





AN INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE TO LIVING A LIFE IN PERSPECTIVE

STEPHANIE FEGER



PRAISE FOR COLOR TODAY PRETTY

"This little book is a big inspiration! If you've forgotten how blessed you are, Stephanie will remind you. If you've lost track of the beauty of the moment, Stephanie will shine the light on it, and if you've forgotten how pretty the day is, Stephanie will awaken you with a story about it. Her authenticity, warmth and wisdom shine through each page of this encouraging tome! Don't waste a minute. Pick up this book immediately and Color Today Pretty!"

Elizabeth Jeffries

Author, What Exceptional Executives Need to Know

"Most of us move too quickly through life to notice just how special each moment, each memory and each person can be to our own existence. Stephanie calls us all to stop and realize that, with our own brush strokes and perspectives in our own lives, we *can* color today pretty."

Dawne Gee

News Anchor, Raycom Media

"YOU have the choice to choose your perspective! Stephanie has written a very colorful book that reminds us that God gives us choices daily to see His divine plan in our lives. She shows us that these small moments can end up having the biggest impact upon our lives. May this book awaken the souls of all who are privileged to lay their eyes on every page, right to the very end."

Damien K. H. Nash, aka Coach Nash

Award-winning Certified Life Coach, Top Selling Author of #CompletelySingle, Founder of Completely You 365, LLC.

"Stephanie's ability to see God working in her life through ordinary moments is truly inspiring. If you are looking to find everyday miracles and peace in your life, you will love reading this book!"

Cheryl Ann Silich

American Gladiators Champion and Community Link Christian Radio Show Host

"In her incredible new book, *Color Today Pretty*, Stephanie Feger shows you the power of perspective and the tools you need to change your perspective on life. By sharing her own personal struggles and successes, Stephanie opens your eyes to the extraordinary events of day-to-day life and teaches you that every day is, indeed, extraordinary."

Mark D. Rucker

Speaker and Author of Unleash the Beast

"Stephanie Feger's book, *Color Today Pretty*, is a breath of fresh air! Stephanie is out to find the sacred in the secular and the holy in the humdrum. As she shares vignettes from her life, you realize that it is possible to experience life in a new and rewarding way. Highly recommended!"

Cathy Fyock

The Business Book Strategist and Author

"I just finished reading Stephanie's book. Wow — it's life-changing for me! I now know that living a life in perspective really isn't as hard as I sometimes think it is and it's so worth it."

Steve Vest

Editor and Publisher, Kentucky Monthly magazine

"Life is not always easy. Things don't always go as planned. Even in our most difficult and challenging moments, we have a choice. How we roll with the ups and downs of the everyday is a matter of the perspective we choose. In *Color Today Pretty*, Stephanie Feger gives us a Spirit-filled guidebook to making the choices that lead to a life well-lived, a life of purpose and contentment."

Michael Holtz

Author of It's Not Harder Than Cancer

"I've been passionate about perspective for more than a decade, as the power of perspective and gratitude completely changed the experience my daughter and I shared through her leukemia journey. It is fun to witness others experiencing similar awareness, as they choose to challenge their perspectives. *Color Today Pretty* is a sweet invitation to see life through a different lens.

This opportunity is something each of us can easily embrace and be blessed by."

Denise Taylor

Speaker, Author of Heavenly Birth: A Mother's Journey, A Daughter's Legacy

"Stephanie Feger's book is a living example of listening to the spirit when it calls us to live our purpose. As you read *Color Today Pretty*, you will be encouraged, inspired and moved to connect to the creator's spirit that is innately inside of YOU. Stephanie's personal story will open your mind to finding your unique purpose in being the change you want to see in the world."

Tasha Wahl

Founder of The Butterfly Effect

"Color Today Pretty is this little gem of a book from a dear friend that isn't a one-and-done read. This book has a simple yet powerful message that should be read DAILY: YOU get to choose the lens through which YOU view life. Choose to color today pretty. Choose to read this extremely relatable story often as a reminder that life is what you make it."

Kelly K

Radio Personality, Louisville, Kentucky

"I've known Stephanie Feger for many years and have always supported her both personally and professionally. I admire how she speaks from her heart and soul and now we get to read about her experiences that are filled with conviction and honesty. I'm looking forward to taking Stephanie up on her challenge to us all ... are YOU?"

Tammy McNeill

Broadcast Producer

"Color Today Pretty offers the reader an opportunity to enter into the wonderful, colorful life of the author, her husband, her children and her faith-family. These litanies of blessings in ordinary life experiences are entertaining as they are insightful of God's grace at work. Earthly life events are logged here, and almost everyone would find common ground in how God amazes us. I recommend this vivid, honest and genuinely written book to everyone who savors life as it unfolds day to day. It is wonderfully written and divinely inspired!"

