



## STEP 1: STYLEPRINT DISCOVERY

Before you can have a home filled with rooms that wow you, you must focus on what you want. How is each piece of the puzzle going to fit into the whole? Once you understand your goals for your home and each room, it's easier to address the challenges in front of you. If decorating is a struggle for you, you're not alone. Many people get overwhelmed, feel unsure of themselves, and get tired of seeing the same thing everywhere they go or displayed in magazines. But it all becomes easier and more manageable when you follow a system.

As Steven Covey writes in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, the way to begin is to start with the end in mind, habit number two.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING AHEAD

The Styleprint discovery stage first identifies something that is not right. As you begin to contemplate this, begin with the end in mind. Essentially, you think about what you want the outcome to be, as opposed to purchasing odd items of decor such as a piece of furniture, an accessory, or a rug, and seeing what happens from there. When you start without knowing where you want to go, things go downhill fast. What works time after time is to start with where you want to end up and work backward from there. The counterintuitive part here is that you may start with one piece of furniture or art or a color that you love and build around it. There is a difference between consciously selecting something that you love and using it as the inspiration for the rest of the room and aimlessly selecting something because it strikes you at the moment.

Looking at the process from the perspective of the desired result helps you to focus and think about the look, feel, and function of the room. You must be happy with all three of those criteria in order to declare the project a success in the end. If it looks good but doesn't feel good and doesn't function for you—it doesn't work. You will be annoyed and irritated living with it. That's not the purpose of your space. Each

room in your home is expected to support your life. Consider your home the theatrical stage where your life unfolds. It's a place where you can rest, relax, and rejuvenate. It's also where you celebrate, entertain, and get together with others. Or it's a place where you work. Your environment plays a supporting role in whatever you're doing in your life.

To begin the process, identify something that doesn't feel right or is missing. Is it an item? Is it a color? Is it the whole room? Describe it in three sentences or less. How complex is it? Is it something for which purchasing one item will make all the difference, or is it more intricate than that?

The solution could be as simple as hanging your favorite piece of art on the wall over the sofa, adding greenery in a corner of the room to round it out, or anchoring the room with a beautiful area rug. Or it could be more complex: the entire color theme may be lacking in personality and placement, in which case adding a wall covering, pillows, and coordinated accessories may do the trick by pulling out colors from the area rug, art, and upholstered furnishings. Or the room may simply not be lit in a way that enhances its style and function and therefore does not feel good or inviting. To remedy this, general lighting may be the best enhancement.

After identifying your pain point, focus on what you want to accomplish by making a change and why. Make notes on your vision of the completed project. What does it look like? Be specific. Consider the end result: what will a change do for the room and for your enjoyment and use of that room? Consider the opposite as well: what will it mean to you if you do not make any enhancements?

For assistance with this thought process, go to [www.styleprintdesignsystem.com](http://www.styleprintdesignsystem.com), download Worksheet #1 (“Focus Step”), and listen to the podcast that walks you through the thinking involved in filling the worksheet out. You will also find a copy of all the Worksheets in the Appendix in the back of this book.



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To gain clarity, ask yourself questions and discover your challenges: What are your preferences? What are your priorities? These become the building blocks to work through those challenges and to uncover your unique design, your Styleprint.

## MAKING DISCOVERIES THROUGH ANALYSIS

Styleprint discovery encompasses more than one level of detailed analysis. On Worksheet #1, “Focus Step,” you identify what your decorating dilemma is, what you want to accomplish, and why. In addition, you elaborate on your vision of the completed project with three criteria that the finished project must include for you to consider it a successful venture.

Worksheet #2 (“Evaluate Your Space”) has you take a critical eye to the details of the room. To do this, you will review each aspect of the room through the lens of how well each supports the room’s function and how well the physical space and your personal preferences accommodate the desired function—not how much you like each part of the room but how well each part supports or does not support the overall function you desire. Refer to Worksheet #2 (“Evaluate Your Space”) at [www.styleprintdesignsystem.com](http://www.styleprintdesignsystem.com) or in the Appendix.

