



Effectiveness of Color

Lauren S. Henry

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Moderator: Chantal Sicile-Kira

Guest Speaker: Lauren S. Henry

Hello. My name is Chantal Sicile-Kira and I would like welcome you to the *momsfightingautism.com* conference Get Educated About Autism. I'm also the founder of *autismcollege.com* which is co-sponsoring this conference put on by *momsfightingautism.com*.

Right now, I'm really excited to introduce to you someone who can make a difference in your child's life through the use of color. My guest today, right now is Lauren S. Henry who is a color expert and sensory designs specialist. She is also the president and founder of, With a Brush of Love, a company that "transforms lives through their surroundings, particularly those

diagnosed with autism and special needs.” This is accomplished by focusing on the sensory elements that surround us every day to support the individual needs of each client.

I’m going to be talking about her more in a minute and ask her a few questions, but right now, I’m going to explain a little bit more about the topic “Effectiveness of Color.” She’ll talking about, how discover the impact color has on all of us particularly those diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Colors can often impede inadvertently one’s ability to focus, concentrate, relax and decompress or simply connect in a positive and communicative way – our sensory surroundings have much more bearing over our attitude and abilities than we realize. You will learn how to discern what colors, shades and hues were best for your child’s specific need as well as your own. You will see how all the other sensory elements such as lighting, textures, scent, sounds, spatial surrounding, plants and more can change everything. Creating an environment that works for you is fundamental to one rising to their ultimate potential and achieving their goals much more easily.

Chantal: Welcome Lauren.

Lauren: Thank you so much I’m really thrilled to be a part of Autism College and this whole conference today. I think it’s an amazing opportunity for people.

Chantal: I was really amazed when I heard about you. You’ve been invited as a guest designer on both HGTV’s “kidspace” and ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” and aren’t you also creating your own TV show now?

Lauren Yes. We have a show called “Room to be Different” in the works which we’re very excited about which would finally show how parents can feel empowered and inspired and really hopeful about making an immediate difference for their children within their home atmosphere. I’ve been really frustrated just because it seems like there’s so much unnecessary struggle, things are hard enough that as parents could start to learn how they can make an immediate difference for their family and their children literally in, you know, over night, days, weeks to months. As an example, a child going from not sleeping through the night to sleeping, that’s a huge difference within the family and for parents to feel really empowered to do something that doesn’t have to be so complicated and that’s what this would be about—education and empowerment.

Chantal: It’s really a great idea and when I heard about you, I said immediately I have to have Lauren at this conference because well, everyone, well, most people know about my son Jeremy who’s 22 but I always talk about how important sensory

motor things are with him, but you know how much our kids really looking at color and we never think that much about the environment and it's a big struggle even at school just with the sensory and the lighting and all that kind of thing but at home, too, we have think about these issues and so it's really cool to see a designer who can help us figure out these things for our children.

Now Lauren has a book called "*Unique Kids. Unique Surroundings.*" I think that was released in September 2009.

Lauren That's correct. Yeah. It's on our website. It's on Amazon. I really appreciate you mentioning that. But it's very simple. It's an easy enjoyable read from what I've heard and it's only about 60 pages. It's a manual, if you will, to make things really easy in terms of a parent being able to go out and acquire the things that they need without it being overly complicated and figuring out how to do the things that we do on a much slightly smaller level but still one that is extremely impactful and has again immediate results for their kids and that's what that's about. The book is something that should just make it easy for parents to say, okay what did she say, about lighting or what kind of plant, the picture is right there, the exact brand name or the exact type of something you might need whether it's paint or lighting, etcetera and so forth, it's listed there. So it's something that's really easy to take with you or read upon and figure out how to utilize it in terms of your own family needs.

Chantal: Okay and your website is www.brushoflove.com, correct?

Lauren Correct, yes.

Chantal: Okay so, I have to say that I'm going to run out and buy this book because I know that I have some challenges with Jeremy that I would like to a look over and I've been really thinking about that ever since I heard about Lauren and say, oh my God, all these things I never really thought about specifically at home with Jeremy, or I always put off taking care of, because you know we don't have that much money when we have kids with autism and we always, the last thing we want to do is redecorate, but sometimes some simple things can really help a lot. So what are you going to tell us today, Lauren?

Lauren Well, what I'm going to do is share a bit of information about, as I mentioned, the effectiveness of color but all of the senses combined especially when you sort

of are looking at a space from an aesthetic point of view but most of us rarely ever consciously think about how it affects us from a functional point of view, productivity, concentration, focus, connectivity, one's sustainable energy, all of these kinds of things really are affected a great deal by our environment. And something as you said we take for granted and we frequently overlook. So I'm just going to start off by introducing my company, *With a Brush of Love* and we're looking at the first slide that introduces our logo and basically now I'm going to start off with the segue that Chantal began explaining in terms of the classroom and that's how I started in this field.

I was a teacher. I started as a substitute teacher for several years and if many of you are looking at the slide with me you will know notice that is very typical, this type of room in the classroom, clutter, color, overstimulation. Obviously, we know that our teachers need to have aids around them to help teach. But also one of the main issues now is that teachers are so overwhelmed having huge classroom of 30 and more even or 25 and more which is a very large classroom. But plus they're asked to teach several different subjects beyond what they would normally be and you know expected to teach. And so a lot of people want to have all the aids around them, all the different things on the wall, different subject material available out whether it be books whether it be the kids work plus all the other elements that have to do with teaching. You also have fluorescent lighting, you have chairs, you have work, you have educational material things that you use and it becomes basically too much, even for the teachers.

So that visual chaos is really affecting everybody's ability to focus as is the lighting and not something that's very typical and very frustrating to a teacher knowing that the environment needs to enhance and support what they are doing and allowing the kids to focus, and as you can see it's not very helpful in terms of doing that.

Chantal: Well even Temple Grandin speaks a lot about how it's easier in the 50's because the classrooms were very austere. It didn't have all these visual distractions and she said it's really hard for lot of kids nowadays with the ADD and the autism to focus when there's so much visual attraction or distraction going on even in the mainstream classrooms.

Lauren: Absolutely and the irony is Temple is right that you know when it's more

minimal, less is definitely more. That being said, going from this kind of elements, this kind of surrounding and then having a tile removed and put into that very kind of cold austere environment where it's kind of gray, there's one chair, there's one desk, there's nothing on the wall, it can be really very alienating and have the opposite effect where it really creates a lot of anxiety in the child which is something I notice as a teacher. All of a sudden certain kids who needed more assistance would be removed and placed from this type of environment, to environment that was the polar opposite and really created a lot of anxiety, just overall angst and discomfort for this kid almost as though they were being punished which they weren't. They're not doing anything wrong. They're being who they are. But the environment doesn't serve them in either scenario nor does it serve any of the more "average" nor typical children who by the way are simply finding their own ways of compensating. I wouldn't say that this is really helpful or advantageous for any child. So now I'm just going to take you into something that may seem very, this takes a minute so give me a moment, sometimes it slows down. Let's try something else.

I apologize, our slides are having a little bit difficulty here

Chantal: Are you going to show us a nicer classroom?

