

WFWP USA: The Mindful Path - Flower Power

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May provides an amazing opportunity to boost our mood and practice self-care. May 9 is Mother's Day. May 15 is Bring Flowers To Someone Day. Celebrate spring by remembering someone special in your life including yourself!

Flower power is an actual brain response to lovely, fragrant blossoms. Brain chemicals including oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin are released when you are exposed to flowers. This positive reaction triggers emotional responses that include joy, connection, and contentment. Men and women respond favorably to a beautiful bouquet.

Research suggests that flowers actually speed healing, reduce stress and anxiety, promote productivity, encourage social interactions, and enhance happiness. Flowering potted plants and bulbs are a great investment for our homes as well as the perfect gift for others. Local florists have a great variety of potted plants including peace and calla lilies, orchids, African violets, cyclamens, flowering cacti and kalanchoes.

A hardy, fragrant bouquet is especially nice for individuals who are visually impaired because of the positive effects of aromatherapy. The tactile, velvety touch of flowers can enhance our enjoyment. To promote the longevity of your bouquet, clip the stems and provide plenty of fresh, cool water.

For a fun, relaxing activity, try flower gazing this month. When you have time to sit quietly, find a beautiful blossom and place it in front of you. Take several slow, steady breaths. When you are ready, gaze at the flower with relaxed eyes. Blink normally and relax your facial muscles (smiling gently may help this happen). Focus on the color and texture of the flower. If your attention wanders, don't worry. Simply notice that this has happened and then bring your thoughts back to the flower in front of you. After 5-10 minutes have passed (set a timer on your phone if that will help you focus), close your eyes for about a minute. Notice if you can still see the flower in front of you. Then take several slow, deep breaths and bring attention back into your own body. Open your eyes and notice the effect of the practice.

Enjoy the 'flower power' effect on your wellbeing and vitality.

Marilyn Halpern is a medical power of attorney, care manager and professional guardian in the Denver Metro area. She has a house full of flowering plants. For more information about services and geriatric resources, visit www.aspencareservices.com.