Father Dale Cieslik

Pastor, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Mt. Washington, KY; Archivist, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville

"Stephanie powerfully describes events that typify those of many young women but does so with the wise reflections of maturity. Her words bring hope and strength to others, enabling them to claim their own power and strength and to move through and beyond those things that might otherwise hold them back."

Michael Johnson

President, Mercy Academy

"Working with Stephanie Feger always leaves me energized because her perspective on life is contagious. She constantly shows me that even amidst challenges life deals us, there is still good in this world."

Nate Butler

Executive Vice President of Operations, Orbital Media Networks Inc, Denver, Colorado

"Through some of the highest peaks of life and the deepest valleys, Stephanie's beautiful spirit is driven by her deep relationship with God and family to be authentic in everyday life. A must-read book!"

Peggy Wolf, APRN

OB/GYN Nurse Practitioner, Women First of Louisville

"Love it!!!! This gal is AMAZE-ing ... meaning she looks at life with amazement. She sees everything brand new. She is a MERCY WOMAN, one who lives and breathes the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy. Use this book as a tool for your own journey. She's "pretty" right in target!"

Karen D. Kuenzig

Music Director, Retreat Director, Spiritual Director, Spiritually Religious Woman

"My thanks to Stephanie for sharing her thoughts and feelings with us in this new book. Her words are very moving, powerful and inspiring. As a 23-year cancer survivor, I found that her words are able to express many of the thoughts and feelings I continue to harbor. We often times do not know the effect our words and actions have on others. Saying 'God Bless You' can be all someone who is really struggling might need to make it through the day. We all need to have a mission in life, and Stephanie has helped provide some ideas for her readers about finding that purpose. Unlike no other of God's creations, we have been given the power of CHOICE. That also means that we can choose to, or, not to, do something. We just have to remember that 'We are blessed to be a blessing to others."

John Huggins

Retired Educator

"I met Stephanie on an 'ordinary' Saturday in an 'ordinary' church building, but what has come to fruition since I met her has convinced me that the thesis of her book is correct. God is in the ordinary working overtime to show us he loves us. Stephanie's mission is to spread this awareness with her work. I am truly grateful that our paths crossed like they did."

Elizabeth Johnson

Educator

"This book streamlines the necessity of making the most out of this treasure we have been given called life and, more importantly, teaches us to look through the lens of vulnerability and purpose to see what this life is all about. Our ability to escape the tragedies of life's distractions is a gift within itself and we are drawn to so much more when we 'choose' to make life happen instead of letting life happen to us. So in order to *color today pretty*, we have to let our dreams flow instead of keeping them locked up in the box of fear, and allow our God inhabit the dreams He gave us so that they manifest into a more meaningful and beautiful reality."

Devin E. West, M. Div.

Senior Leader, First Trinity Baptist Church, Jeffersonville

COLOR TODAY PRETTY

An Inspirational Guide to Living a Life in Perspective

STEPHANIE FEGER



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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those who believe in others who may not believe in themselves. To those who help build confidence and encourage others to find their voice, no matter how hard it is to find. To those who have a story that needs to be heard but who may be too scared to share. To the lives that are touched by those doing good in this world in a way that may never be known.

To each of you, this book is dedicated to your continued perseverance, your abundant compassion and your consistent kindness. May more stories be told, more voices be found and more faith instilled as together we all learn to live a life in perspective.



CHAPTER 15

Broken Beautiful

There was a point in my life when the fear of talking to anyone would be nearly crippling. It didn't matter if I was supposed to talk to one person or to a crowd, I would break out in red splotches and clam up. "Shy" was an accurate descriptor of me when I was young, as I would hide behind my parent's legs when approached by anyone. If I did decide to talk, I would squeeze out a squeak as if I could still hide the real me behind a nearly inaudible noise.

My parents knew that deep down within me lived a girl with a voice that needed to be let out and heard, and to help me find the confidence I needed, they signed me up for modeling. Now, there was definitely no hope that this extracurricular would turn into something monetizable as this short, freckled pipsqueak wasn't destined for the runway, but it was a means to an end; meant to push me to live outside my comfort zone. And that it did.

While I despised getting up in front of class or having to place my own order at a restaurant, my squeaky voice subsided and little-by-little I was up for taking a few more risks such as going door-to-door selling candy bars as a school fundraiser.

Rather than doing homework, a friend and I braved the neighborhood on our selling venture. With our box of chocolates nearly empty, I was

startled when I heard his voice as we turned to head home. While his presence is definitely never questionable, it took me a second to register my dad as he pulled up in a new ride. A 1998 Ford Mustang.