Lauren I'm going to take you to another slide that is, this doesn't want to work. Let's try down here. A moment ago when we just...okay here we are. What I'm you right now is scrubs and I'm taking you there to sort of give you a little bit a basis for color. Before scrubs became very fashionable where there's a whole bunch of different patterns, you'll notice that typically, scrubs were a kind of minty green or even a blue and that was the typical color you might see when you're in hospital with people surrounding you in the doctor scenario if you will. And there's not an accident that a lot of people don't realize that those colors came from the feeling of balance. Green is the color of balance outside. It also grounds people. It's a very sort of pacifying color but depending on the shade that you choose, it doesn't pull energy so it doesn't depress or overly calm so that one becomes lethargic and it doesn't stimulate, it can often create just a sustainable amount of energy or one that allows you to feel balanced. And that has a lot to do with the intentional aspect of it being something that comes from the outdoor that is nature and very grounding and that's why plants are also extremely important within our everyday environment.

Also in hospitals typically you have very one or the other, you have very austere again, basic surroundings where you don't really see much color or you go to the other extreme where there's a lot of colors especially in areas that have children. And again we're thinking about primary colors and things of that nature that seemed childlike but we're not taking into consideration how it has a subliminal effect on those around us just in general.

So I wanted people to understand that the colors of brown neutral colors and green and blue, those type of tones, typically are used in terms of soothing pacifying atmosphere mainly because they are balancing grounding colors as they are natural and are nature organic lifestyle colors, cooler colors, things that allow us to feel a little more tranquil in general. But that is where it comes from. So I hope that make sense. Does that help a little bit in terms of where they...?

Chantal: It makes sense to me especially because when I was in college I worked at a state hospital, Fairview State Hospital in Orange County and yes they had this kind of a green, a pale green on all the walls and everywhere because they felt that it was calming. There was a...hype, they thought that.

Lauren Absolutely and so it was no accident Going over to the next slide and we're going to take our time because clearly this is a little bit stubborn , it's not quite where I want to be yet.

Chantal: It seems like it just takes a little bit time for it to load because it has pictures that's why.

Lauren Yeah and I apologize to everybody for the confusion so just go with the flow. It is just like life, stuff happens, what are you going to do. So you know what, I'll just go with the flow myself and so here's a list of questions. And these questions are things that I asked in my live seminar. When we're in workshop and seminars, I like things to be really experiential.

So the next thing that's going to happen is I'm going to show you some specific colors and that's what I'm going to have Chantal sort of give us her impressions of the colors based on the question that I asked and also I'd loved the audience to type in their responses and their questions as well. But when you look at colors, the first question I ask is what is the first word you think of, and then what is the first feeling or emotion that you experience when looking at the

color. And obviously those are different. When I ask the first word I'm not looking for an emotion, I'm really looking for the first object or noun that might come in to your thought process. And then we get in to the feeling or emotion and you'll be really surprised, people are always shock at the differences, the extreme differences between their answers. And then we go on to ask if the color energizes or depletes you? Are you able to focus easily looking at the color?

Do you begin to feel agitated and need to look away from the color? Does it trigger a specific memory? Do you gravitate towards specific colors in your wardrobe? And then often, if so I'll ask people why because very frequently they'll say they don't know but when we spend some time there, people always know why they're gravitating to a color in their wardrobe that might make them feel better.

Do you notice if you feel better in a particular or specific room in your home than any other besides wanting of course to sit in that favorite comfy chair? Do you notice if the colors you're drawn to are solids or more patterns? And do you tend to prefer muted neutrals over bright primary colors?

And as we have people goes through and answer all these questions, it becomes a real discovery about the things people are learning about their own environment about why they prefer certain environment and how it's affecting them which is usually very subliminal or subconscious.

So now we're going to go into colors. So here is our first slide which is clearly red. So Chantal I'm going to ask you to respond to at least the first 2 questions, the first word and the first emotion, and then if you can expand on asking our listeners to do the same.

Chantal: So I did want to say that there's a couple listeners who are asking questions. We will be answering your specific questions later. So don't go away but think of exercise that she's having you go through. So red what is the first question?

Lauren What is the first word and keep, everyone I would suggest take a pen and paper and write this down for yourself. There's no right or wrong. Don't worry about what your spouse, or your friend or your partner is thinking. Just write it down for yourself and...

Chantal: And send us some answers too. And I'm going to read them.

Lauren Yeah, please. So what's the first word and then what is first emotion you think of when you see this color, Chantal?

Chantal: Fire and hot.

Lauren Okay, fire and hot, great. Now what are some of the responses that some other people have had or are typing in?

Chantal: I have to switch over to another...

Lauren And as an emotion Chantal hot, hot is a reaction. What is an emotion you feel?

Chantal: Yeah, You know you're right. What is an emotion that I could..

Lauren And usually I tell people to look at it very quickly and then you know turn away because if you persevere over it, if you sit and sort of look at it for a while, it will start to shift.

Chantal: For an emotion, I kind of think of I don't want to say angry, and I don't really want to say frustration, but it's more on those, that kind of energy level.

Lauren Aggression or—

Chantal: Yeah, that's it, or assertive.

Lauren Okay. I'm going to do the same thing for 3 more colors so I want people to immediately just write it down and the same for you Chantal, don't say it. Just take note of how what the first word and first emotion.

Chantal: We will go through all the colors?

Lauren Yeah.

Chantal: 3 more colors, or 2 more colors.

Lauren So we're going to just sit for a second or two on this color. First word and first emotion and then we're going to go to the next color. Oops, sorry. And then lastly, this is going to be the last color. So, I'm hoping people are taking note like I said first word for each color and then first emotion. It was red, blue, green and now yellow. So, now we can actually kind of chat for a second. Do you have that information, Chantal?

Chantal: Wait, I'm still writing my words down.

Lauren Okay, good. You can only do it for a second though. First reaction.

Chantal: Okay. So you want me to read mine and then I'll go see if people have written theirs in. I'll give the people time to write it in.

Lauren Yeah.

Chantal: Okay, so I had down for blue. Warm as the word and energetic is the emotion I felt. For the green, I had, the first word that came in mind is grass, not very creative, vibrant was the emotion I felt like energy vibrant.

Lauren Okay.

Chantal: Which was different than the blue. The blue was energetic but it was more like a calming energy.

Lauren Well, those are obviously very different because you're talking about calm and then you're talking about energy which are again...

Chantal: Yeah, but it feels like depressing calm like when I look at beige, calm but to me that's depressing calm.

Lauren Right.

Chantal: Maybe I'm not making sense.

Lauren No, I understand what you're saying.

Chantal: Okay. And then for the yellow, I had bright was the first thing that came in mind

and then happy was the emotion I felt looking at that.

So let me see people have written in. I still have questions. Okay, somebody said, wow, good we're getting some answers here. I'm going to have to go down here. Okay. Too bright, shut it off, passion, anxious, bright and well, fire and ..

Lauren Say that again.

Chantal: These are all the reds now.

Lauren Okay, go ahead.

Chantal: Too bright, shut it off, passion, bright, anxious, bright and well, fire engine and love. The first word bright, first feeling passion. Red for me is energy and the feeling of moving fast. Burn, bright, anger. Irritation. Apple and strength. Bright, mad. Okay, here comes the next color which was, what was the next color?

Lauren Blue. And you know what I'm just going to stop you for a second. I think that's a great example. You have someone who sent in, if I'm correct, they said love and passion. Someone else said, was it anger and irritation?

Chantal: Yes.

