

# **REACHING OUT**

**To The Youth Of The World  
A Success & Happiness Guide**



**Stephen Tan**

**A Global Project - 40 Languages Targeted**

# Contents

	Page
Foreword.	4
Preface.	6
1. Why are we on earth?	7
2. The beauty and wonder in nature.	10
3. The powers of flowers and colours.	14
4. The magic of songs and laughter.	18
5. Seeing and finding good everywhere.	21
6. Exercise, nutrition and health.	26
7. Crown your life with a majestic purpose.	30
8. Your values.	34
9. Morality and character.	37
10. Starting off with simple balance and common sense.	39
11. Your mental attitude.	44
12. Self-knowledge and self-image.	48
13. Talents, and discovering your share of them.	53
14. Building hobbies around your talents for maximum success.	57
15. Freedom, with responsibility.	60
16. Love, kindness, generosity and forgiveness.	62
17. Respect and love your parents.	66
18. Friendship.	69
19. Good manners and etiquette.	72
20. Communication.	75
21. The winner's image.	79
22. The joy of learning and the power of knowledge.	84
23. Staying ahead.	88
24. The marvel of man's inventions.	91
25. The consciousness for abundance and prosperity.	94
26. Wealth for a purposeful and fulfilling life.	97
27. Dreams.	100
28. Setting your goals.	103
29. Burning desire.	107
30. Imagination and creativity.	110
31. Beliefs.	113
32. The magic of the positive mind.	117
33. Our miraculous subconscious.	120

## Contents

34. Visualisation and affirmation, the magic carpet.	123
35. Psychic capacities.	126
36. Visions and strategies.	129
37. Clear thinking, judgement and priorities.	132
38. Opportunities are everywhere.	134
39. Enthusiasm.	138
40. Drive.	141
41. Decisions and actions.	144
42. Focus.	147
43. Good memory.	150
44. Time, the priceless commodity.	153
45. Discipline.	156
46. The power of a peaceful heart, quiet mind and winning spirit.	159
47. Getting the job you want.	162
48. Job-loving and job-survival.	165
49. Good organisation, methods, and efficiency.	169
50. Being initiative and going the extra mile.	171
51. Excellent performance.	174
52. Climbing the ladder of success.	179
53. Empowering others.	182
54. Human resources.	185
55. Building your charm and charisma.	187
56. Marketing yourself and attracting influential people.	190
57. Tenacity, perseverance and determination.	192
58. Labour now, luxury later.	195
59. Thrift for thriving.	198
60. Observance, inquisitiveness and enterprise.	200
61. Provide the environment and rewards for excellence.	202
62. The recipe for success.	204
63. A further analysis of success ingredients.	208
64. The paradox in the pursuit of success.	211
65. Luck.	214
66. Problems and setbacks.	217
67. Coping with frustration and failure.	219

## Contents

68. Stress, worry, fear and depression.	222
69. Courage.	226
70. Relaxation and meditation.	228
71. The power of prayer.	231
72. A fresh view, optimism and humour.	234
73. Self-healing.	238
74. Learning from failure.	242
75. The importance of physiology and disposition.	244
76. Your response to daily situations.	246
77. Habits.	248
78. Reading people.	251
79. Street-smartness.	254
80. Selling skills.	257
81. The art of negotiation.	261
82. Emulate the successful, learn from them.	266
83. Dating and romance.	268
84. Love and marriage.	272
85. A home full of affection and joy.	278
86. More on the happy family.	283
87. Overcoming a personal crisis.	287
88. The foundation for happiness.	292
89. More pursuits of happiness.	298
90. Change, ongoing improvements and growth.	303
91. A model citizen, gaining reverence and recognition.	307
92. Leadership.	310
93. The successful personality.	314
94. The powerful synergy of your resources.	318
95. Staying young.	320
96. Building balance, wisdom and virtues on success.	324
97. More morality, less misery.	328
98. A moral duty to mankind.	334
99. Eternal life.	338
100. True riches.	341

## Foreword

In the last 80 years, wars have cost us billions of dollars in destruction, and millions of precious lives. More recently, hatred and brutality have devastated much of Asia, Middle East, Europe and Africa. Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Zaire are glaring examples. The 1994 Report from the UN Development Programme, reveals that the richest 20% of the world feast on 85% of the earth's total output. In Asia alone, 700 millions live in poverty, with little ability to read or write. Soldiers outnumber doctors 20 to 1 in developing countries, yet a fighter jet could pay for the primary education of 1 million children!