As you continue your evaluation, move into the room and consider how well the arrangement of furnishings works in relationship to the scale of the room and its function. Do you need different or more pieces to enhance the function? Eventually, you will draw a room arrangement plan to establish which size of furniture will work and to make sure you can move about easily.

Finally, critically review the overall aesthetics and the look and feel of the room. Does the room make you smile? Does it invite you in? Make some notes about how it makes you feel and how much it appeals to your aesthetic sense. Later, you will consider options for completing the look of your space. This is very similar to enhancing the look of a little black dress: it's a nice enough dress as it is, but when you see it accessorized, it transforms into "Wow! I need that!"

Once you have completed your analysis, determine whether you are ready and willing to make any of the major changes. You want to complete these first.

As you evaluate how well the space is or is not meeting your criteria, start by asking yourself the following questions:

Function of the space:

- Who will use this room? For what purpose?  
How often?
- Tell us about the room as it is now. What works, and what doesn't?
- What is your vision for this room?

Physical characteristics of the space:

- What is your overall impression of the room?  
What is the room's best feature? What is one thing about the room that annoys you?
- Do the colors work for you?
- Does the room accommodate its function?
- What type of natural light does the room get? What are the wired lighting options?
- What works now, and what may need to be replaced or added in these areas:
  - walls
  - floors
  - ceiling
  - furniture
  - window treatments
  - artwork
  - accessories
  - storage
- What else is there to note about the room?
- On the personal side, there are preferences to be considered:
  - Color, contrast, or subtle flow of color?  
Color families?

- Tailored, crisp look, or intricate detail with layers?
- Wood? Fabric? Texture?
- Natural light? Privacy?
- Special needs?
- How is comfort defined?

There is a column on the worksheet for inputting the financial investment that you are willing to make to create the space. If you don't want to commit to a dollar amount now, skip that column and come back to it later when you are researching solutions. Ultimately, however, how much you are willing to invest will be a major factor in your final selections, your solutions. Keep in mind that some solutions will affect your home's value, so you may decide to put more dollars into the solution than originally planned.

For example, if you eliminate old kitchen fluorescent lights and add in pendant lighting, overhead fixtures, and a chandelier, you may improve the resale value of your home by thousands of dollars. This change may more than pay back your investment when you sell your home and assist you in selling your home more quickly because of the fresh, updated look.

When you move into a new home, you may love it or love parts of it, you may accept it for what it



is, or you may just not like it. It's all personal, and it's hard to see the forest for the trees. You don't see the beauty of the home, and you also don't see what's missing for you. This is where an objective third party can be helpful. This book is designed to guide you just as a professional would if that professional were in the room with you. The desired outcome is that you love your home, with *your own* look, *your own* feel, and *your own* function—your Styleprint. Given the physical parameters of your space, take the principles and elements of good design, along with your preferences and priorities, and mix them all together. That's how the magic is created. You will know you have hit your goal when you think, *Wow! I absolutely love my home!*

After you determine what is “off,” assess what you have. Begin from the outside in. As you enter a room, critique it. Look at its size, its shape, and where the light sources are, both natural and artificial. Look at the colors and the permanent features.

- Is there a fireplace? Is it brick? Is it stone? What color?
- Is there cabinetry? Color? Accents?
- Is there a hardwood floor? What color? What condition is it in?

- Is there wall-to-wall carpeting? What color? Is it in good condition?
- How about the walls? Are they rustic logs, brick, stucco, or wallpapered?
- Standard ceiling height?
- Any architectural features?

Once you have evaluated the structure of the room, determine what you like and do not like about it. For each thing that you don't like, do you have the ability—meaning the time, investment resources, or patience—to change it? As an example, transforming a carpeted room to hardwood flooring is a major project. All the furniture must be moved out, the carpet ripped up and disposed of, and hardwood either installed or refinished. This could take several days and is inconvenient. Are you ready for the sacrifice?

My own home had a fireplace that the previous owners loved, but it just didn't fit with my personal preferences. The hearth was high. The mantel was high. The brick was not a charming red brick that I could work with. Every time I attempted to create a family room in that space, I got stuck; I couldn't pull together anything that I liked. Ultimately, I realized that no matter how much money I put into everything else in that room, the fireplace was always going

to be a sticking point. It was time for an alternative solution.