Lauren Okay. Perfect example. So if the person who said anger and irritation happen to have that color somewhere in their home whether it be their bedroom or perhaps their office, and in their bedroom, they were feeling, they were having argument or in their office, they were feeling agitated or fidgety or even got a headache and they didn't know why, the color would have a lot to do with it. Yet on the other hand, if you have a person who's reminded of love and passion which is again very different, that same person with that red in their bedroom might find that they have a very passionate reaction when they're in their bedroom and that there's a lot of intimacy that happens rather than arguments.

Chantal: That's really interesting and it shows how it's so important that let's say if you are a kind of person who has a designer help you with your house, that you're using your opinions about what you were feeling and not what the designer

thinks should be that color in your room.

Lauren Well, I can't always see about trend or aesthetic and that's why what I want people to understand is if you're reacting differently to colors, imagine what your child on the spectrum is reacting too and how they can't even, they may not be able to express it in the right words to you.

Chantal: Right.

Lauren So if the color affects you, it's going to affect them to the tenth power. And it's going to affect them in ways you may not be aware of especially on a grand scale. So, now let's go to blue.

Chantal: Okay. Cool, happy. Next one is pretty, calm. Natural and calm. Someone here put in a bunch at a time, red was pretty, happy. I think because when I wear it most people say I look good in it and therefore I feel happy. Red, fire, anger. Blue, water, calm. Bright and eager. Someone else has for blue, sky, energy. Somebody as red, energy and fast. Blue is soft and calm. Blue, sky and calm. Blue, cool feeling, peace. That's it for the blue.

Lauren Okay. So that's again, that's great and you have some people saying soft and calm, and some people saying happy, energy, eager. Now, again, while they're all lovely, they're very different and we're showing you the primary types of colors, these are primary colors. Now we're showing you the typical primary colors people think of. But if everyone thinks of blue when they close their eyes, they're all going to get a different version, depth, brightness etcetera, contrast of that blue. So that's the other thing that people have to realize, the same with red, yellow, or any color. When you talk about a color, especially like one of the biggest things is when you're talking about hair color and somebody says, you know, I want a blonde. I want to be blonde. In fact, I remember my mom had this major issue. She has someone way back when I was little who did her hair just phenomenally well and there was a particular blonde that she had and it was gorgeous and ever since she had moved and left that particular beautician, she described the blonde the way it looked to her, but she was never able to get that same color. So if you say I want my hair to be sandy blonde to somebody, that person is going to get a very particular look or idea of what sandy blonde is. But everybody's idea is different. If you say red, someone's going to think fire engine red and someone else is going to think like a brick red. Well the fire

engine is an orange red, the brick red is a blue red. So it's very difficult when you're talking about color in a general way. Blue. Someone is going to think of that light, lovely, calming, soft, sky blue and someone is going to think of a bright energetic as they said here, happy, energizing, bright blue. And that's the main issue I want people to get. Color is very subjective even though we all know what yellow basically looks like. Does that make sense?

Chantal: Yes, it does.

Lauren Yeah, and so, this is why when we do this in more depth in our workshop and seminars, the awareness and the experience becomes major because suddenly people really have their own personal experiential idea of how different these basic things are. The other thing is when lighting hits color, it affects the color dramatically and when you use a paint and you have a sheen whether it be an egg shell or a satin finish or something that shiny, again, all of these elements coming together change the color and the way the color reacts in the space

Chantal: Okay, so you want to hear green now?

Lauren Yes.

Chantal: Grass, happy. Trees, spice.

Lauren Trees what, sorry?

Chantal: Spice.

Lauren Spice, really? Okay, I haven't heard that before. I love that.

Chantal: Green, calm. Grass, soothing. Meadow, calm. Green, nature, calm. Trees, refreshed. Trees, sooths. Water running like a brook onto that. It must be blue, sorry. Green grass, happy.

Lauren That's good.

Chantal: Green, plants, balance.

Lauren Balance. Okay. So again, we have a lot of different words.

Chantal: Energetic.

Lauren And energetic. The outdoor comes up a lot which is as I said it's all about balance which is why green is so integral in terms of hospitals and utilizing scrubs always in green from the very start, greens or blues. But all of these words have to do with, again, similar types of reactions but still different to each person. One person is saying they feel soothe. Another person is saying they feel refreshed. Well, while they can be similar in the family of feeling good and well being, they're still a nuance of difference between feeling refreshed and feeling soothe. And again, it has a lot to do with not just saying it's green but what type of green. That green is often like considered like a Kelly green or a brighter green are more primary green. But if you go into the green family, these particular people's reactions would shift as we look at darker greens, lighter greens and that's the other thing how we describe green. Bright isn't always the same to everyone. Somebody else may say it's deep. Somebody else will call it bright. So again, all of these nuances make such a difference in the degree of emotion and reaction that we feel. Let's go to yellow because I also, I usually get a very different reaction like we did with red.

Chantal: Sun, overwhelmed. Sun, happy. Yellow, yuck, feeling wake up. Somebody doesn't like to wake up. Yellow, bright, energetic. Bright, alert. Sun, happy. Sunflowers, happy, energetic. Bright, energetic. Sun, hot.

Lauren Okay, so, you could even stop right there, because we have yuck and we have happy

Chantal: And overwhelmed.

Lauren And overwhelmed. So God forbid the person that says yuck, has that, as a main color in their home in any room rather than an accent. That person is not going to be happy with the way they feel or respond or function in that space especially if it's their office.

Chantal: Right.

Lauren And that's why, and yet the person who says happy might love the idea of that color on a large grand scale in a particular space but do they want it in their

bedroom or would they want it in their room where they need more activity and then even if they have it in a room with more activity, is it their office or is it a playroom, because you might like yellow but that particular yellow may not be great on a grand scale for your ability to function as you needed to in your office. So the other thing I want to bring across is that very often, people are looking at or purely aesthetic and they say, oh you know, with their interior designer, I love this look in his magazine, or I love this particular design and they put it in a room not thinking about, is it going to support what I need to accomplish in that room. And so maybe it's now in that room and they're not doing what they need to at the rate that they normally could or rising to their full potential and they're assuming it's a million other things that happen that day when really it's as simple as, it's not the right color.

Chantal: Right.

Lauren And people never look at color and think that could be affecting their ability.

Chantal: What about light? What does light do to people? You know how some people don't paint their walls, I mean, they just leave us bright.

Lauren Well, the irony is that men and women have very different on a whole, I'm talking about majority, very different ability to see, to discern the difference between colors which is why men go nuts when there's ton shades of white in front of them and they don't get what the difference is. They're like, it's all white and it makes them crazy when women ask them that. The fact is men don't have the same types of rods and cones in their eyes that women do.

Chantal: Wow.

Lauren So they're often color blind whereas women are not. Now there are men that are not and they have great discernment of color, artist, etcetera and so forth. But we're talking again on the whole and so white, it's really important again that there are different shades of white and it's important that you pick the right one if you want a purely white home or white kitchen or whatever it is. You want to be careful about how bright it is and what type of sheen and again, are you using sunlight. Is there are lot of sunlight coming in or you're using light bulbs, are they fluorescent which I hope they never are. Are they soft? Are they yellow? Are they white lights? All of that makes a difference in the type of white

that you can use in the home. So just because you leave something white doesn't mean that it's non-descript or it's not going to have an effect on you. It's very important what kind of white you use.

Chantal: I got that.

Lauren Yeah. So now that we've gone through color, if there's a question that you have, I'm happy to answer or we can move on?