In developed nations, we have strayed in other directions. Crime in America for example, costs US\$425 billion and many lives a year. The latest news is that the U.S. prison population have soared to 1 million; one in 250 citizens! In modern communities, where alarming percentages of marriages end in divorces, and part-time and solo parents are increasing, a 3-year wedlock seems eternity.

Internationally, more conflicts are now inside national borders, where tragically, 90% of the casualties are civilians. We spend a whopping US\$800 billion a year on weapons instead of welfare, yet an estimated US\$34 billion is sufficient to put the world's children on a good footing. The last 10 years saw far more children killed in wars than soldiers, with 2 million dead, 5 million disabled and 12 million homeless! What kind of adults will these millions of kids grow up to be, shaken and deranged by such mass violence and deprived of home, family, love, normal bodies and souls? Will they grow up to create or face greater problems and catastrophes in future? The global scene has a web of injustice, illiteracy, crime, diseases, famines and bloodshed.

One cannot help sinking into serious soul-searching, and ponder over the reasons and solutions for all these cruelties and miseries. Soon, an answer invariably emerges. It lies now in our offspring, the heirs to the world. They are our hope and future. A flurry of old phrases and new words comes to mind: A tree grows the way it is bent, nipping problems in the bud, love, guidance, conditioning, mental-

seeding...These words also trigger our recall of 2 bizarre incidents reported in recent times, which can chill our spines and touch our hearts about parents' sway on future generations. One involved an infant kept with the dogs, who later barked like a puppy; elsewhere, another child had been brought up by chimpanzees, and showed behaviour approaching that of the apes.

Parental care, religion, moral guidance and good education are the foundation for knowledge, skills, altruism, virtues and even justice. Parents tend to leave things to the schools, but being most influential, and answerable for their own flesh and blood, they should assume 90% of these duties. Beyond the family, and given the interwoven nature of society and the economic multiplier, if we would only put other people's welfare closer to our self-interests, our blessings could return tenfold!

Childhood and youth are a treasure, the most precious period of life. It is a time of great expectation, discovery, emotion, learning, formation of personality and character, and consolidation of personal substance. The new generation can in time be the powerful pillars of society, and possibly the salvation of humanity. If all of them could release their vast potentials, harness all available resources, and make combined efforts to improve and beautify the world, they could bring miracles. Meanwhile, not enough is being done to help the young. It is high time we realise that, to create a Utopia, young people need a creed to believe in, a moral code, strong values, a noble purpose, causes to champion, knowledge, health, wisdom, and profound innate strength.

All our youngsters must now advance resolutely towards a happy, meaningful and rewarding life; the rest of the world and their destiny depend on them. Governments, leaders and parents, on the other hand, have a grave moral duty, to provide the all-important education, nutrition, love, and a promising future. Despite current shortcomings, it is still a wonderful world, a fascinating universe. Let us strive to find and develop beauty and goodness everywhere. Let us crown our lives with a majestic purpose.

The Author.

## Preface

This book is written for the growth and well-being of children and youths, and indirectly, for the current and future welfare of those around them. We pray that they will learn to live happy and fruitful lives, and become the saviours of society.

The chapters follow a developmental process from age 10 to 35. This age group is almost 40% of global population, or 2.5 billion young and vibrant lives. Despite their free time, energy and receptivity, they remain a neglected and under-utilised group world-wide, yet it is in their tender age that morals, values, intelligence and talents are shaped and crystallised.