Rather than painting the brick, which wasn't going to give me the wow effect I was after, I spoke with a contractor, and we brainstormed how to alter it. The final solution was to put plywood over the top part of the brick, paint it, and put marble trim around the fireplace opening, with glass doors, to eliminate the brick completely. It wasn't as expensive as I thought it would be, and it gave me the ability to create the room that I really wanted.



*Photo courtesy of Janet Aurora, Styleprint Designer, Hambley Team*

## LIGHTING THE WAY

Lighting is often an undervalued part of the decorating process, and yet it sets the tone—the function,

the look, and the feel—for everything else. Typically, when people start to think about making changes or even at the very beginning of creating a room, they will jump into the color, the furnishings and their placement, and then the accessories, along with other finishing touches. It is usually at the time of putting the finishing touches in place that someone will begin to think about the lighting. “Gee, is there an outlet near where I want to put that lamp?” or “How much light do I really need in this room? How do I know?” Often, what is left to last is best considered first. And it is better to plan for more lighting than needed because you can always turn something off. Ideally, plan to light the room first based on how you will utilize it. That way, you will have outlets—and enough of them—where you need them. Also, consider general or overhead lighting for every space. It’s better to not use lighting later on than not have what you need, because lighting is so important!

## THE STYLEPRINT™ DESIGN SYSTEM

### TECHNICAL DÉCOR INFO: LIGHTING

#### 4 types of light:

Natural	General/Ambient
Task	Accent/Ambience/Mood

**Ideal:** Have all four types in the room

**Tip:** Use dimmers wherever possible to be able to control the light for best application

#### Light affects color

Exposure: Northern = adds blue  
 Eastern = adds yellow or green  
 Southern = adds yellow-white;  
 neutralizes  
 Western = adds orange

Time of day: Varying effect on color

Artificial light: *Fluorescent light*— enhances blues/greens; mutes reds/yellows

*Halogen light*—best replaces natural light; doesn't distort color; white

*Incandescent light* - warmer tones enhanced; cool tones dulled

Shades effect: Shade color will project its color into the room; Opaque shade directs light out the top and bottom; Translucent shade lets out light.

**Guidelines for sizing of fixtures:**

*How to calculate the proper size of a Ceiling Fixture:*

Width:

Room Length (ft) + Room width (ft) =  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ceiling Fixture width in inches

Height:

minimum 7' from the floor

Diameter of chandelier over a table:

table width - 12" = diameter

Height of chandelier over table:

30" above table (8' ceiling)

Sconces:

placed 5' up from floor; min. 28" apart

Table lamp:

shade at eye level of person seated  
proportionate to table and room

Vanity light over mirror:

minimum 24" wide

The Styleprint Design System considers light from four different perspectives:

1. What is the reaction of the people who live in the space? How do they feel about its light?
2. How much natural light is there? Natural daylight makes a big difference. What are the exposure, number, and type of windows? Note the surroundings outside the home. If you live in a city where the buildings are

almost up against each other, that affects the amount of natural daylight. Or if you live out in the country and it's hilly, it may take longer for natural light to fill the rooms because the sun is rising behind the hills, or in the evening the sun may set earlier because it's behind the trees. But at the shore, you may get the full effect of daylight from sunrise to sunset.



*Photo courtesy of Therese Bush-Hilgar, Styleprint Designer*

3. What types of artificial light are available in the room: general, mood, task? This will affect the look, feel, and function of the room. Lighting touches every aspect of decor.

The artificial sources available are:

- overhead: chandeliers, fixtures close to the ceiling, and recessed—for general light
- lamps: floor, table, and desk—for tasks
- sconces: for general or ambience light, depending on the number in a room
- small (often concealed) transmitters of light: candles or canisters placed as uplights under cabinetry and concealed in molding—for ambience or mood

4. What exists now, and what is still needed for the maximum enjoyment of the room? This question is important because lighting sets the stage for the entire room and how everything in it is viewed. It can also be tricky, as many people are not well versed in the different types of lighting and how to get the most from them. More about this later.