"Is this the right color?" he had asked. While I still had several years before I would be driving, I had already talked about wanting a blue car, and what I'd find out soon enough was that the joy ride Dad was taking was actually the car that one day would be mine.

Riding in a convertible was fun, but I couldn't wait to be the one behind the wheel. So, when I got my driver's permit, I was willing to try everything to ensure I would be well equipped to pass my test. My parents found a credible driver's education company and signed me up in hopes it would boost my confidence and prepare me for what was to come.

The instructor was to pick me up after school for several sessions and between the drive from school to home he was expected to teach me the skills I needed to be considered a good, safe driver. When the school bell rang, I flew out of the building, elated to see that car, all branded with "Student Driver" so other cars on the road would stay far away from this newbie.

Even though it's been years since that day, I can still recall what it felt like to sit in the driver's seat. Short has its downfalls and driving in a car made for average people was one of them. So, I had to sit on the edge of the seat after it was pushed as far forward as possible just to reach the pedals. I drove off, slowly, as the instructor discussed our game plan. I remember so many details of that day, but I barely remember him — what he looked like or what his voice sounded like. To this day, I have pushed that deep within as if to shield myself from the pain of remembering. No, I don't remember him, but I will always remember what he did.

Things started off fine until he made comments less about my driving and more about me. It started by him directing me to the closest park near school, which seemed innocent enough because it had lots of windy roads that gave me great opportunity to practice. However, the instructor had planned it perfectly as several cross-country runners were out with their schools practicing. I didn't think anything of it at first until we came up to a pack of girls running and he asked me to slow down. He watched them run like they were his prey, and his eyes were focused on each girl's attributes instead of their skill. He caught me off guard; I, unfortunately, had obliged.

His comments didn't stop. Once he made one, he gained the confidence he needed for them to flood in. With each comment on how the girls looked in their running gear to the silent stares he gave as if he could peer into what each of the young women looked like underneath them, I became more paralyzed. Even though years before I had been empowered to find my voice, when I needed it most, it was lost. I stopped talking but couldn't stop shaking, and my trembles got worse when his comments turned from women outside the car to the only one inside. He commented on my school uniform, on my appearance's impact to those around me and even touched my leg.

There are a lot of "should-haves" I should have done. I should have told him to stop talking. I should have smacked his hand or his face. I should have sped past the runners or pulled off on the side of the road and gotten out of the car and ran myself. But I didn't. I didn't do anything. I was paralyzed in fear. I had no cell phone, no voice, no hope. I was trapped, and he knew it.

As we ventured closer to home, I panicked. I think he could tell because he started to layer threats in with his inappropriate comments, leaving me with the reminder that he knew where I lived, and he would find me if I ever told anyone anything. As we pulled up to my house, he informed me that he would be coming in whether I invited him in or not.

My mom, who normally worked from home, wasn't there that day and he knew I was there all alone. As that truth set in, I found he had already made his way into my house. Now, alone in my home, I paced while trying to determine a way to get myself safe again. But I couldn't.

He walked down the hall, heading to the restroom to change his clothes for the funeral he had told me he needed to visit next, but decided he'd rather change in the middle of the living room, where he was in my line of sight. Panic set in, and more threats were made, but somehow (perhaps it was God's protective hand), once he was suited in funeral attire, he left.

The house was quiet as tears streamed down my face. And even though I had hoped to feel safe, I honestly didn't feel safe at all. I had been violated, my innocence stolen. The voice I had worked so hard to find, suppressed deep within. My body shook as I found the phone to call my mom to tell her I made it home. Our conversation started simply, but she quickly knew something was wrong without me ever having to say it. At first, I opted not to speak details, but then the sobs came, and I released it all — tears, panic and a fear I'd never known before.

Mom rushed home, and I told her everything. She jotted on a piece of paper each detail I was willing to share and thank heavens she did because as I spoke my truths, my subconscious packaged it all in a box that would be kept deep within me for years to come to compartmentalize the trauma.

We filed a police report but I could see it in the police officer's eyes that he didn't trust a word I said. Little energy was put into looking into my allegations. In fact, it was quite the opposite as I, the victim,

was told to keep quiet while my instructor was allowed to continue his business as usual.

No amount of beauty that the convertible would exude would make me want to drive again. It sat in the garage, shiny and tempting, but I had no desire to get behind the wheel. My parents knew if they didn't do something, fear would consume me. So, one day another man in another car picked me up to teach me how to drive. He had been told my story — he knew my trauma — and he was determined to help me overcome it. Together, we did.

Years have gone by since, and I've seen the branded car of the company that was led by the man who stole so much from me. I haven't a clue how many others he's traumatized. I pray none. But I fear more than most will admit.

