

## **Crayons**

### **Transcription by Evernote with edits by myself**

Good evening.

Crayons are probably not something you have thought much intellectually about. You probably have not thought too much about them at all. You may have used them; you probably have used them in fact. It would be odd if you didn't. Federation Without Television is all about thinking intellectually about just about anything. Even crayons. I have some food for thought for you.

On occasion, you'll find just the three primary colors:

- Red
- Yellow
- Blue

In a box of crayons. This is rare certainly. Usually just for novelty or gimmick purposes. I have seen restaurants, for example, give out a box of three crayons. My dad told me, "That's a way to occupy the kids when they have to wait for meals." Besides the rare uses such as novelty, gimmick, and restaurant purposes, if you go to the store, you're not going to probably find a box of three crayons. Usually, it's at least eight. Often sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, or one hundred twenty-eight.

The more crayons you have, the more choices in colors you have. For some, this is good; for some, this is not good. It all depends.

It's good because you can be more precise in your color selection. Instead of just having red, you can have different shades of red. You can have a really dark red or a really light red. You can have anything in between as well. It's disadvantageous because it makes it hard to decide [a lot of research says that options can confuse rather than help people. Do you want watermelon red or do you want lift red? It sucks sometimes. Sometimes you just rather have plain old red.

You would think the process of naming and selecting crayons would be really innocuous. You would think such a process would be uncontroversial. Or at least you would hope that such would be the case. But such is not the

case. I have heard of PC liberals complaining that “there is bias in the colors of crayons selected.” I have heard people complain about names of crayons. Although these people may have points that selection of certain shades of crayons reflect racial bias in our society, ultimately... Ultimately, I don't think it's that important of a matter to get worked up about. Certainly, there's more egregious examples of racial discrimination and bias than crayon color selection. Why not worry about the criminal justice system or jobs [common things sociologists and activists cite as examples of racial discrimination]?

Some people note crayons are used a lot in our schools, a big reason for this is because kids are in schools and kids tend to love crayons. When I worked in the schools, I was amazed at how often crayons were used, particularly in the first grade. It seemed like every other assignment almost involved the use of coloring. When you think about it, in the real world, coloring is not that important of a skill. I think what the teachers are trying to do in their infinite foolishness is to teach the kids not coloring for its own sake, but teach kids how to complete assignments by using something they like to do, color.

Probably the biggest market for manufacturers of crayons is the school market. The retail stores have humongous sales when school rolls around. You can get school supplies such as crayons for dirt cheap prices. Even if you are poor or broke, you can still probably manage to get some crayons. Dollar stores sell crayons for cheap prices. Sometimes I think the retail stores are even cheaper yet. Crayons are easy to come by.

In the past, crayons were made out of wax [common knowledge]. I don't think wax is the favorite substance anymore. Wax was useful for crayons because it gave crayons the texture we have come to associate with them. These days with synthetics, you don't have to use actual wax to create the texture you want [common knowledge]. You can find some other substance that does what you need to do. I've even heard of soy being used for creating crayons. Advocates of soy say, “it's one of the most versatile plants out there.” Not only can it be used for a plethora of food, but it can also be used for something like creating crayons.

There are other writing utensils that compete with crayons. The two biggest ones are colored pencils and markers. I think colored pencils and markers are ultimately better than crayons. But for some reason or another, crayons

still keep going. Markers are great, because you can cover a greater surface in a smaller time. They tend to be bold and thick. Plus, they stand out really well. Markers are great for posters. They are not good in the sense that they can bleed through really easily [common knowledge]. If you have a thin piece of paper or if you are a heavy touch, you will likely bleed through. Colored pencils enable you to be really precise. Since they are pencils, they can also look fairly neat. I know when I was in the schools, teachers often during important assignments told the kids to use colored pencils and not crayons. Actually, some of the most anal retentive rules are about what to use.

One teacher had this really anal retentive rule about what should go in the pencil tray:”

- Only pencils, not markers.
- She didn't say crayons, but I imagine if the kids there dared to put a crayon in the pencil tray, it would have been bad news.”

Another competitor is colored pens. These are not as popular as competitors. There are three standard colors for pens:

1. Red
2. Blue
3. Black

Blue and black are for general writing and red is for correction [common knowledge]. Even though these are colors, they're not generally considered to be like colored pens. Anything outside of these three are. I've seen pink pens, purple pens, and other colors. When I was young, I had this one pen that had multiple colors. It was fun to use it. Pens are probably my favorite writing utensil. I have this great desire to have a pen with me at all times. In fact, not just one, but multiple pens. Inevitably, a pen will not work, so it's useful to have more than one. For some reason, even though people like me prefer pens, colored pens have not been quite as popular as colored pencils, markers, or crayons.

Robert Fulgham, the author of that book, *Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, mentioned crayons in one of his other books. I listened to the audio tape version of it. In there, he was talking about how even though he's an adult, he thinks crayons are great. He talks about how wonderful it makes him feel to use crayons. He even suggested something

ludicrous. I'm not entirely sure if he was being serious or not. It was so ludicrous that you would think he wouldn't be serious. He said, "World leaders that are fighting should get together and be given crayons." He argued that this would ease tensions. He even mentioned, I think, George Bush Sr. and Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein has an awfully hard heart. It would take a lot to soften that heart, if he even has a heart at all. I don't think throwing some crayons in front of him would be sufficient, if anything would work. Certainly, someone like Osama Bin Laden would not be softened by mere crayons. He definitely has no worthwhile heart.

Crayons are that powerful. Crayons are that powerful. Next time you see crayons, don't have empty thoughts. Think intellectually about them. Think about the ramifications I have mentioned tonight.

I don't use crayons very often. It's rare I would even think about using them. Unless maybe that was my only option. Maybe you are different. Whatever the case may be, you can think intellectually about crayons.

Good evening.