When evaluating lighting within a room, first determine its purpose:

- Is it task lighting (lighting needed to perform a task, whether to read, knit, or cook)?



- Is it general lighting (the overall illumination in a room)?
- Is it ambient/mood lighting?

Each lighting function plays an important role in the overall design of the room. Let's assess the dining room, for example. This is a place where you need general lighting, but it's also a place where your focus is on the task of eating. At the same time, you may want some ambiance, some mood lighting in that room. The overall lighting could be provided by a chandelier, natural light through a window, or wall sconces that provide lighting around the room's perimeter. Put the sconces on dimmers, and you can change the lighting with the touch of your finger to create more mood or ambiance. After dinner you might decide that you want more subtle light in the room. The chandelier could have tiers of individual bulbs that can be turned on or off.



*Photo courtesy of Janet Aurora, Styleprint Designer, Hambley Team*

Remember to keep the function of the space in mind. This will dictate how you light up a room. In a family room, you might use recess lights over the sofa area and put them on a dimmer switch. This allows for sitting and watching TV when you do not want much light.

## **WORKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE**

Decorating focuses first on the elements of good design, and everything flows from that perspective.

These elements are:

- light
- color
- texture and pattern
- scale and balance

Within each element, there are choices to make. This is where personal preferences, quality, level of investment, and other intangible elements come into play. There are, inevitably, crossroads where you will make decisions based on the amount of time, energy, and dollars you have allocated for a particular project.

For example, I worked with a client we'll call Sally. When I arrived, she had moved into a previously occupied condo that was unfurnished. She had a budget and an idea of what to do first. Her thought was to rip out all the carpet and put in new carpeting. This was a five-room condo, and doing that would have eaten up a big chunk of her budget. There was nothing wrong with the carpet; it was in good condition. But it was neutral in color, and Sally wanted color. She felt the carpet was ugly.



*Photo courtesy of Crystal Cline, Styleprint Designer, Hambley Team*

Because the carpet still had value from a professional's perspective, I considered how else to put color into Sally's home. If she changed the carpet, she would have less to invest in furnishings. One consideration was to add color in other areas of the room: the window treatments—which she would need for privacy and light control—wall coverings, or paint, plus some nice artwork, accessories, and an area rug.

We selected items with colors, patterns, and texture to complete the room layout. Sally got excited about the plan and forgot about replacing the carpet. Once it was all together, she absolutely loved her new home, and she was tickled to still have some investment dollars to spend on other things. Ultimately, it meant we were able to decorate several rooms instead of having to do the whole condo in stages.



*Photo courtesy of  
Amy Boesen,  
Styleprint Designer*

When you walk into an empty room and all you see is the carpet, it's easy to think, *Oh my gosh! I want to replace this ugly carpet!* If you have the budget and desire to make the replacement, that may be the right direction to go in, and the time is good because there's nothing else in the room.

If, however, you must make choices based on limited resources, prioritize what you need to make the room look and feel functional and to be happy in it. Make those choices in the context of the whole project. Decide what is first needed to make the room or home useable, and then determine whether a large chunk of your budget is best spent on one aspect.

As you consider the function of the room, get input from the entire family. What will they be using this room

for? If it's a family room, look at the size and ask, "Is seating for watching television a primary function? For how many? Do you want multiple seating areas so that people can read, work on the computer, play games, or sit and have conversations? If you will be socializing more here, how many people will need to be accommodated?" These considerations are similar for a dining room. How many people will be in the dining room?




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**Love the space  
you're in.**

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Many dining rooms are too small for the groups that use them, or their layout is not practical.

One of the things I've always fantasized about doing is to strategically position all of my furniture and then build the walls around it so that I truly have the optimal space I want. This is beginning with the end in mind. If you are in a position to build a house, my challenge to you is to take this perspective.

Most of us own the kind of house that we have in order to fit whatever we want within its confines.



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Look at what exists and ask what the function is going to be: is it a dining room, a kitchen, a family room, a bedroom? Bedrooms, for example, come in a variety of sizes. If it's the master bedroom suite, ask yourself if you

want an exercise area that's separate or a part of the room. Do you want a desk? What about a TV or an armoire? What's the closet situation? Is a closet attached to the bathroom? Is there a linen closet or storage space? These are all considerations or conditions of satisfaction with respect to how the space will function for you.