Chantal: Okay, there's a couple of questions here and let me get to them please. Okay. This is from Joyce Anthony in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Lauren Hi Joyce, thanks for being part of our seminar today.

Chantal: "Is the balancing property of green why so many autistic or Asperger kids choose green as their favorite color?"

Lauren Actually yes, it's a great question. I worked with a lot of kids and very often when I give them their choice, they pick blues and greens on their own accord. They don't even gravitate to some of the brighter colors. And that is very much why they tend to gravitate towards the balancing blues and greens, all different hues, all different contrast, and sometimes, they even choose some of the brighter colors and parents are thinking, you know, I just want to make my kid happy. So they put the color everywhere, but really, if it's a very bright color that they gravitate towards, you want to keep it on the accent level, you don't want have it on the grand scale. You want to have a version of the softer green, perhaps on a larger scale or as an accent wall. But again, it depends on your particular child. While most kids on the spectrum tends to need more soothing tranquil colors, there are some that need stimulation and so in that scenario, obviously, shifting in terms of how you use a brighter color would be necessary but that is why they tend to gravitate to those colors. That was a great question, thank you, Joyce.

Chantal: And it could change over time, like my son chooses blues and greens like for comfort or covers?

Lauren Uh-uhm

Chantal: He chose an orange more often than not.

Lauren Well, again, as they, just like all of us, as we get older we all shift and change, we all tend to evolve in terms of what we like and what we don't like and sometimes we're not sure why but it also has to do with our maturity process, and very often, if there is a brighter color and they said that they choose, that's a part that might stimulate an area that's one of their strengths. It may help him with his creativity or whatever it is that he is really good at. And so again, it's great to always validate and have those particular colors in their surroundings but not necessarily on the grand scale and I think that's always the case when it comes to excessively bright colors. But it's important to validate whatever it is they feel supports them and that they gravitate towards in a positive way.

Chantal: Judy from Clifton Springs, New York asks, "Working in an autism based classroom that is already established, where would be the best place to start to begin the change into our color focus for classroom?"

Lauren Well, I know classrooms are limiting so as a former teacher, I definitely understand Judy where you're coming from, and I know that you have a lot of constraints put upon you. So I would say, one of the first things to do is to look at the things that are up on all of your walls and really decide what has to be there and what doesn't. And if you're able to take things that are very colorful where you're using a whole bunch of different colors, maybe you can take one particular color and use the variations of that color. So let's say you have a rainbow of color somewhere in your room, perhaps, you can just use one color and use a whole bunch of different shades of that color instead. So maybe you have a whole bunch of different blues or a whole bunch of different reds, rather than red, green, pink, purple, yellow, etcetera and so forth. Also, try to separate the amount of information you have into almost like stations, so you go here for one particular thing, you go to another area for another particular thing and don't try to mix and match so many things because it just becomes too overwhelming. Maybe also have some more areas where you can put things away, stations where you can contain things. So even if you have to have a few more areas of shelving or movable containers, make them opaque so that you can see through them. Have less things that you can see through, more things that are closed and covered and labeled. So again, people know they only go, your students, they only go there when it's time to work on those particular things, otherwise, we don't open them or they stay closed and everything

doesn't have to be out. When it comes to books, perhaps you have a few out that you're going to use and then put some away and change them out but don't have everything out. Sometimes it's worth a few extra minutes to take things out as needed rather than have them all out all of the time. And I'm sure as a teacher it would be helpful for you, for your visual over stimulation to have less to sort of focus on and look at when you're trying to teach. One more thing if I may because I know I'm giving a lot of information...

Chantal: Someone is asking can we please remove the yellow slide.

Lauren Yes. (laugh) Thank you.

Chantal: Finish your thought and then I have some more questions for you.

Lauren Great. I'm going to go back to the logo and see, I'm so glad that viewer said that I wasn't even paying attention, but yeah, it's too much, it's over stimulating and overwhelming, so my apologies. I am not a yellow fan and I wasn't looking at the slide. What I was going to say is with fluorescent lighting which is often in classrooms, just turn it off. Turn it off. If you can't use the outside lightings, if you don't have a window, my suggestion is go to Target, get one or two free standing lamps and put in soft white bulb, natural bulbs and use the soft lighting, frankly you're saving on the energy bill and you're also really alleviating a lot of unnecessary stimulation and stress frankly on you and your students. Fluorescent lighting is the worst lighting anyone could possibly use.

Chantal: Lisa G. from Salem, Virginia. "Since color preferences vary from person to person, what colors do you recommend with the classroom, i.e. for the paint through the borders, etcetera?"

Lauren I already recommend neutral colors in a classroom. Neutral meaning they don't have to be blues and greens per se, but if you combine a blue or green with a neutral like a café au lait, something in the brown peach area, it doesn't have to be brown brown, but I would say in the khaki, things of that nature that are light coffee as I said café au lait with the contrast of a light green or a light blue. It gives some coziness and some warmth in the neutral but the tranquil color of the cooler blues and greens also give a little bit of sustainable energy so you don't want to use too light or too pastel of a blue or green because it can pull some energy and make them too calm. But something with a slight energetic feel to it

will allow for some sustainable energy and you want that in the classroom where people are able to focus and concentrate and they're able to sustain the energy throughout their classes but they also have some warmth. So it's not so cold and overly stimulating with the brighter colors. I would keep the brighter primary colors for use just in terms of the things that you're using your aid, your education aids, rewards, things of that nature where it has a pop and it feels special and unique but it's not something that surrounds them 24/7.

Chantal: Jean from San Luis Obispo says, "I wish I'd realized this before painting my son's bed a beautiful dark brick red color. He was 3 or 4 at the time and in tears because it was too bright. It had been an ugly bright blue in my eyes before that poor kiddo and with an OT mom too."

Lauren Oh wow. Well, you know, here is the other thing, if people often look at those little sheets of color in the paint store, and they think, wow, that's going to be great but they're not realizing that once you do a few coats, it's darker or deeper or brighter and also again, on that grand scale it doesn't always translate, so if you do use a color like that, you want to keep it to a small area or even one wall and then contrast it with a warmer cozier color like if you use a brick blue red, sometimes it's really great to have it with a brown because it's very cozy and it feels very warm. The same with if you have a tranquil cooler color like a blue, and you have it with a brown, it pulls in the energy, so it's not over stimulating and again, add some coziness and some contrast and some balance from outside. But when you're dealing with kids' rooms, I'd be careful with using bright bright colors in any other way other than an accent. I'm also very careful with the types of patterns or designs you put in kids' rooms whether it be animals or superheroes, or race cars, things of that nature because again, when the lights are out and there are shadows and you don't know what your kids respond to yet, those fun things that seem very kid friendly can become very ominous and have a very different feel at night when you're dealing with shadows and you're dealing with subliminal thought processes and you don't know what the children are reacting to or what frightens them. They might love animals by day but not so much at night.

Chantal: Someone asks, this is Grace from Lomita, "My ASD son is obsessed with pink and his therapist said quite a few ASD boys like that too. Any idea why?"