My voice may have been stifled then. The person who I am today is frustrated by the person who I was that day. Before finding myself the victim of sexual harassment, I would have thought that I would have handled things differently. But until you are in it, you truly haven't a clue your reaction.

That day, one man broke me, or at least he attempted to. I let him for a little bit before deciding no one would stop me from talking. I started by talking to my mom, telling her everything. Then, over the years, I've slowly shared pieces of my story with others. To some, I may seem like a strong-willed woman, but deep down, hidden in a place that only sometimes my mind will let me venture to, is a box. That box, when opened, tells the story of a girl who believed that all people were good but saw differently. That girl trusted and in doing so, trusted the wrong person.

I could have decided to never trust again; to live in fear. That's what he wanted, and that's what I refuse to do.

I may have a piece of me broken; a piece I'll never get back. But from that day forward I've decided to gather all of my broken pieces and build me, albeit a broken version, back together. I've decided to bloom into someone beautiful.

I've decided to not hide my voice but to use it. To tell my story, in hopes that someone somewhere will realize that no matter what has happened, you can choose to become empowered from a place where you feel shattered. You can trust again; you can find hope. I've realized that while there may be some rottenness in this world, it's usually the exception. For there is more good placed around us.

If you're broken, know that you don't have to be. Find your pieces and start putting them back together. They may not be as perfectly placed as they were before, but however they are, the new you will be magnificent, too. No matter where you are planted, make time to grow because when you do, the seed within you will flourish to someone beautiful.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Feger is a passionate communicator who believes that a shift in perspective can help people live truly fulfilling lives. After working in the public relations and marketing industry for nearly 15 years, she learned that happiness isn't found in what society deems important and felt a calling to do something different. That's when she began to nurture her entrepreneurial spirit and build a brand intended to help others live to their fullest potential.



Stephanie has embraced listening to God on her journey and empowers others to join her through *Color Today Pretty*. From being a professional speaker, avid blogger and home décor business owner, Stephanie connects her passion for embracing creativity with her devotion to faith in everything she does.

Stephanie lives in a small city on the outskirts of Louisville, Kentucky, with her husband, Cory, and their three kids, Eli, Lyndi and Luke. She is a member of her community's Catholic Church and credits her personal faith for helping her overcome obstacles in life. When she isn't creating or spending time with her beloved kids, she can be found in her backyard gardening.

Learn more at www.colortodaypretty.com.



BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS BOOK, OPEN YOUR MIND TO MORE WAYS TO COLOR TODAY PRETTY IN YOUR OWN LIFE

It's YOUR turn.

You've read these pages. You've absorbed these messages. Now YOU hold the power to impact another. Remember, it starts with one. How will you use the messages sprinkled throughout to extend into your life and the lives of others you come in contact with? The opportunities are endless, but do you mind if I leave you with a challenge?

Will you help me color today pretty? My challenge to you is to start today, this very moment. Start with a smile to someone you don't know who looks as though they could use a reminder that happiness can be found. Give a hug to a loved one, for the power of human connection is immense. Write a thank you note to someone who made your day. Let someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store or pause to let another car out at an intersection.

Start small, but know that each act of kindness has the power to have a ripple effect. In doing good for others, you will also find that the ripple effect inches its way into your heart, chiseling any callouses you once had away. In fact, I need your help to ensure that this ripple effect makes the difference it is meant to make. Each time you find yourself or someone else around you choosing to color today pretty, snap a picture of it. Write about it. Post it to social media using the hashtag #colortodaypretty. Let's show the world that we get the choice to do good, and we choose

it daily! I believe that with your help, our world will not just be colored pretty, it will be downright beautiful.

Thanks to you, the charge I was given by a little boy in my dream is possible. I know that with each crayon scribble, each paint stroke and each pen line we are working together to make the world a better place.

MEET, WORK WITH AND BE INSPIRED BY STEPHANIE ...

If the messages in this book touched your heart, don't stop here. Allow Stephanie Feger of Color Today Pretty to continue to provide you the inspiration you need as your traverse your life's journey. Stephanie is passionate about perspective, believing that through inspiration comes transformation, and with a dash of creative therapy in the mix, you have a recipe for fulfillment.

Stephanie would love the opportunity to work with you to bring the messages of Color Today Pretty to you and any group — corporate or social — and help you explore them more deeply. Living a life in perspective has benefits for everyone. Personally or professionally, Stephanie is ready to help you pause the noise and savor the moments Stephanie is excited to help others live out their life's mission with purpose and perspective. Hire her for:

- Experiential workshops
- Retreats
- Speaking engagements and keynotes
- One-on-one coaching and consultation.

To learn more about Stephanie's suite of Color Today Pretty offerings or to schedule her to come and engage with your group, visit www.colortodaypretty.com.

Learn more at www.colortodaypretty.com.