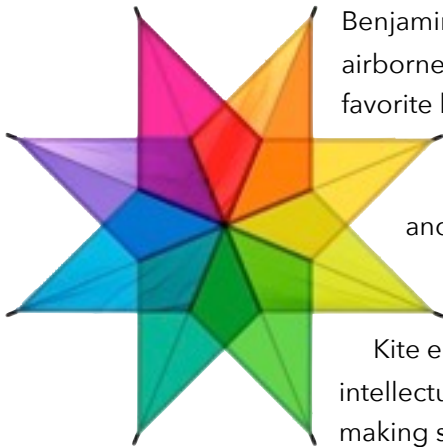


# Flights of Fancy

Creative types, spiritual seekers, and original thinkers throughout history have felt the pull of the kite.



Benjamin Franklin demonstrated that lightning was an airborne electrical current by tying a metal key to his favorite kite and setting it aloft during a powerful storm. New

Zealand's Maori tribes believed that kites shaped like birds could carry messages up to the ancestors, and in Thailand, kites were released into the sky to appease the monsoon gods. Hindi speakers have come up with over 100 words for "kite."

Kite enthusiasts have an inherent appreciation for the spiritual and intellectual power of the kite. Standing in a grassy field on a breezy day making smooth, balletic adjustments to the line, we feel connected to both the earth and the sky. We are free to let our imaginations wander. At the same time, we maintain laserlike focus on keeping the kite aloft, keenly attuned to subtle shifts in the direction and force of the wind.

Flying a kite is a great way to alleviate stress. It forces the flier to stay in the moment. Said another way, it helps the flier step away from his or her desk, from email and voicemail and to-do lists, and spend a couple of hours outside on a beautiful day.



In modern-day culture, where one of the primary measures of status and success is the number of obligations and meetings a person packs into a single day, “go fly a kite” is an insult. But it should be viewed instead as a generous invitation to escape from the trap of busyness.

While there may be nothing “productive” about flying a kite, there is much to be learned: the rules of aerodynamics, specific wind patterns, and the relative merits of different line-handling mechanisms, from spools to reels.

Flying a kite with a child is a great way to spark his or her curiosity about flight, about the weather, and most important, about life’s baffling ups and downs. “The optimist pleasantly ponders how high his kite will fly; the pessimist woefully wonders how soon his kite will fall,” wrote scholar William Arthur Ward. Flying kites teaches us valuable skills for living a fulfilling life. Without a doubt, your kite will fall eventually. But you can always patch it up and try again. And that, by its very definition, is resilience.

– Eden Sears, *International Kite Enthusiasts* member since 1998

*The kite is flying,  
which represents the  
revelation or  
manifestation of the  
divine glory.*

– **Sri Chinmoy**

*Throw your dreams into space like a kite, and you do not know what it will bring back: a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country.*

– **Anaïs Nin**