Lauren Well, again, I talk about this in my book that gender has no bearing anymore or

you know, pink being for girls and blue being for boys. So, I'm really glad that that was brought up and I think it has a lot to do with the fact that even way back, years and years ago, they used to use pink in jail cells and prisons because it was one of the only colors that truly pacified the most violent offenders that were of course man and that this certainly doesn't go to saying that your child is aggressive in any violent way, it just means that guys often are drawn to the more tranquil colors of red which happen to be attached to the red. So it's not surprising that as we tone down red and we add white, we get the pink. So pinks are, have to do a lot more with a more subtle feeling of warmth and has a lot to do with maternal feelings. It has a lot to do with simply pacifying them from the aggressive color that man are very much drawn too, because it has to do with power, it has to do with strengths, and we tone that down to the lighter shade and that becomes pink which again has to do with calming, maternal, warm, loving, pacifying feelings and that tends to have a really subliminal feeling on reaction on man and on boys. So it's not at all anything negative. I think it's wonderful that they're reacting that way and again, using them in tones along with brown is a great way to support them and still have it feel grounded and have it feel masculine and basically accomplish what you need to accomplish. So don't at all be uncomfortable with the fact that they're drawn to some of the lighter shades of pink.

Chantal: You know, it's interesting because when Jeremy was 16, he's 22 now, but when he was 16 and has to give his first input for his individual transitional plan, you know at the high school, he was high school at that time. And so at that time, he was typing, you know spell in word, but this is the first time that he actually wrote out like a whole paragraph in preparation for what information he was going to give at the meeting. And I'm just going to read a few lines of it, but he was talking about his future because that's a transition plans were about and he wrote, "I am imagining a future of people who work, a future of orange and mauve, people who are not my family who love to spend time with me, happy to be my friends.: So there's more in there but that was the only color he mentioned but I remember sitting in that IEP meetings saying, gee I wonder what that orange and mauve is about, and the psychologist at the meeting said, "You know it's really interesting because I've recently read a study that was done California state prisons about color preferences and what it make people feel like and the men in the prisons preferred the orange and the lavender color. They said it was the most, some of it was calming for them or it's just that they wanted to see those colors more in the prisons and they ended up using a lot of

those colors because it made the prisoners feel better.”

Lauren Yeah, it’s not an accident. The orange allows them to feel positive. There is an energy to it but depending again on the type of orange, it doesn’t have to be stimulating. It can just be sustainable energy like almost like a tangerine, and then when you look at the mauve , the mauve is like and the fact that your son, that Jeremy used such a specific color, he didn’t say purple, he didn’t say pink, he said mauve, and mauve is like a very soft plumy purple, almost like a dusty rose but deeper, I mean we can go in to the nuances of that but again, it’s not an accident. That has to do again with the warmth of emotion. It has to do with loving feeling. It has to do with subtlety. It has to do with the tranquil feelings that often come from those colors. And lavender is a perfect example of that so I think it’s great, and when you look at my new logo, we use those colors because of the reactions we got from most of our community and most of our clients where a lot of the blues and a lot of the lighter lavenders, purple, plum, really had a certain type of effect, very positive with a lot of our community and I think that it’s very telling and people should really start focusing more on how their environment is affecting them and not just those on a spectrum, I’m talking about in your home, in your rooms, in your offices, how you’re able to be productive. We try to work with corporations and women from offices specifically to improve on concentration and bottom line productivity because surroundings especially in a cubicle are integral to people’s ability to really work in a positive way and keep their thought process where they need to, not just having a pictures around them and...

Chantal: I need you to come to my house because when Jeremy moves into his own place hopefully with supports, he’s going to need some color and I need to know what color is going to make me write more efficiently.

Lauren Yeah, I mean, it really is no deal and yet at the same time it’s exciting because it’s not so complicated to really make a huge difference for yourself, your own productivity, your family, and your child. It doesn’t have to always be so complicated and fortunately we work internationally so I can help anybody.

Chantal: I got some more comments and questions. Benjamin in Alabama wants to know, “If autistic children and adults are affected by colors, why do nurses or even staff members in office buildings that treat autistics wear scrubs that are different colors?:

Lauren Because now to be honest with you, it's really become an expression, a way to self express, and people have to wear their own, you know, they have to wear scrubs everyday. Now it's become a fashion statement and so people can wear scrubs in any color, just like with anything else to express themselves and how they feel. What's ironic is that in hospitals and in a lot of the places where they're catering to our kids, they are not focusing on how it's affecting kids. They're assuming like oftentimes in a child more and I have seen a lot of the nurses wearing bright, bright color scrubs because it's for kids, kid friendly, it's bright, it's fun. But very often again, we're not realizing that kids all respond differently, so having something that's more middle of the road which would be not always a bright color would probably be smarter on the whole but that's not how people are looking at it, and this is my point, people are not focusing on the importance of environment, color, sensory design. Not the way they should be at this juncture when we're talking about 1 out of 91 kids being diagnosed on the spectrum. And again, not just kids on the spectrum but for all of us. We're still looking at it as a design element, as a luxury, as aesthetic thing with no real effect. People are not really taking this into consideration and to heart quite the way they should be yet. We're getting there but we're not there yet.

Chantal: Okay, so Barbara from Moscow Mills, Missouri. I'm sorry if I'm butchering people's names by the way, especially with the name I have. Barbara was a pretty easy name but I don't know how I did with the rest of the location. So this person, Barbara wants to paint her 8-year-old with autism's bedroom. He is non-verbal and doesn't appear to gravitate to any one color, so what do you recommend? What do you do when you don't know someone's preference?

Lauren The first thing I tell parents that they, and parents often struggle with me about this, but they always thank me afterwards. I don't know how old Barbara's child is, did you say?

Chantal: 8 years old.

Lauren 8 years old, okay. So the first thing I would do Barbara is I would journal for one week. I and perhaps your partner or your husband should take the time and if you're a single parent, that's fine too, take the time to journal every single day where your child is going when he feels certain things. Where does he go throughout the day? Is there any sort of routine? Journal all day about what

you're noticing. No matter how much you already think you know, do it anyway, because I promise you by the end of that 7 days, you will say, oh my gosh, I didn't even realize this, I didn't notice this, I didn't etcetera and so forth. And that will start to educate you and navigate in terms of the answer you're looking for. Once you have that information, you could come back to me and give me that information and then I could say to you, this is what I would do based on what you notice because there are things that he is doing to handle his internal emotion. You're just not noticing them and that's all parents. It's very typical, so don't at all feel badly or uncomfortable, it's very typical and I have all parents do this and that's how we get to the point of figuring out where we should start. When I'm able, I spend time with the kids. So you know, for a day or two so I can notice these things. But where I can't this is what I tell parents to do and it is one of the requirements I have a parents before I work with them. You're welcome to email me after you do that at lauren@brushoflove.com. So don't at all feel like you won't have the answers you need.

Chantal: Okay, great. Cathy from Mt. Juliet asks if you have any pictures available showing a classroom decorated in neutral tones of blues, greens or pinks.

Lauren I don't on this PowerPoint but certainly I can discuss that in more specific and you know I can, if she wants to email me, we can go through that more specifically but I do want to move into some other pictures I have of some of the rooms that I've done, this is one room that I did for HGTV's kidspace and this can show you a little bit about some of the things we've discussed, is that alright?

Chantal: Yes. Go right ahead.