Hopefully, this will be a candle to the underprivileged in some dark corners of the earth, and a cradle for many, to nurture success. In the years ahead, may this be a guiding light, a constant companion, a source of comfort, encouragement and motivation. If this book reaches a great number of youngsters around the globe - which is our burning wish - its impact will be substantial, and its results, promising and gratifying to us all!

The Author.

"In you there is hope, for you belong to the future, just as the future belongs to you." - Pope John Paul II, Letter to the youths of the world, International Youth Year, 1985.

"What's done to children, they will do to society." - Dr K. Menninger.

"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." - Aristotle.

## Chapter 1 Why Are We on Earth?

The thought of sharing all my good ideas and knowledge with all of you everywhere thrills me to pieces! This is the 1st of the 100 chapters, so it is appropriate that I start at the beginning of everything; hence, the big question is: Why are we here?

We are here because God created the universe, and He made humans special among all his creations. We are His children, and you can appreciate how much He loves us. He could have built a perfect paradise on earth, with all living happily ever after; if that was the end of the story, wouldn't it be boring? That is why God lets the world carry on as it is, giving us freedom and choice. When we eventually discover Him, adore Him, and choose to join Him in heaven, He feels enormous gratification. It is a satisfaction beyond description, much grander than that of owning a faultless world from the start, because His children have come willingly to love him, without being forced to.

Should you or any of your friends doubt the existence of God, just ponder, the vastness and order of the universe. Its expanse is beyond human understanding or imagination. Our Sun, according to scientists, is only one of the countless stars around, many of which are much bigger. The others are so far away that they appear only as cold and dim twinkles in the night. These 'suns' are so distant that despite the speed light travels, their light takes hundreds of years to reach us! A light-year is the distance travelled by flashing light in a year, or about 9,518,616 million km. Our Milky-Way galaxy alone, is 100,000 light-years across, or 951,861,600,000 million km wide, and yet, that galaxy is only a speck of dust in the whole universe! The universe is that infinite, that endless.

The order in the universe is equally astounding. The planets rotate and revolve around the Sun. The earth gives working days and resting nights, and tilts to provide the seasons. The magnetic poles activate compasses to guide ships and planes. The human brain thinks, plans, calculates, and remembers! The human heart beats about 2,600 million times without resting, and each person contains 100 trillion cells, miraculous right down to the invisible DNA! The tongue tells the chilli from the tomato, while the nose differentiates champagne from coffee. Acorns always grow into trees, not roses, and Poodles never give birth to



Pekingeses. God gives us rain from the clouds, timber from the forest, food and medicine from the plants, rice and cotton from the fields, sugar from the canes and salt from the seas. Boys and girls attract each other, fall in love, then get married to produce offspring.

All members of this huge ecological system co-depend on one another. Are all these one big accident, without a God? Let me put it in simpler examples: If I served you a delicious meal would you say no one had cooked it? If you walked along the beach, found a watch and held it to your ear, and it was still ticking away beautifully, would you say nobody had made that watch? Do not doubt the presence of God. If you do, you are unfortunate, and you may find your life in this world and in the next, a little messy and unhappy, because there, something is definitely amiss.

At the onset here, I want you to see clearly and certainly, that you are here for a special reason: To love yourself, to love others, and to love God. You are here to bring success and happiness to yourself and your fellowmen. Someone once said, 'The great purpose of life is to make something that will outlast us.' It would be very sad, if you lived like a cow or a sheep and just passed away, without beautifying and enriching yourself, society and humanity. So let love and virtues be the focal point and the integral part of your values and your daily life. Let your love for your parents, brothers and sisters be **deep and unconditional**; then you will greatly enjoy and treasure their company, you will help them more and share the joy of building a wonderful home. If you really love God, you will do good, and do no wrong.

