
UCF Forum

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UCF Forum: My Addiction to All Things Colorful, Crafty, Stationery and Office Supply

By Yolanda Hood
UCF Forum columnist
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I have a coloring book and pretty pencils to color with. I know many of you do, as well. But the difference between you and me may be this: I have had an addiction to all things colorful, crafty, stationery, and office supply for my entire life.

My office-supply addiction is so insane that people tease me about it. But, I believe that their teasing is simply a poorly disguised way of masking the fact that they covet my awesome pens, pencils, file folders and cat-shaped paperclips.

I believe there is a reason that I'm this way.

I grew up in a large, full and loving extended family. None of us had very much money, definitely not money for the whimsical—like felt-covered pencils in a rainbow of colors with a beautiful pointed eraser on top. There you go. That was the fifth-grade fad.

All of the kids whose parents could afford to, bought their kids every color you can imagine—Carolina Blue, Sunshine Yellow, Eggplant Purple. They were slightly larger than your typical No. 2 pencil, and the felt was not only pretty but amazingly soft on the fingers. My mom took me to the local stationery store to purchase a few.

I was so psyched.

But when we arrived we discovered that the pencils were \$2.99 each. My mother let me have one. Just one. That was all we could afford. I got Fire Engine Red.

I was grateful, of course, but brokenhearted too. I had dreamed about all the wonderful colors that I would bring to school to do my school work.

I know I'm not alone in this addiction. Office supplies is an industry with \$15.8 billion in revenue and \$300.4 million in profit. Thirty-eight percent of office-supply sales is to households for general and educational purposes.

How about planners and notebooks? Some think that the need for paper planners is shrinking as many favor digital time-management tools. But online sales of paper planners increased 49 percent and store sales of paper planners increased 7 percent in 2015. The accessories for those planners? Those increased 64 percent since 2014.

No, I didn't single-handedly cause the increase in sales. I had help.

There are a lot of people who find comfort and peace in planning on paper and using amazing office supplies to plan with, as is evidenced by the thousands of Facebook groups, YouTube channels, blogs, and people to follow on Instagram. Whole communities have been created to discuss planning: how to do it, when to do it, what to use.

There is a sense of community and nostalgia for those days when pen and paper were our only option.

Paper planning gives the brain an opportunity to rest from the pace of our digital world. With paper you can dump your thoughts, reflect, rethink, redo. Recent studies have suggested that people learn better in a classroom setting and are more productive in a work setting when using paper.

Journaling, scrapbooking, paper planning, coloring, or some other form of crafting and paper arts are easy ways of being creative, reflective and meditative. Besides that, they're fun. A good pen and a brightly colored file folder will get you through that boring meeting that you have to sit through.

I'm an adult now. I have my own money and, unfortunately, my own bills. But I make sure that I revel in the pleasure of office supplies, paper and planners without guilt.

I allow the little fifth-grade girl in me to have as many cool pens and pencils as she wants, especially felt covered ones in rainbow colors.

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