Lauren Okay. So where I was which is right here, this slide is a slide from kidspace that we did a few years ago and this is for two boys that were in one bedroom, one being an Asperger little boy, a 5 and the other being a brother of 7 who was neurotypical but very, very hyper. So almost like an ADD child. And they're sharing the same room and so before you see the room was crazy. You have like a mango yellow color. You had a crazy trafficky carpet with trucks and one that over here. We had what you can't see, there were tie-dye pictures upon the wall and then you had different types of sheets with all sorts of patterns. It was nuts in that particular room. So how we changed it was the following. We came in and I actually had to hand-mix a color of blue because I couldn't find the blue

that I wanted. I want a kind of a sustainable again energy, a cornflower blue with something that was a little brighter and that's what I mixed. And then we got a bunk bed rather than two separate beds and we really paired down on all of the shelving and what you can't see is that there are some closed shelves, again, only a few open shelves with containers that you could see through. The main thing that made a huge difference is what I want to discuss and that's this bridge here. The little boy who had Asperger really focused and perseverated on bridges, that was his obsession and he loved shapes. So what we did is I decided to paint a bridge all the way around the entire room and then in areas of the bridge, I painted different color shapes and they were all different colors, some were bright, and some were neutral. And then there was an outline of little yellow lights over the bridge. But what we did is we also had his father who happened to work in construction cut out the same pamphlet of the bridge in wood and we didn't paint the wood, we simply did a polyurethane sheen over the wood so that it was smooth and shiny. So during the day, we had the bridge with colors and light and shapes that the little boy, Adrian, could look at and identify with. But then at night when it was time to self-soothe, and decompress for bed, we would then cover the bridge with the wood bridge and we went one step further and we had the wood bridge cut into puzzle pieces so that when we put the bridge up on the wall, they fit together in pieces. So now, the bridge was calming, there was no color, no shapes, but the consistency of the bridge was still there throughout the day and the night. On top of that, there was a tangible sense that Adrian and his brother John, John Ross is his name could lift the bridge off, they could touch it, feel it, hold it in their hand and play with it together which brought them together and they could put the bridge on the floor. So there were three uses to this bridge. It allowed Adrian to stay with the bridge all day, at night, it allowed him to still be calm in the evening and decompress and it gave them the tangible ability to handle a bridge together 3-dimensionally in the room and out of the room. And that is the major element that made it much easier for both boys to live in the room together happily. John Ross loved insects and bright colors and so if you notice we just have pops of that that validate John Ross's need including a little picture of a lady bug.

Chantal: Very cool.

Lauren Thank you. I hope that helps people who have two children sharing a room. In my book, we talked about how to do that as well. We're going to move on real quick. This is another room I went and work with the military. I was very

fortunate to be invited by the marines and worked in Japan on one of the military bases in Okinawa for one of the families that had an autistic little boy. And the room and the housing that they had for the military as you can imagine are very small and don't really allow for much especially when you travel a lot. So this is what it looked like before. The boy's bedroom ended being a playroom and several other things. And it was very stark and had a lot of clutter that was hard to see. This is what it looked like when we were done. In two quick days, we had the marines just ripped everything out, we started from scratch and while it looks like, well, they just painted it blue. There are very specific things that we did and if you go to our website, you can actually see the video highlights of everything that we did.

Chantal: Oh, that was really cool. Because we're just seeing the slides now, it's so calming.

Lauren Yeah, we changed everything and we did it in a way that it can be replicated because we know that people in military are constantly travelling. So keeping things consistent for a child especially one on a spectrum is again, paramount for that child's ability to move and transition more easily. So we got a bunk bed that is open so the child doesn't feel too constrained and encapsulated but at the same time, the bunk bed also serves as almost like a hug. It makes them feel really embraced and supported. We keep it open so that he can see and he can connect but the covering of the bunk bed also allows him to feel secure and safe. Now the brilliant thing is that it can be taken down easily for transport and also it can be separated into two young men bed that as this little boy gets older, he can still use that as an adult big boy bed. And since the mom was pregnant it was going to be great that they could use it for more than a decade as their kids grew, they would have two separate beds. Number two, we made sure that we had, this was a very favorite chair and since it was a very subtle yellow, we kept this one piece of bright color that was still subtle in the room in order to create a little puff of energy and a little comfort because it is a chair that the little boy loved because the material was so soft. We added this blue that was very calming and the thing to know about this little boy is that he hated covers, he hated going to sleep and they had to go through an hour and a half of a whole rigmarole, every night with a box of toys in order for him to go to sleep. We also got this particular rug offering a little bit of pattern, again, to have a little bit of stimulation but nothing too crazy with a little puff of that green. So again, you have some sort of visual difference to create interest but nothing that's going to

pull too much from the child's ability to self-soothe and nothing that will over stimulate. The curtains were transparent so that you have the venetian blind that the military offers but underneath, you had one sheet that would tone down the sun and you also had a transparent netting that could totally block out the heat and the sun but also allow a little bit to come through so that it doesn't seem to shut out from the world or too cold.

Chantal: We have a question. Someone sent in a question specific about this picture. There are other questions as well but Judy from Clifton Springs says, "I looked at the picture, I feel calm. That shade of blue is relaxing. Do you find that using the blinds is an issue for visual stimming, and shouldn't that be avoided in the classroom?"

Lauren Well, in a classroom, you know, you can't usually do much because very often the schools won't allow you to. So in the classroom, I just deal with the blind but I control them in terms of it meaning I don't left the kids just do whatever they want. I keep it closed when there's a lot going on outside.

Chantal: I guess she means like if you look at this picture, is that a visual stimming thing in the bedroom also for the child, is that a problem?

Lauren No, because the curtain, what's there right there is a little stuffed animal. All you have to do is take it off and the curtain comes down so we rarely ever see the venetian blinds, that was part of why I put that particular curtain up. We also put it up higher and made the curtain longer to create a longer look there rather than keeping it short and cutting off the room, we make the curtain much higher and much longer and that creates a longer, believe it or not, more soothing look because there is no cut off. The light is also instead of a being a light that you turn on and off, there is a foot control that allows you to control how much light there, so if they, I can't believe I can't thing, I can't come up with the word, it's a controlled light rather than a light that turns on and off.

Chantal: Right. We'll think of the word, it's okay.

Lauren But you guys know what I mean.

Chantal: We have to take our omega oil today.

Lauren I clearly do. This is another picture of the bed just from a different angle. And this is another one as well. This plant here is called a corn stock Dracaena. It's very easily found in all stores. It's an indoor plant. It's not expensive. What's great about it is that it grows into a huge plant. It doesn't need a lot of attention but it acts as a natural air filter. So what's wonderful is that a lot of the chemicals that are in the air actually feed this plant. So just keeping this plant here cleans the oxygen.

Chantal: Very nice.

Lauren And I talked about that in the book as well. I also talked about the importance of what you have on the wall, what pictures at what eye level and where. And it's very important often that you clean up the walls and you don't have a lot up on the walls. Some of the things that your kids like, it's better to have it in a smaller, more contained picture frame in one or two areas on some of the furniture and that you actually only have one or two or three pictures up on the wall at eye level, of the family and the reason that's so important is that your child feel connected and they have an immediate feeling of the family and the security they have in the room so that they don't feel that they always have to run out of the room into a parent's room or a sibling's room, that they feel connected even in their own space.

Chantal: That's a great idea.

Lauren It's more important than you think, having one of you with and your child, one with your child with their siblings and one of your child, so that when the lights are out or when the lights are dim, or just when they're alone in their space and you're in theirs, or rather you're in your space, they feel connected remaining in their own space and they feel protected.