## DESIGNING AROUND ROOM COMPONENTS

As you prepare to design your room, note its components, its unique features. Review the windows; other architectural features such as built-in cabinetry or moldings; and the material of the walls, floors, and ceiling.

In the column titled “What’s Working?” on Worksheet #2 “Evaluate Your Space” (see Appendix), list the characteristics of each line item in detail. As an example, for floors, identify whether you have hardwood, carpet, tile, combination, or other. Also identify the color and any pattern or texture. If what exists must be replaced, list what needs to be replaced in the “What Needs Replacing?” column, and indicate what it will be replaced with if you have an idea. If you do not have an idea yet, list the change as TBD and highlight it for further thought.

As you go through the detail of the evaluation worksheet, you have the opportunity to understand the many parts that make up the decor of your room. It is important to evaluate each part and determine how it fits in with your personal style. Take, for example, paneling in a room. It has a color. It has texture. It’s associated with a particular style of decorating. Whether you like it or you don’t depends on how you feel about paneling in general and whether

it's your style or not. Some people just love the wood grain, and they treat it with a clear stain, a natural wood stain, or a color. If you don't like the wood look, painting it may be the best thing to do. Other options are to wallpaper over it or take it down.



*Photo courtesy of Janet Aurora, Styleprint Designer, Hambley Team*

Walls make up a major portion of the decor in the room. They are the largest space, and their visual presence is at eye level, and yet they are considered to be part of the “foundation” of the room because they are “behind the scenes.” What that means is that they are the backdrop for everything else. Furnishings, window treatments, artwork, and even many lighting fixtures will be viewed “on top of” the walls. As you are evaluating the walls, consider putting them into



the context of a supporting role and not the lead in the cast.

Within this context, consider all of the different types of materials used for walls: drywall, plaster, paneling, stucco, tile, logs, glass, stone, brick, and upholstered, to name a few. Also consider the condition of the walls. Are they in need of repair, cleaning, or simply some cosmetic enhancements? As the homeowner, you could complete some repairs yourself. Others may require the expertise of a professional.

The walls and floors account for 60 percent of your decor. Keep this in mind as you allocate color, pattern, and texture. Whatever you choose to do here will have a huge impact on the final result of your room and how well it accomplishes your desired result.

In some rooms, particularly kitchens and bathrooms, there are additional surface finishes that will add to your personal decor style. Granite countertops are more prevalent than they were 30 years ago since their cost has decreased. Laminates, which are least expensive, are another option, and then there are materials such as Caesarstone, Corian, marble, tile, and natural wood.

<b>THE STYLEPRINT™ DESIGN SYSTEM TECHNICAL DÉCOR INFO: KITCHEN COUNTERTOP SURFACES</b>	
<b>MATERIAL</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Bamboo	Sustainable, natural material; not high durability—water can warp.
Butcher Block	Laminated wood; needs sealing for moisture resistance; knife marks create character—or sanding can eliminate/reduce.
Glass	Sleek; tempered glass = clear or translucent w/smooth or textured surface; waterproof and heat tolerant; will scratch.
Granite	Natural stone; has a particular look; durable and impervious to heat; requires professional installation and periodic sealing.
Laminate	Engineered plywood/durable nonporous surface material with a thin veneer as a top layer with choice of hundreds of colors/patterns as faux stone, marble, etc. Affordable material, easy to install. may scratch—use a cutting board.
Marble and Limestone	Natural stone; more porous and softer than granite which makes them likely to scratch or stain; recommend periodic sealing treatment; cultured marble: made from natural marble chips embedded in plastic resin; comes in sheets, more economical and can be used in the bathroom for countertops and walls.
Quartz-Surfacing	A.k.a. engineered stone; blend of quartz, resins, and pigments, which will produce a consistent stone like pattern; non-porous and heat/scratch resistant.

