



[live colorfully]

Dare to be different. Each of us is like a flower: unique, beautiful and the source of a smile. Show the world what variety you are with these tips from design psychology expert and author of *Do I Look Skinny in This House?*, Kelli Ellis. She shares advice on how to **live like a flower** by being colorful and daring to be different.

① **Shake it up.** Do something unpredictable. Skydive, take ballroom dancing lessons, drive a race car, learn how to sail, paint the living room a wild color, hang flowers from the chandelier... try something completely new and you'll feel new!

② **Make it simple.** Keep the people that make your life better on speed dial; your hair stylist, your florist, your dog walker, your baby sitter. Call on the pros and trust them to make your life simple and sweet.

③ **Good morning sunshine.** Start and end your day in a color that makes your heart smile, one that creates a key to your haven. Choose a bedding color that you love, and wrap yourself in a smile every day. On your nightstand, fill a vase with flowers in your favorite color. A Harvard study shows that while people tend to feel least positive in the early hours, they reported feeling happier and more energetic after looking at flowers first thing in the morning.

④ **Ignore your "normal."** To brighten your day, get bold. Instead of the usual black tights, try colored leggings in your favorite color. Swap out the typical black boots for vibrant pumps. Find a new style one piece at a time.

⑤ **Make a statement.** Share the things you love with the world. Create your own signature brand by choosing a favorite flower and always have them on your desk, or be known for your cool hairstyles and hair accessories. Do both and pin your favorite flower in your hair.

⑥ **Spread Smiles.** Show your thoughtful and creative side by giving your work mates flowers that you think represents them. Flowers make the boss smile too! According to a Texas A&M study, productivity, innovation and creative problem solving improve when flowers and plants are in the workplace.

For more tips on how to Live Like A Flower, visit AboutFlowers.com/LLAF.



[soak up the sun]

Ever notice on bright and sunny days how everyone seems happy? Just like flowers need light, people need happy thoughts and moments to grow. Personal change expert and author of *The Happiness Makeover*, MJ Ryan, provides these tips on how to **live like a flower** and embrace the sunny side of life.

① **Uplift with orange.** Color therapists say colors really do affect our moods. The happiest color? Orange. It promotes optimism, enthusiasm, and a sense of uplift. Choose orange flowers — roses, gerberas, lilies, ranunculus, alstroemeria, tulips — to put on your desk and see your mood soar.

② **Tune into happy tunes.** Music is a very powerful happiness creator. Choose songs that make you feel good, whether that's through inspiring lyrics or the rhythm. Want to boost your mood even more? Singing has been shown

to be a great way to lift your spirits, lower blood pressure, and decrease depression. Get your family or roommates involved in the fun. If you're self-conscious, sing in the car when you're alone.

③ **Follow the happiness path.** Research has shown that there are two routes to happiness. One is doing something that you feel is personally meaningful, such as volunteering in your community or seeing a friend through a tough time. The other is indulging in simple pleasures, such as

relishing in the feel of your dog's fur, taking a luxurious hot bath, or treating yourself to flowers or a blooming plant. But who says you have to choose one over the other? The more you fold both into your life, the more joyful you'll be.

④ **Do one little thing that's been nagging you.** Procrastination is a happiness killer. Usually it takes less energy to do whatever it is than to worry about not doing it. The pile of files, the email you need to return, the appointment you need to make ... just do one thing and you'll feel absolutely great!

⑤ **Spread happiness to others.** Acts of kindness benefit both the receiver and the giver. So spread the love around and you'll feel good too. Research from Rutgers University shows that a gift of flowers creates instant delight and increases enjoyment and life satisfaction. Study participants expressed "true" smiles upon receiving flowers. Send flowers to a friend, just because, and watch the happiness prevail.

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[grow roots]

Vanessa Diffenbaugh, author of the best-seller *The Language of Flowers*, offers advice on how to live like a flower by growing roots in your community.

① **Ask people to tell their stories.** Everyone has a story, full of both heartbreak and triumph, but we can't see their story just by looking at them. Asking people to share allows you to find common ground even when all you see — externally — are differences.

② **Be real.** We have been trained to broadcast our successes and hide our failures. But the truth is this: our failures humanize us, and they connect us to one another. Being truthful

about both sides of your story will help you form more honest connections with those you love and admire.

③ **Embrace your elders.** Show love and respect to your grandparents and aging neighbors. Talk to them often. Send a letter or card. Help them with chores or errands. Or really make them smile with flowers, which have been shown by a Rutgers University study to ease depression, inspire socialization and refresh memory as we grow older.

④ **Make yourself useful.** Everyone has something to give, no matter how much (or little) time you have. Find an organization that inspires you and make a difference while also meeting people that care about the world in the same way you do.

⑤ **Do what you love to do.** Figure out what you love to do, and then go do it! Take a flower arranging class at your local florist or join a local sports league. You'll meet people that share your interests, whether they are reading, running, flowers, music and more.

⑥ **Ask for help.** Don't be afraid to ask humbly, genuinely, for help when you need it. People want to help one another; sometimes we just forget to ask. Becoming vulnerable and admitting we can't do everything on our own is another way to deepen relationships. Say thank you with flowers, a plant, or another heartfelt expression of gratitude.

