuring the story Prism by guest writer, Emily Doherty

"Right brain ... left brain ..." droned the speaker. I doodled idly in my already embellished notebook margins and mumbled "No brain!" under my breath. Surely a crayon or two might still lurk in a forgotten corner of this escapee mother's pocketbook. I nudged my friend for assistance, but all she could find was an old lipstick stub, too neutral for my purposes. Not even a smudgy red pen or a faded highlighter. I grinned conspiratorially in her direction as we recalled yesterday's 'there-goes-another-flower-child' glances of other tourists when they spied the bunches of scarlet poppies waving comfortably from a free corner of my backpack.

"Right brain...left brain..." One for words, one for images, and I, ever easily aroused and enraptured by both. Which brain was mine, I mused? Yet another hole too round for my perennially square peg. Images. Color. Why choose?

I cannot remember a time when I was not seduced by color. Was it the petunias, perhaps, the firm grip of my father's aging hand as we climbed the short hill beside our house to browse briefly in the palette of fuschias and magentas, violets and lavenders blue? Was it the haphazard piles of velvet upholstery samples tossed invitingly on the play yard floor of my grandmother's linen closet, beckoning me to

cavort with kings and queens? Or the bright balls of wool stored in the shiny brass potato chip can awaiting her dedicated fingers to transform them into rainbow squares for afghans? Perhaps it was the color words themselves, the tantalizing tongue twirls of fairy tales and Crayola wrappers: heliotrope, delphinium, vermilion, celadon, burnt sienna, Endless as imagination, they lured me to delight.

I am drawn to the mesmer of color as the musician is to melody. Song colors my ears; image colors my soul. I cannot choose a favorite, like chocolate or vanilla ice cream; life remains incomplete without all 64 in one box. From the earliest remembrances of childhood, my favorite few possessions were books with "colored plates", a rare find among my mother's vintage novels, and crayons. I amassed color everywhere: postage stamps, ribbons, fabric swatches, buttons, flower petals, butterflies, marbles, in endless and varied collections. While my mother shopped, I crawled invisibly under the tables in the millinery department, risking spots on my shopping—white gloves and hoping that an elegant bloom or two, a feather or a bright sequin, had somehow hidden in the pale, plush carpeting. I traced the paisleys in oriental rugs, and retraced them as I rubbed my eyes and journeyed through my very own Arabian Nights to sleep.

Dresses, many ill-fitting and old, hide in the depths of my closet, appearing as briefly as butterflies in Spring cleaning, and then carefully return to their hooks and hangers because the loss of their colors would somehow diminish my being. Like my relationships, they stay safely in the shadows, each waiting for the vibrant moment to emerge from its Plastic bag chrysalis when the light changes seasons. My mother's coral wool dressing gown, my father's tasteful maroon ties, my daughter's first velvet gown, an unmistakable Evening-In-Paris blue, a length of bright Marimekko left from my son's window curtain — each has a spot in my Technicolor memory. Bred on the still enticing black and white films, a secret part of me breathes a quick sigh of relief when the movie is in color!

Like my mother, I find myself chasing Tiffany windows in obscure towns and places, their brilliant tones enveloping me in awed silence as they did on Sunday mornings long ago. Unable, to rationalize a splurge on the real thing, I have carefully arranged a pauper's ransom of colored glasses and bottles on the eastern sill to greet the early morning light. Drawers burgeon with sheets of wrapping paper too beautiful to be sacrificed yet to packages; silk scarves spanning the generations lie in neatly folded piles looking for a more swan-like neck than mine.

Yes, it is I, screeching to a stop in front of summer's roadside standssurely there is a friend who will delight in the medley of marigold yellows and cosmos magentas as much as I. Only a woman committed to keeping all 64 colors in a single, dog-eared yellow box would buy flowers instead of cucumbers for dinner, would count Provencal sunflowers instead of sheep on a sleepless night. There is not a jelly glass (see how that one looks blue in the afternoon light!) too dusty for the optimistic crimson of the last November rosebud, nor a moment too full to wonder at the purpling miracle of sunset, where, at last, one might search between the gilded folds of cloud and finally capture the elusive sky-blue pink.

"Color", continued this morning's speaker, "frolicked like the child at the edge of the sand" in the chosen artist's works. In color lies the kaleidoscope of my life, the fire opal of my imagination, and the palette of my memories and dreams. It is the prism of my soul, illuminating the depths and the dark.

Dr. Holstein is the originator of The Enchanted Self and a psychologist since 1981. She is the author of two books: The Enchanted Self, A Positive Therapy and Recipes for Enchantment, The Secret Ingredient is YOU! Dr. Holstein speaks on radio, and appears on television in NY and NJ. She gives lectures, seminars, retreats and audio interviews on LadybugLive.com and is in private practice in Long Branch, NJ with her husband, Dr. Russell Holstein.

The Sentimental Meaning Of Flowers

By Gina Stathopoulos

For me certain types of flowers bring back a flood of memories. I remember in my early teens visiting my best friend who had moved to the country. We would spend hours in the field next to her property, talking and picking the petals of daisies in a game played by many, he–loves–me, he–loves–me–not.

This memory can rushing back two days ago when I was waiting in line at the supermarket and happened to glance at the bouquets for sale. Amongst the mixed bouquets, there were daisies. This flower has special meaning in my heart. I associate it with my best friend who I lost to a car accident when we were both 17.

Flowers definitely bring an emotional response and we remember our happy and sad times through them.

The first time I inhaled the sweet fragrance of a carnation I was enthralled. It happened when my father, took us to Greece to visit his parents. As a 7 year old, this strange land captivated me. I vividly remember my first response when we made our way up the hill where my grandparents' house was, to find myself staring up at the hanging grapes from the porch roof and the carnations which were planted along the edge of the porch.

Blood red, I can still recall their sweet aroma. They were the pride and joy of my grandmother who nurtured them and allowed me to help care for them. I had been instantly impressed by this glorious flower, not having seen it before.

If you are a woman, most of your flower memories may be romantic ones. Can you recall the first time you received flowers? Or the time when you were impressed the most with your date's thoughtfulness?

The first time I received flowers was at the early stages of the internet. I loved meeting and chatting with people from around the world and one such person was Rowan from London. We hit it off right away and till this day have remained good friends.

I was at work when a courier came in with a gigantic bouquet of flowers. When the receptionist came into my office to usher me to the reception not for a minute did I think they were for me. But they were. The gesture was so unexpected, so thoughtful, it will remain in my heart forever.

What are your flower memories?

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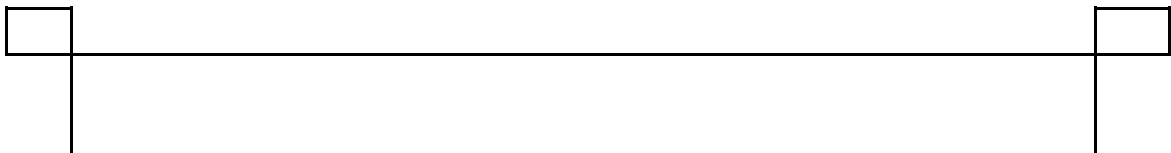
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