

## Captured Thought: The Crayon Box Analogy

I despise race and race issues—not because I deny that people look different, but because I can't understand why those differences should matter at all beyond simple heritage.

The analogy that came to me is this:

When you open a fresh box of Crayola 64 crayons, all the colors are arranged in this beautiful rainbow. Every shade is distinct, vibrant, and full of potential. But beneath the pigment, each crayon is fundamentally the same length, the same wax, the same capability to draw across a page.

That's what I see when I look at people.

Sometimes you encounter a box that's mostly warm tans, or deep browns, or a full sweep from the palest whites to the darkest blacks—but it's still a complete set. Every crayon is equally "there," equally capable. You just pick different colors for different creative contexts: greens and yellows for grass, blues and whites for sky, reds and purples for sunsets. Not because some crayons are better but because every color has a place where it expresses its nature beautifully.

Humans are the same way. We are all just different-looking humans—every one of us unique. With the rare exceptions of near-identical twins or global doppelgängers, no two humans look alike. And yet skin color has been elevated into some bizarre metric of value, identity, superiority, inferiority, or conflict. To me, that makes as much sense as insisting that red crayons are morally superior to blue ones.

Appearance should be nothing more than a marker of lineage—an echo of where our ancestors happened to live and how their biology adapted to sunlight. That's it. Nothing deeper, nothing revelatory. Certainly nothing worth dividing over.

I wish more people saw humanity this way: A brand-new box of crayons—full of color, full of potential, equal in worth, and each invaluable within the domain where it naturally thrives.

It should also be noted that nobody gets to dictate where those domains reside. In this analogy, a "domain" is simply the context in which a crayon's qualities naturally shine — like using blues for sky or greens for grass. But those domains aren't rules; they're just tendencies. The scene drawn by a child hanging on your refrigerator that is filled with purple grass, an orange sky, and bright blue people is still a completely valid expression of those crayons in that context.

Likewise, people don't need to justify where they belong, how they live, or what spaces they thrive in. No one has the authority to declare which "colors" are appropriate for which "scenes." Humanity isn't a paint-by-number kit. It's more like that refrigerator artwork — bold, personal, surprising, and fully legitimate in all its variation.

Of course, just because you *can* draw blue people with crayons does not mean that *people can be blue*. Creative expression lets us explore any combination of colors, shapes, or ideas we want — and that freedom is valuable. But artistic possibility must never be confused with objective reality.

The crayon analogy celebrates the beauty of human variation and the equal worth of all appearances, but it does not suggest that imagination should override truth. Creativity can illustrate meaning, evoke emotion, or challenge perspective, yet it must coexist with an understanding of how things actually are in the real world.

In other words: you can draw the world however you choose, but you cannot use those drawings to redefine the nature of humanity.

### **Context for the Analogy**

This analogy first surfaced while I was daydreaming about a hypothetical future where UNS becomes widely recognized and I'm invited onto *StarTalk*. I imagined spending some unrecorded time with Neil deGrasse Tyson beforehand — not out of formality, but because I respect him, agree with him in many areas, and also disagree sharply in others. In his public persona, he sometimes arrives at conclusions based on a selective or narrow interpretation of input variables. And while his confidence can read as arrogance or stubbornness, those traits seem to have softened with age.

I find his co-host Chuck to be similarly likable in his own way — thoughtful, good-natured, and sincerely engaged with the topics. At the same time, he is often quick to reach for racial framing or racial humor, which saddens me because it highlights exactly why I dislike race as a framework in the first place: it inserts itself into discussions where it doesn't belong.

So while I enjoy *StarTalk* and respect what both of them bring to the broader conversation about science and culture, imagining a future conversation about UNS made me realize I would want to set some shared foundations first. Not restrictions — just clarity about how we speak of humanity, identity, and universality. All of this is, of course, far ahead of reality — merely a passing thought while contemplating what the release of UNS might someday lead to.