You are a lucky person in your own way and by normal standards, but today you are even luckier, because I am starting this book of 350 pages, and imparting everything to you to ensure your success and happiness. This is easy, with a bright and responsive youngster like you; all you need is to read every line attentively, then digest, understand and memorise them. Please put the good ideas into practice immediately. In the next 99 lessons, I will give you all the good concepts and encouragement to make you happy. Basically, life depends on our self-image, attitude, thoughts, actions, and our acceptance and handling of situations and people. How we overcome frustrations and problems is important. Life is not always a bed of roses, and people who succeed do not have fewer problems than those who fail. The only people without problems are those in the graveyards.

Whenever there is setback, it is okay. It is not the problem that matters, it is how we perceive situations and tackle them, that makes the whole difference!

I beg you to read all the chapters carefully. I will do my best to make them meaningful and interesting for you. I cannot expect you to embrace all my words immediately, but I have lived over 40 years, seen 26 countries, met thousands of people, read thousands of books and spent months in seclusion, reflecting on success and happiness. One day, you will say, 'Thank you Sir, you were right. Now we have come a long way, you have brought me much strength, goodness, joy and achievement.'

Life is precious, and you are! Make the most of life and yourself. Enjoy and progress every minute of your day. Today is the beginning of your great lifetime, let's have words from the great to enlighten you, and to launch you on your fabulous journey:

"He has half the deed done, who has made a beginning." - Horace.

"Give the best to the world and the best will come to you." - Anonymous.

"Man has his future within him, dynamically alive at this present moment." - Abraham Maslow.

"You are free to choose, but the choices you make today will determine what you will have, be, and do in the tomorrows of your life." - Z. Ziglar.

"Sow a thought and you reap an act; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny." - R. W. Emerson.

"Life means to have something definite to do - a mission to fulfill - and in the measure in which we avoid setting our life to something, we make it empty. Human life, by its very nature, has to be dedicated to something." - J. O. Gasset.

## Chapter 2 The Beauty and Wonder in Nature.

Tonight I stand peacefully beneath a cloudless sky, enchanted by thousands of stars. They are winking at me, with the light that they flashed hundreds of light-years ago! The splendour of the universe still stuns me. I am waiting for a falling star to make a special wish for you.

There it goes! I wish that in your lifetime, you will see and experience most of the natural and man-made wonders of the world, some of which I have relished myself. First, let us admire the natural wonders, which are really a mouthful. There are 900,000 types of insects on this planet, 250,000 species of plants, including 25,000 specimens of orchids and 20,000 varieties of roses. There are 30,000 kinds of fishes, thousands of breeds of mammals, and even 10,000 sorts of worms! That is enough to fill many sets of encyclopedias, and keep you busy for many lifetimes!

The first things that come to mind are the big ones, like the Grand Canyon in Arizona. It is a gigantic trench in the landscape, 450 km (280 miles) long, up to 29 km (18 miles) wide and 1.6 km (1 mile) deep! The gash was formed in the last 10 million years, mainly by the slow erosion of the Colorado river. The sight is awe-striking. See the magnificent Niagara Falls, straddling Canada and USA, called the honeymoon capital of the world. The voluminous descent looks like a curtain of white ropes; often bathed in dreamy, romantic colours from the nightly spotlights. If you have the chance, adore the Angel Falls in Venezuela, the highest waterfall on earth; then tour the world's largest river, the Amazon, in neighbouring Brazil. The upper reaches of the Amazon are home to some of the prettiest aquarium fishes, such as the Neon Tetra.

Let the world's tallest geyser thrill you at the Yellowstone Park in USA, called the 'Old Faithful' for its regularity. It hurls 45,000 litres (10,000 gallons) of hot water, 45 metres (150 ft) into the air! There are also sensational boiling mud and yellow sulphur pools nearby. Did you know there are smaller ones in Taupo and Rotorua in New Zealand and elsewhere too? These are all parts of the bewildering volcanic actions around the globe; but I hope you will never meet an erupting volcano! There are still 500 active ones. Under them, the intense 6,000 degrees Celsius temperature of the earth's core has formed brilliant and glamorous

gems and crystals. Examine the sparkle of a diamond at the jeweller, the rich green of the emerald, the mesmerising blue of the sapphire, and the alluring red of the ruby! The lustrous pearl is something else, it is formed after the wrapping of a foreign particle, by an oyster!

