How Colors Affect Us

Colors are often used to describe emotions. For example, if you “feel blue,” it means that you’re sad. A person who “sees red” is angry, and someone who’s “tickled pink” is happy about something. Besides expressing feelings, though, colors may also influence our actions.

In Japan, officials have put in blue lights around railroad platforms to discourage people from jumping in front of trains. As a result, certain stations with blue lights have seen an 84 percent drop in suicide numbers.

Pink has been believed to prevent violence. In the United States, jail cells were painted this color to calm prisoners. In sports, some visiting teams have had to use all-pink locker rooms, which were meant to weaken the teams and make them lose.

Unlike pink, red may let you gain an upper hand in sports. In the 2004 Olympics, boxers who wore red were found to have slightly higher chance of winning. Red is also believed to be the color of energy and power.

The ways in which colors affect us many be a result of nature and evolution. Red is the color of fire and blood, so it is connected to life, appetite, and danger. Yellow describes sunny days and can make us feel energetic and happy, while blue relaxes us with images of the sea and sky. Other factors determining our reactions to colors are culture and history. In the past, purple dyes were difficult to come by, and only kings and nobles could afford them. As a result, the color became a royal symbol.

As you can see, colors shape how we interpret the world. They are seen in all parts of life, and they can affect us in ways that we may not notice.