Soapstone	Natural stone; resists heat; chips more easily than granite; treat with mineral oil to repel moisture and maintain its classic look.
Solid-Surfacing	One version is Corian™; alternate is a plastic resin available in many colors and patterns; non-porous; stain resistant; resists scratches (can be sanded out); a sink can be made seamless—easier installation.
Stainless Steel	Sanitary, stain proof, heatproof, waterproof, shiny finish may show scratches and fingerprints.
Tile	Glazed ceramic or porcelain come in many sizes, shapes, colors; water and heat resistant; may chip; variety of price points; requires grout; tiles are easy care; grout may stain and require cleaning or regrouting periodically.

The primary consideration with all of the finishes is that your choices coordinate and blend well together. No choice is isolated. This is especially true when it comes to color. Everything has a color. You either start with a finish that you love and build the rest of the room around it, or you find a finish that complements the room.

For a room to be considered “well designed,” everything in the room—all the colors, patterns, and textures—must flow together.

In addition—and this is critical—think about the care and maintenance of the items you choose. Check with the professional you are purchasing the

product from to find out how durable it is and what kind of care it needs. Will you have to treat the item once a month? Once a year? Never? How do you clean it? How do you maintain it? What if something spills on it? Does it scratch easily? It's important to learn about the care that will be required and to select materials that match your level of willingness to care for them and will be durable, depending on how you use them—much like clothing. Can the product be washed, or must it be dry-cleaned? Is that something you are okay with, or will you be annoyed and irritated every time you have to take care of it? This will also be important with respect to the resale value of your home. Whatever you choose must wear well so that at the time of sale it's not looking shabby and worn. Additionally, how will a potential buyer react to the level of care required?

## **DECORATING FEAR FACTORS: TURN THEM INTO REASONS FOR TAKING ACTION**

If you're starting or contemplating a decorating project, you're bound to run into a few fears and limitations that may cause you to get stuck. Here are four great ways to stay motivated and moving ahead:

1. Enjoy the process of the project.
2. Stick to your plan, and avoid project creep.

3. Set a realistic time frame to complete it.
4. Check your progress along the way.

TV decorating shows are good news and bad news for your confidence in home decor improvement. First, the good news: they are inspiring. Wow! Look what can be done! The bad news: the results the show gets are not nearly as simple, easy, and inexpensive as the producers would like you to think. Consider that they have an untold number of talented and experienced craftspeople working as a team. They have sponsors who donate materials and time. Their mission is to get your attention, and what they do might not necessarily have the same effect on your space. We have also seen shows in which the owners end up underwhelmed because the decorators, wanting to surprise the owners, come up with a look without involving them. The result reflects someone else's style and not the preferences and taste of the homeowners.

What are the most common fears that people have about decorating projects? From my 30-plus years of experience in working with clients and coaching other DecorDesigners to work with clients, here are the top nine. Do any of these apply to you?

1. How do I select and use color for maximum effect and enjoyment?

2. Will it cost more than I planned to invest?
3. Will it take longer to complete than I want?
4. Will it be of a quality that is healthy for the inhabitants and last for the time I want?
5. What safety concerns do I need to be aware of?
6. Will it be easy to maintain?
7. Will the space function as I want and need it to?
8. Will it be comfortable?
9. The ultimate question is will it make me smile and feel pleased with the results?

If any of these apply to you, you are not alone. The purpose of this book—and the Styleprint Design System—is to take the fear out of your decorating projects, get at least one into motion, and enjoy the results.

## **#1 COLOR: HOW DO I SELECT AND USE COLOR FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT AND ENJOYMENT?**

The fear of using color can stop some people in their tracks. They worry about which color to choose ... whether it should be light/dark/warm/cool ... where

to use it ... how to use it ... how it will look ... whether they'll get tired of it ... how it blends with other colors ... where to start and stop ... and on and on.

**Solution:** If you want to do some preliminary research, go to a paint store or the paint section of a home improvement store. These stores often have tear sheets or brochures of current color trends and combinations. In addition, they usually have photos of those colors in room settings to help you visualize. All of this will assist in narrowing down your color preferences. One word of caution: be open to colors that you may not have considered previously. There are over 16 million colors available. Do not limit yourself just because you have never used a color before.

