

## LIFE IN COLORS

(Early empty-nest thoughts in an email to a friend)

I enjoyed the kids yesterday, but they are definitely a full-time job. I well remember those days! A mother's world from when her kids are born until the youngest is about six or seven is a whirlwind of primary colors, the color of pure innocent love and tiredness and running and toys and fulfillment. You don't feel the fulfillment since you're so tired but it's there. :)

I think that marriage until the first pregnancy is a world of red, living in a valentine world of married love. Not that it's all roses but it's just that emotional stage. The children bring out an explosion of primary colors in your life, not only literally but emotionally. During that time everything in life is bold and almost so bright it hurts your eyes, rushing around in the whirlwind of life. Then the kids start to grow up and life gets physically easier, the bright primary colors darken into purples and blues and blacks and greens. The color of bruising, because at this point your life changes from the physical stress to emotional stress as you let them start moving outside the safe nest. Viviane said something in her letter Friday that struck me. "I mean, I'll always be the Mom but I won't be the Needed Mom." That is so true.

Now I'm into new colors again, and I'm not sure what they are. They're more pastel, and I think that's hard as I'm a bold color person. Not literally, of course. But life softens into lighter colors. What color are large blocks of empty time? Not gray. Kind of a washed out blue. What color is having time to finally do something with your life and not knowing what that is? I think we're kind of rattling around in an empty cage. Not enough business to keep us totally occupied, not enough money to take up blocks of time with diversions like traveling and such. The unfulfilled feeling of not really doing something to keep us spiritually focused. I don't mean going to church, I mean as in having a ministry, affecting people's lives. We're used to affecting people's lives day and night (our children) and suddenly we have no ministry. This book I'm reading, *The Memory-Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards is

really getting inside my head. I can't put the book down. To see how choices and words affect people's lives is so wild. Real food for thought.

I'm waxing philosophical and while this may sound kind of depressing it really isn't, I'm just finding my way and I feel rather lost at the moment. I need to go work in a soup kitchen or something and give me some perspective back. :)

(My friend's response, as a mother of young children.)

Hey,

I identify with your color theory. I'm not sure I would say we were Valentine's Red, because it was rocky, I'll have to think about what we were before kids. Young kids are definitely vivid primary colors. I'm still there, though it seems (her oldest boy) was the four "primary" ones, but with the two girls we've expanded to pinks, purples, and the bright secondary's. It's still a box of Crayola markers though. A little muted-ness would be nice sometimes, but I can see how an empty nest makes you feel lost.

I go up and down like waves I guess with enjoying the moment, savor them while they are young thoughts, then descending to these crazy kids, I wish I could just get away thoughts. Anyway, I wanted to say I relate.

(from a friend my age)

She shared your "colors" e-mail with me. I loved it. I admire your creative thoughts and your ability to express them. I'm in the same color as you. When you figure out what it is, please let me know. :)