Waltz or drink to the charm of the Danube river, which inspired Strauss and Ivanovici in their masterpiece-compositions of *The Blue Danube* and *Danube Waves*. The river winds through Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Germany, and Austria - the setting of the great movie *The Sound of Music*. What a combination and heritage!

Go south of the equator, and venture onto the Ayers Rock in Central Australia and savour its changing colours, then move eastward to the Great Barrier Reef - 1,500 kilometres of underwater wonderland for swimmers and divers. The Reef is only 7 hours' drive from the Sunshine Coast my family visited recently! Study the dozens of Australian species of parrots, Macaws, Cockatoos, Budgies, Parakeets, and the rainbow Lorikeets too, which my family befriended on our last trip. Farther north, the mangrove swamp will show you the delicious mud-crabs, the naughty mud-skipper, the underground Lung Fish, and an occasional crocodile. If you are lucky enough, you may get acquainted with the strange Darwin Frog that hatches its eggs in the mouth. If you dig hard enough in the Australian desert, you may even find the Spade-Foot Toad It keeps moist by hibernating deep in the sand, until a heavy downpour induces it lay eggs.

We hope that one day you will chance upon the exquisite Midnight Sun in Northern Europe or Alaska, as the Arctic region tilts towards the summer sun, which does not set for a few nights! Stay a few more days and watch the astonishing Aurora - the Northern Lights - dramatic colours and dancing lights across the sky, caused by highly charged solar particles and atmospheric gases. Below the sky, view the icebergs and glaciers, but avoid the avalanche at all costs! Stay clear of the typhoons, tornadoes and hurricanes too, but watch the common yet spectacular lightning, and listen to its roaring thunder. You need not be afraid; it is estimated that every minute there are 6,000 lightnings flashing around our good earth. After the thunderstorms, look for the rainbow and let its prettiness linger in your mind. You can create your own rainbow too by splitting a spectrum of light. Put a torch light behind a glass prism, or cast a fine spray of water in a sunlit garden (which I used to do for my children), it is lovely!

Away from the biggies, the average things are even more miraculous and mesmerising. Recline lazily in the Dead Sea in Jordan, and read my book; the saltiest water in the world will keep you afloat forever. Walk on the black-sand beaches in Iceland, or watch the rising and falling tides of rivers anywhere around the globe, obediently magnetised by the moon.

Tumble into the deep jungles of New Guinea, and peep at the several species of Birds of Paradise. Their colours of red, orange, green and iridescent blue, coupled with angel-like long tail-streamers and discs, make them truly blissful and unforgettable. Then there is the peacock, with its jubilant tail display, spanning 1.5 metres. The superb Lyre Bird has a tail shaped like the ancient Greek guitar. Watch the brilliant blue Fairy-Wren of Australia, the gorgeous Fairy-Blue Bird of Asia, the elegant plumage colours of the Kingfishers, the pleasing Toucans, the charming Cocks-of-the-Rock, and numerous pretty Sunbirds. Do not miss the petite Hummingbird, which flaps its wings 80 times a second! You must listen to the beautiful songs of the New Zealand Bellbird, with a musical pitch so hypnotic and unique that I almost heard *'The Bluebells of Scotland'*. Listen to the melodic Asian Magpie Robin. Remember too, to converse with the mimicking Myna from Borneo.

Do not forget the clownish Puffin, carrying 10 fish at once in its beak. The short-tailed Shearwater birds take a yearly 30,000 km tour of Japan, Alaska, Canada, and Fiji, and return unfailingly, to South Australia in the last few days of September. The sun-loving Arctic Terns make the longest bird migration, from the North Pole to the South Pole, and back! Oh, the wonders are endless.