Chantal: That's a great idea.

Lauren Yeah. It's very subliminal but very important.

Chantal: Great idea.

Lauren Thank you. So then we move on to the next and this is to talking about what type..

Chantal: You know what, I'm sorry, couple of people..

Lauren Go right ahead.

Chantal: About the name of the plant.

Lauren It's called corn stock Dracaena.

Chantal: Corn stock like corn that you eat and stock like ...

Lauren Correct. Corn Stock dracaena which is a DRACAENA. It's actually corn stock dracaena. Dracaena is a large family of plants. Corn stock is one of the most typical and you'll know because the leaves are very large and there is a large yellow line going right down the center. You've seen them everywhere. You just didn't know what they were called.

Chantal: Yeah.

Lauren And again, I talked about the plants in my book as well.

Chantal: And then somebody else asks, is there a website where they can see the images that you're describing that are on your PowerPoint.

Lauren Ah yeah, so you can actually go to *brushoflove.com*. My PowerPoint is not there but there's a webinar about color that is a free download. You can order my book from my website. It will actually say products or book and on the website, I don't really go into specifics about the plants and things of that nature, outside of the book were the some of the conferences and seminars that I do. But we're going to be having a free teleseminar for Q&A about this kind of thing for more information, so if you look at my website in the upcoming week or two, there'll be information about the telephone seminar that you can join and we'll talk more about some of the products I'll be offering in the near future.

Chantal: I think they were just concern because they were having trouble with the slides and they wanted to know if they can go on your website and I know it seems some of those pictures that you showed in your PowerPoint is on your website.

Lauren Yes. If you want, I can, well, I don't think I show that much, but I can go back to one of the slides that has the plant in the room, would that be helpful?

Chantal: Why don't we just continue and I'll see if people.

Lauren Let's see if there's any questions about that. I was just, the slide I'm on now is about paints because I know there are so many paints and that was very trendy. The one that I use the most is the Benjamin Moore Natura which is completely VOC free and VOC is a volatile organic compound. Those are found in all regular paints and it's the chemical the cause a lot of the odor and also makes a lot of the paint fine etcetera and so forth. But they're not necessary and so if you can ever find the zero VOC or even a low VOC paint, that's what you want to use. I tend to use the Natura Moore because it lasts a long time, it dries more quick than most average paint, they come in every color now that you can imagine and they have a citrus base.

Chantal: Which choice is that?

Lauren This is the Benjamin Moore Natura. It's natural without the L. And if you're looking at the slide, it's the top right picture. And now, let me also say, it's more expensive by the gallon than your average paint. It's about \$42 or \$45, but it is very well worth it. As you will see when you use it, it dries much more quickly and if there's a citrus base so you don't have to leave it, it's not an awful odor or anything like that, it's a whole different experience. Also, the Benjamin Moore Aura Guard which is low VOC is the bottom right picture and that's another great one to use. There are a lot of different ones. There is another one called Yolo which is a wonderful paint to use. And then I also show here which are more limited in colors, Fresh Aire Choice which I believe you can now get at Home Depot and Sherwin-Williams have their brand called Harmony. There's a lot of paints coming out that are no VOC now. What you need to do is just really look because a lot of the paints say No VOC but they're not. They just have the lowest amount to get away with saying it. So you just want to really look at some of the ingredients and whatnot on the back and it should be zero VOC. The low one, you're still safe using, don't feel badly if you can't get the no VOC. Just make sure that you're paying a little more attention and you're looking at what the degrees are on the back.

Chantal: I'm giving you a time warning here that we have about 15 minutes left and

somebody would like to know that name of your book.

Lauren "*Unique Kids, Unique Surroundings*" and you can find it on *amazon.com* and you can find it on *brushoflove.com* and I'm actually on a slide right now as it comes up showing you more specific pictures of plants for those who are looking, if that helps while we're talking. You'll see the corn stock *Dracaena* is on the top right and the bottom right and then you'll also see even the gerber daisy which is also another great house plant that feeds on chemicals on the air. Very nice

Now, really quickly I'm just going to touch on lighting so that you're aware. The light on the right which is more typically known for energy conservation, they're fabulous for energy conservation. However, what people don't realize is that they have more mercury and they will tell you that it's just a minimal amount and it can't hurt you like they used to tell you with cigarettes. I'm telling you, if you want to use them for wonderful energy savings, please use them in rooms where the kids cannot knock them over or touch them.

Chantal: Which ones are you talking about?

Lauren The one on the far right. These are the lights better energy saving light bulbs. And they have mercury in them which means if they fall and they break, it's an issue. You have to, what you really need to do and again, this is in my book, you have to put on two sets of gloves, you have to pick up pieces and put them into one plastic bag and then another garbage bag and the third, as recommended and take them somewhere and drop them at a field that allows mercury-related items. And once the mercury is in your home even if it's minimal, you can't really get it out. So please, in areas where there aren't going to be a lot of kids messing with the bulbs so that you can change them and use soft white light bulbs or incandescent, your LED lights or incandescent light. The light that you see here are lights that are a little more and safe and easy to use, now that they're much more readily available for the home as well.

Chantal: There's a question from Nicole in Olive Ranch. "Is the Benjamin Moore Natura safe for kids who have sensitivity to citric foods? My son gets sick when drinking lemonade because he has a classic allergic reaction to it."

Lauren You know what, that's a great question. I've not been asked that question. So what I would say is I would typically assume it would be because he's just, it's a

citrus based. However, I don't want to give you the wrong information. There are some other paints like I said the Aura Guard is low VOC. You can also look at the other paint companies or the Fresh Aire Choice might be a great one which is at Home Depot. And also Google low VOC or non-citrus based paints. And just double check with your pediatrician and see if he feels that a citrus-based paint would have an adverse reaction for your son or daughter.

Chantal: Good question.

Lauren Great question. I'll look in for that myself. Are there any questions I could answer?

Chantal: Yes. Haley from Nevada. "My non-verbal child loves Winnie the Pooh and animals. Any color versus the preference for vibrant and primary perhaps?"

Lauren Well, the Winnie the Pooh series are usually colors that are not too, you know, they are little more subtle and subdued, but again, I would have them in her room in specific areas. In other words, I wouldn't do the entire room in Winnie the Pooh including her comforter and her sheets and her pajamas. I would have maybe one picture somewhere of Winnie the Pooh and maybe get her one pajama top with Winnie the Pooh. That kind of thing, maybe get her a stuff animal. I would stick again to the more subtle greens or yellows or blues or lavenders that are a part of the Winnie the Pooh series as the wall coloring, maybe do one accent in a lavender or even if she likes yellow one of the more subtle yellows. But I would keep the color very subtle and more pastel oriented and use some of the brighter colors as accents and not as the grand color that you're going to use on all the walls. Keep those to the more subtle lavenders or mint green. You can even use those two colors together.

Chantal: Right. Lyn from San Marcos. "I am a teacher of elementary students with autism and most of my students are non-verbal. How do you recommend that I test what emotions they feel when exposed to various colors?"