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[open up]

Flowers open hearts. When you connect with flowers your heart opens, love pours in and you feel happy. Follow these tips from relationship expert and author of *Choosing ME Before WE*, Christine Arylo, to learn to **live like a flower** — open and beautiful.

① **Know what makes your heart happy and do that.** Make choices in your relationships, career, home and lifestyle to meet your personal expectations, rather than those of outside forces. One great way to reconnect with joy is to surround yourself with simple things that make you feel happy and loved, like a colorful bunch of flowers or a blooming plant. Flowers have power to open hearts, and when your heart is open you are more likely to do things that make you happy.

② **Follow your inner wisdom, not conventional wisdom.** Living an authentic life means living life by what feel is right to you, even

if it differs from the norm. Be willing to listen to your inner wisdom — that intuitive, gut feeling — even if it is contrary to rational thought. People who live great lives take risks and live outside the prescribed box of conventional wisdom. They are willing to be different, because they are willing to be themselves.

③ **Stay true to yourself, even if that means disappointing another.** Be a best friend to yourself by taking actions that are best for you. Sometimes you will disappoint others, but ultimately if you stay true to yourself, you'll almost always end up in a better scenario. In the event another person is disappointed, send them a small but mighty token of

your love, such as flowers to brighten their day and remind them you adore them.

④ **Be willing to make a mistake, but don't beat yourself up about it.** It can be hard to admit you've made a mistake. Give yourself some love by saying the same words you would tell a best friend in this situation, "You are doing the best that you can, and it's enough." Then do something loving for yourself, an action that you would only usually take for someone else to cheer them up, like sending yourself flowers. When they arrive, you will receive a huge boost of love, and your heart will open up ... to yourself.

⑤ **Be a feeling sharer not a feeling stuffer.** Most of us were brought up to stuff our feelings as far down as we can. If it is hard for you to express your feelings, bring in help to open your heart and let the feelings out. Flowers are great heart openers, for yourself and the person with whom you want to connect. Give flowers or a plant to the person you are trying to open your heart to as a gesture to start the conversation. Watch the walls break down and the field of love open.

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[live beautifully]

A prioritized life empowers you to **live like a flower** — a lovely and fragrant offering to a harried and distracted world. Change agent and author of *Restoring Order*, Vicki Norris, has some advice for living beautifully, inside and out.

① **Rethink order and beauty.** Embrace order as a gateway to beauty. (It's hard to enjoy aesthetics in the midst of chaos.) Train your mind that organizing your life and belongings is not a chore; it's an investment in a lovely life.

② **Repurpose old things to new life.** Rescue vintage buckets from the corners of your garage and shapely jars from your recycle bin or canning supplies, and turn them into vessels for flowers, pencils, or utensils. Bringing yesteryear into today provides comfort through nostalgia and conveys simpler times in today's busy world.

③ **Re-envision your space.** Arrange your home or workplace around centers of activity and community (instead of by sterile rooms). Create a homework zone, a reading nook, a crafting nest, a creativity wall, or a workout niche. Make room for the things you love and create a refueling or reconnecting space. Incorporate flowers and plants in these areas. As well as beautifying and updating your living space, flowers boost emotional health. Harvard research proves people feel more compassionate toward others, have less worry and anxiety, and feel less depressed when flowers are present in the home.

④ **Rehab your mind.** Change in our natural environment or habits begins with a change of thinking. Make a list of the beautiful, lovely, praiseworthy things you can think about and post it near your sink. What we think about, we become.

⑤ **Rejuvenate your senses.** Take a break from the busyness of life and treat yourself to a visit to a relaxing spa, botanical garden, lavender field, or local flower shop. Surrounding yourself with the sounds, scents, and beauty of nature invites us to engage our senses, slow down, breathe and experience peace.

⑥ **Refuse to dichotomize.** Trade up from *balance* to *integration*. A completely balanced life is impossible and requires constant reallocation of time. An integrated life is one where we intentionally break down separations and blend our personal, professional, spiritual, and emotional lives together. An integrated life is a beautiful display of peace in an out-of-control world.

For more tips on how to Live Like A Flower, visit AboutFlowers.com/LLAF.



[pollinate]

Positive energy is positively contagious. Live like a flower and pollinate by transmitting your optimism, kindness and love to change a person's day or quite possibly their life. Jayme Barrett, an authority on inspired living and author of *Feng Shui Your Life*, shares her results-oriented ways to transform the lives of others by sharing positive energy.

① **Radiate joy & happiness.** Start every day in a good mood, and let your happiness uplift others. Make someone laugh with a funny joke, or share a hilarious memory on Facebook. Smile. Wear clothing with a positive message. If you need a jump start in the morning, think flowers. Research from Harvard shows looking at flowers first thing in the morning makes you feel less anxious, more compassionate and more energetic throughout the day.