You should have joined the group of scientists, who in 1977 descended 2,500 metres to the pitch-dark ocean floor near Galapagos Islands. They did it in a special submarine called 'Alvin'. The world they saw, unseen by the sun, was incredible and bustling with life that ranged from the bizarre to the beautiful. There were strange creatures, and fishes that had various lights to show the way! The Football Fish, for example, has a round body covered in bony plates, plus a cable carrying a light-bulb above its head. Nearer the surface, you have giant squids growing up to 20 metres, the length of your classroom. The South African electric eel has enough power to light up 10 household bulbs! The adorable dolphins find their way by making sounds and listening to their echoes. Salmon navigate back to their exact birthplaces, to lay eggs and die. In California, the

Grunion Fish dances out of the soupy sand, to lay thousands of eggs in a minute.

I hope too, that one day in Mexico, you will stumble onto the picnicking ground of a few million Monarch butterflies; the sight is dazzling. Illuminations, mind you, are not confined to ocean floors. On the Japanese island of Hachijo, fungus plants glow like lanterns in the night, bright enough to be seen 20 metres away. Elsewhere in various countries, the fireflies flash orange in flight and green on the ground. Glow-worms are common too. Someday, I hope you can get a camera with a zoom-lens, and capture various sensational sights, like the flying Lemurs, gliding from tree to tree. Do you know there are 1000 species of bats and flying-foxes, and that spiders have up to 8 eyes? The dragonfly has 40,000 small eyes compounded together! Not to forget the big eyes of the owls, and the ridiculous-looking wide-eyed Tarsier, a tiny brown tree dweller, whose big round eyes will make you laugh.

Before I finish off here, let us turn our camera to the eye-filling Noah's Ark, forever around us, with such a rapturous array of: Seashells, starfish, lobsters, Jellyfish, caterpillars, butterflies, bees, squirrels, rabbits, porcupines, camels, zebras, giraffes, rhinoceros, elephants, sharks and rays, frogs and toads, newts and salamanders, lizards and crocodiles, turtles and tortoises, dolphins and whales, seals and sea-lions, penguins and polar bears, flowerpeckers and woodpeckers, falcons and hawks, platypus and spiny ant-eaters that lay eggs, gibbons and orangutans, leopards and cheetahs, Pugs and Malteses, Dalmatians and Silky Terriers.

'And Papillon, and Samoyed, and Bichon Frise...' my children would chip in as usual, they love dogs; but I would say: 'The world is so beautiful, but how many people really see it?'

### Chapter 3 The Powers of Flowers and Colours.

There is a poem I learned in my childhood days, which I remember clearly till this day. No other poem has such an impression on me; and true enough, a poetry book I looked into yesterday confirmed that ‘*The Daffodils*’ is one of the best ever written. Here is a part of it:

*I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze ...*

*They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.* - Wordsworth.

Wordsworth was writing about an English lakeside scenery, which he and his sister had cherished. Oh, if we could constantly see and feel, as Wordsworth did, we would always be filled with enchantment, we would be nearer the path to a world of happiness.

Imagine a world without colours, only black and grey! Visualise an earth without flowers, only iron and concrete. Colours and flowers are therefore, God's special gifts to humankind. The prettiest and sweetest things are God-given and free, or rather, are things we cannot buy. The fresh air, the soothing breeze, the enlivening shower and sunshine, the cloud's silver lining, the rainbow, the gorgeous trees and flowers and their fragrance, the music of the birds, the romantic sunset, the diamonds in the sky, the moonlight on the bay, and above all, life itself.

How much have you been missing? There are more: The swaying field of brilliant yellow flowers, the innocent, green sprouting leaves in spring, the rich chlorophyll of summer, the blazing orange of autumn, the whiteness of the winter

wonderland. These things can bring awakening and magic to our well-being, to our soul!