Lauren Well, in terms of testing them, that kind of thing is so subjective, it might be even better to, I don't know if she's able to do this but if you are able to spend any individual time even if it's with an aid showing slide or even construction paper of colors, colored construction paper and see how they react on an individual basis, but just to be general and more cautious, I would again, only

use more subtle colors in the classroom and save the brighter colors for specific rewards or specific exciting, maybe assignments or events that are coming up in the classroom. I wouldn't use those colors for anything other than something specific and make sure it's clear what it represents, if it's good or if it's negative. I wouldn't use bright colors in any general way because more often than not, it is going to over stimulate so I would really stick to middle of the road colors for sustained energy and colors that are more pastel to keep them calmer and help them self-soothe. I hope that helps. But when you use any sort of color with each of the children or even as a whole, they will react and they will let you know if something that they're excited about or if they're face gets more kind of contorted in a negative way and their actions become more aggressive rather more excitable. Usually there's at least a slight bit of discernment in their stimming reactions when they're showing their angst and when they're showing their excitement.

Chantal: Interesting.

Lauren Did that help clarify a little bit?

Chantal: I'm sorry?

Lauren I said, did that help to clarify a little bit?

Chantal: I think so.

Lauren Great.

Chantal: Somebody wanted to know does depression or decreased affect affects color choice

Lauren I'm sorry, say it again.

Chantal: Does depression or decreased affect affects the color choice?

Lauren I think it does actually. If you're asking if somebody is already depressed and having that issue, I think it's really important to not just jump to an energetic color and say, oh that will make them feel better, because it can create more anxiety and aggression. And so then you have depression and aggression. If

someone is already depressed, I think it's helpful to have positive tranquil colors again, maybe you have a contrast of a light lavender with a brighter plum or you have warm red with a helpful brown that makes them cozy. But you want to be really careful of just generalizing, well this is bright and happy and cheery, so it's going to cheer someone up, because people don't necessarily respond that way. They respond to the things that agitate and affect underneath and you can't necessarily know that, as we learned a little earlier, bright colors really affect each of us very differently. So that's why journaling and really noticing how people react throughout their day, how they react to music, colors, lighting, sound, outdoors versus indoors is really important and it really helps educate how to bring the things that work into your space including sounds of nature whether it be rain, wind, ocean. Some people find rain very soothing and some people don't like it. It depresses and makes them sad. You really want to pay attention to that kind of thing.

Chantal: And some of us don't want to play water near our children because that tends to make them use the restroom more often.

Lauren And that's something that affects all of us that way by the way, depending whether it's subliminal or rather it's conscious, so you really, again, paying attention to the things that seem negligible and you know like they're not going to make a difference or actually the things that makes the most difference. These are fundamental. They're not frivolous in any way, shape or form.

Chantal: Barbara asks, "How do you feel about large stripes for bedroom?"

Lauren How do I feel, well, it's not for me, so it doesn't matter what I think. It really has to do with whose bedroom it is. And you know on what scale you're going to use them. Can this person be a little more specific?

Chantal: Well let's see if they write back in. They're listening.

Lauren Okay. How are we doing? I know we have a few minutes left. Or anything Chantal that you have to ask for you or Jeremy or that you have to add?

Chantal: Well, I've wanted to say because I've been listening and it's very interesting, and okay so now, this is going to be information that people know about me privately but I happen to move into a house and it's a nicely white pink. What happens is

my husband and I always have a deal that we're only going to put up one or two paintings on the walls and that eventually, I'm going to get to paint the walls like a light, different colors depending but very pale colors. Well we never get around to painting and you know, parents of kids with autism will understand why especially working parents. And secondly, every time I turn around, my husband hung up another painting. Now we both love the arts and we live in Europe for a long time and so we never got into collecting or buying good furniture just because it's expensive and you can't move it with you. But we would go to flea markets and find wonderful pieces of art for a not very much money and then we ended up over the years having them framed and so I just feel like our house is too overly visually stimulating. So in Jeremy's room, it's funny because growing up, he never really showed preference for what he wanted on the wall so his sister who was a couple of years younger, who was very athletic, we would take out with her sporting posters for Jeremy's room. One day we went in there and he had ripped all the posters down and so at that point, he was at a point where he could start pointing to yes or no and communicating things like that and we realize he didn't want anything up and the only pictures he wanted up was the picture of the charger cheerleaders.

Lauren Good for him.

Chantal: I don't remember...

Lauren Guys will be guys will be guys.

Chantal: Cheerleaders.

Lauren That's great.

Chantal: I did notice that it is important to him to have less stuff around and even when he's working, he does a lot of work at home because he's older now. He goes to community college and he studies in different places but we had to take a lot of things out of his bedroom. Of course we asked his permission, we asked his opinion but he's very clear about what he wants up and what he doesn't want up.

Lauren Yes, less is definitely more and especially with kids on the spectrum who are high-functioning or so on and so forth because their brains are working twice as

fast as ours are and that's the other thing. It's very hard to kind of understand or empathize or go where they are because you can't. Your brain just doesn't work at the level that their does. Just because they're wire differently socially doesn't necessarily mean that they're slower or they're not computing and/or associating or eating up the information just like we are. So you have to be really on top off as I've said the things that work for them, where they go, what they're focusing on and what they feel is okay. It maybe something he likes to see but it doesn't necessarily, as long as he doesn't detract and he's not going to necessarily know if it's detracting or not, that's helpful, but it's better to have what I call assistive technology in the room where these faces, your home ends up working for you like a person or assistant would. So the minute you walk into your office, the office is already boeing in you into a zone that allows you to work more easily just like when you go into your bedroom would do the same or your kitchen and that has to do with the way it's designed.

Chantal: That's correct. So now, it's time to go.

Lauren That was quick.

Chantal: I know.

Lauren That was quick but I hope people got the information they were looking for and that I was able to answer as thoroughly as I could under the circumstances. Do you want me to mention how to reach me or would you like to do that?

Chantal: Well, first of all, just mention again so that people will know that Lauren S. Henry was speaking and she's from Brush Of Love, or Brush With Love remind me..

Lauren It's actually With A Brush Of Love.

Chantal: Okay.

Lauren Color expert, sensory designed specialist and you can reach me at www.brushoflove.com. My email is lauren@brushoflove.com and you can also join our fan page to keep up on our good news and our show. Our show room can be different at facebook.com/withabrushoflove. We're on Twitter as well at [@brushoflove](https://twitter.com/brushoflove). We keep everything as consistent as possible so I certainly hope to hear from all of you and would like nothing more than to be able to assist

them and make your life easier and empower parents to really see the differences they can make for themselves and their children with just a few easy changes.

Chantal: Great. And I would like to remind people that this is a conference Get Educated About Autism put on by *momsfightingautism.com* and I think we should ever shout out to Ernest Priestly who does this every year.

Lauren Absolutely.

Chantal: Yes. It's a lot of work and every year, we get better at it, but it's *momsfightingautism.com* who put this on. My company is co-sponsoring which is *autismcollege.com* and if people have any questions or would like to check out Autism College and just Google *autismcollege.com* and I'm mentioning that because a few people have emailed in or sent in questions having to do with my son which I didn't answer because it didn't have to do with the topic right now, but you can go on my website at *autismcollege.com* and ask me the questions and I'll answer you.

So again, thanks to Ernest Priestly. Thanks so much Lauren.

Lauren Thank you. It's my pleasure.

Chantal: And really it was very informative and helpful.

Lauren Great. Thank you so much.

Chantal: You're welcome. So listeners if you're going to be here again for the conference, I'll be talking to again later today. Thank you and until then. BE THE CHANGE THAT YOU WANT TO SEE.

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