② **Celebrate & acknowledge people.** Make an effort to praise and compliment friends, family and co-workers. When you celebrate someone's

accomplishment or efforts, large or small, it can make their day and give them confidence to continue on. Taking special notice of unique qualities, hard work and time spent is a gift and a blessing. Marking those special times with flowers will keep you in their memories forever.

③ **Share your creative spark & business smarts.** Share your business know-how with a newbie. Being a casual mentor can transform a person's life. Brainstorm fresh ideas, offer to make an introduction, read a proposal or send them your resources. It doesn't need to take a lot of your time but it can help launch them towards the realization of their dreams.

④ **Listen with undivided attention.** In these days of smart phones and tablets, interruptions and distractions are rampant. Giving someone your complete attention is a gift. Put your phone on silent, turn off the television, walk away from the computer, and listen with your heart. Sharing your attention will make them feel number one, and you'll feel connected in a meaningful way.

⑤ **Pay it forward.** A magical way of spreading positive energy is to do something unexpected for a stranger. Offer to run an errand, bring an elderly person to a doctor, or let a stranger go in front of you in line. Bring flowers to a neighbor, or offer to babysit

for a couple hours. Kind acts help others and give you a sense of purpose. We feel more deserving of happiness when we have given it ourselves.

⑥ **Give your love freely.** Love is the nectar of life. It sustains us. Love your partner, family and children with all of your heart. Show your deep affection with daily positive words and actions. Say "I love you," give big bear hugs, surprise them with flowers, spend quality time, do the dishes, and honor their passions.

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[grow new buds]

Some flowers go together better than others, just like people, and the best flower arrangements come from intention and creativity. Relationship expert and author of *Choosing ME Before WE*, Christine Arylo shares her easy advice for how to live like a flower — becoming your own best friend and growing new ones.

① **Grow little buds into blooming buds.** It's easier to grow friendships with people you already know than to start fresh. Choose friends past or present who have the potential to grow deeper and stronger, and to make your life better. Put energy here. Be proactive at reaching out. If they live farther away, send them surprise flowers just because you are grateful to have them in your life. Think of it as helping your friendship bloom as a flower blooms — steadily and beautifully.

② **Be honest about who you want in your friend bouquet.** Be intentional with whom you want to surround yourself. Make a list of these buds (call it

your friendship manifesto) — who they are, what they like to do, and how you feel when you are around them. Place the manifesto somewhere sacred (perhaps under a flowering plant to signify blooming friendships) and every so often take it out and read it, and keep your eyes out for new friends!

③ **Be inspired by others, not envious.** If sunflowers spent all their time trying to be roses, they would be very unhappy sunflowers. Next time you find yourself comparing yourself to someone else, find what inspires you about that person, and tell them so! Watch how their heart opens because you've showered them

with appreciation instead of judgment or envy, and you might just find a new friend.

④ **Look for new buds that feel like you.** There is a universal relationship law that says like attracts like, which means people are attracted to energy on the outside that matches the energy on the inside. So if you want new friends that you resonate with and that feel good to be around, put your true self out to the world so others can see you. Think about what qualities you have to share with others and embrace this as part of your essence, so that your new buds will have an easier time finding you, and you them.

⑤ **Plant seeds in new fields.** Put yourself out there to new people in new circles instead of just hanging out with the same people. If your new friends were flowers, what kind would they be? Do you want to grow fun friendships (think daisies or tulips), sophisticated ones (think lilies or orchids), or calming ones (think bamboo plants or succulents)? Surround yourself with these kinds of flowers or plants in your home to remind yourself of the new friends you are welcoming into your heart and life.

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[be grateful for rain]

A prioritized life prepares you to **live like a flower** — nimbly and gracefully in all kinds of weather and refreshed by the rain. Follow this advice from change agent and author of *Restoring Order*, Vicki Norris, to be grateful for rain.

① **Receive the rain.** Look at life's circumstances — not as inconveniences or intrusions — but as enrichment to your soil. Even the tough stuff can bring growth, and even beauty, to your life. Determine to always become better, not bitter.

② **Refine your transitions.** Make your transitions stress-free: give attention to your going-and-coming spaces. Set up a mudroom or hallway where coats, boots, gloves, keys and

sunglasses can be easily placed for grab-and-go ease, and welcoming and orderly returns. Display flowers and plants in the area to greet you and help keep clutter at bay.

③ **Reconsider your remnants.** Pause to enjoy (and even photograph) the overlooked, dirty, or disruptive things, instead of perceiving a nuisance. Snap a mental or actual picture of the muddy boots by the front door, the dishes piled up, the toys lurking under

the couch. Remember that these are actually evidence of what we DO have — the beautiful blessings of today.

④ **Refuse the daily grind.** Infuse your busy life with little pleasures that invite you to breathe in the sweet joys that no circumstance can steal. Take the doors off your kitchen cabinets so you can behold your pretty dishes, add a small vase of flowers in the kitchen or laundry room, tuck love notes inside your spouse's pocket.

⑤ **Reclaim your priorities.** Prioritize your life around that which matters most. Resolve to live with no regrets by putting first the relationships and moments that count. And, like a flower, you will be happier living when the rain comes; you will have the roots and support system to weather the storm and rebound resiliently.

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