The garden and the landscape abound in floras and colours. There must be a thousand different shades and tones of blue, red, yellow, pink and green. Look at the red tulips and poppies, the stately dahlias, the yellow and joyous marigolds, buttercups, daffodils and sunflowers; the amber, bronze, copper, maroon and mauve of chrysanthemums, the bright faces of pansies, the blue lobelias and bluebells, the pink geraniums, the purple heathers and lilacs. Admire the peach blossom, the delicious blush of apples and cherries, all the crops, vegetables and spices; the endless, paradise displays of cactuses, impatiens, daisies, lilies, carnations, petunias, and so on.

When I was young I used to read about orchids and grow them. Have you ever flipped through a large book on orchids? Please do that on your next visit to the library! They are the biggest family of flowering plants, of almost 25,000 types, including many man-made, crossbred ones. They are found as far north as Alaska, and as high up as the Alps. Their long-lasting blossom, hues, shimmering contrasts and infinite range of tones thrills me. The vivid violet of the popular Dendrobiums, the jubilant Vandas, with angel-painted textures and patterns, the blissful spray of the Phalaenopsis, and probably the fairest of all is the fairy-like Cattleya, gentle and beautiful beyond description.

Then there are the queens of flowers, the roses. These blossoms of romance, friendship and dreams come in 2,000 species, with 20,000 ecstatic, cultivated varieties. Even the colours of roses have such meanings and feelings in our lives. For example, red roses convey love and respect, deep pink: appreciation, light pink: admiration or sympathy, orange: enthusiasm, yellow: joy, pale blended tones: friendship. You can do many things with roses, you can grow and cut them for bouquets and self-arrangement, or you can join an exhibition. You can dry roses, and also make pot-pourri mixture with spices, for fragrance. Rose petals and hips are also edible and used as medicine! Roses and other flowers obviously appeal to our 5 senses! You see, touch, and smell them, you taste them, then you sigh at their fragrance and beauty - that is sound, the last of the senses!

It is little wonder that flowers and colours have such an impact on our minds and behaviour. They can uplift our state of happiness to a degree few of us can fully evaluate. Take the common gesture of giving flowers, it brings a noble



feeling to both the giver and receiver. If we can appreciate the power, blessing and magic in flowers, we are closer to the road to happiness. If people had more 'flowers' in their hearts, there would be fewer conflicts and less bloodshed in the world. Nature's bloom takes away the gloom and disharmony in our environment. They calm, delight, and exude peace and gentleness, all the time. That is why important people and occasions make unfailing use of flowers. Many European cities, especially the German and Swiss ones, have flower-beds at the windows, and baskets of flowers on the lamp-posts. Most countries have their national flowers too.

Some surgeons operating on the hearts of patients had a ritual of pinning a 'Rose of Life' on the operation machine. The roses were later given to the waking patients. Over the years, the reputed medicinal properties of substances from flowers have even been contested in the courts and proven true! Away from the hospitals and in our everyday lives, flowers in the house and gardens assume great importance. Why don't you do something extra today, get several vases of fresh flowers and display them around the house, and admire them, a Garden of Eden! Then you can skim from petal to petal like an enchanted butterfly. You will feel good, I can assure you.

Besides flowers and plant life, everything in the world has some form of coloration. Everything in our daily lives has colours and they affect us, often without our knowing it. We must have this awareness, of the power of colours. The colours of buildings, houses, signboards, shops, walls, furniture and anything you buy or give away, they all carry a strong message. In some situations, it can even determine success or failure, because certain colours just do not suit a certain place, person or business. The colours we wear can match or mismatch our complexion, personality and position; they affect everyone and can even bring luck, as some people believe. Occasionally, we hear someone say: 'This is my lucky colour.' or 'This is my good-luck gem.'

Colours are now well known for their swaying and healing powers. Modern hospitals are very mindful of this, so are psychiatrists, artists, schools, hotels, commercial airlines, fashion, pop and theatrical shows, and even shopping windows. See how the jewellers display their gold and diamonds in a back-drop of deep red or dark blue? Magicians, movie-stars, models, marketing experts, politicians, kings and queens, toy-makers and sign-writers, and Santa Claus, you

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