Here are some recommended websites with information on color and color selection:

- [www.sensationalcolor.com](http://www.sensationalcolor.com)
- [www.behr.com](http://www.behr.com)
- [www.sherwin-williams.com](http://www.sherwin-williams.com)
- [www.benjaminmoore.com](http://www.benjaminmoore.com)

We address many of these nine questions later in the book, but color is one of the areas where a professional can step in and really help. The reason is twofold. First, a professional has been trained in color and how to use it. Second, a professional can serve as an objective eye in

the project, asking and answering questions from an unbiased perspective.

What people are really afraid of is taking a risk or making a blunder, so that, sometimes, they never get going at all.

## #2 INVESTMENT: WILL IT COST MORE THAN I PLANNED TO INVEST?

Whether the project stays within budget will depend on how thoroughly you've thought it through. If you have done your research on what things cost,



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**What people are really afraid of is taking a risk or making a blunder, so that, sometimes, they never get going at all.**

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requested quotes from contractors, and truly nailed the scope of the project, you can expect to be within a realistic range. When it comes to implementing projects and keeping the dollars in alignment with your intention, it all comes back to your focus:

understanding what is involved so that you can select what you want within your dollar range and not get carried away with add-ons. It's similar to building a house or buying a new car: Starting with the basics, it's



easy to upgrade in small amounts that add up quickly so that you can easily exceed what you intended to spend.

**Solution:** Plan your project, know your parameters, and do your research so that you have a realistic investment range to work with.

### #3 TIME: WILL IT TAKE LONGER TO COMPLETE THAN I WANT?

People worry about how much time the project is going to take. It's important to allow time for planning, for thinking through the project, for saying, "What is it that I really want this room to do for me? How will we use the room? How will it function? How will it feel? How will it look?" It's also important to understand the time it takes to complete the different aspects of the project. Will you need a painter? How long will it take to get on his/her schedule? How long will that piece of the project take? If you intend to do the painting yourself, how much time do you have to devote to it? Look at your calendar. Schedule the project with some buffer time. Look at the sequencing of things that need to happen to complete the project and schedule that out.

**Solution:** Think ahead and plan. Refer to the worksheets that accompany this book. Take the

time to complete Worksheet #1 (“Focus Step”) and Worksheet #2 (“Evaluate Your Space.”) You may find some subtle aspects that are more important than you thought. You may also find some hidden to-dos that will eat up some time. Through planning and being realistic about how fast all the parts can be completed, you will have a better sense of how long the project will take. Be sure to build in some additional time to handle things that don’t go as smoothly as planned.

#### **#4 QUALITY: WILL IT BE OF A QUALITY THAT IS HEALTHY FOR THE INHABITANTS AND LAST FOR THE TIME I WANT?**

Quality is another area where people are afraid to make a mistake. There are many different levels of quality for every type of product in a decor plan. You may not want heirloom quality for your furnishings—something that you want to pass down from generation to generation. You also may not want “curbside” quality. Curbside quality is made of inferior materials, often has harmful chemicals used in its production, and, typically, has a short life because it’s not well made. Ultimately, curbside furniture ends up being thrown out long before you are ready to replace it.

**Solution:** Select the level of quality that’s appropriate with respect to your dollar investment, the

longevity/durability you desire, and the healthful aspect of its production.

## **#5 SAFETY: WHAT SAFETY CONCERNS DO I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?**

Safety is sometimes taken for granted but is of concern to many people. The materials in furnishings can be toxic—for instance, they may contain formaldehyde or other chemicals that people are sensitive to and can even make them sick. Alternately, some products have a dangerous design. For example, the cords on some window blinds are hazardous, even lethal, to pets and children. Some reputable manufacturers have designed alternative lift systems for these shades or have crafted the cording so that it breaks away when weight is applied to it so that nothing, child or pet, gets caught in it.

**Solution:** Ask questions about the product, what it's made of, how it traveled to where it's sold, and what its safety features are.

## **#6 MAINTENANCE: WILL IT BE EASY TO MAINTAIN?**

Concern about maintenance does not always surface at the beginning of a project, but it certainly becomes

a factor once you're living with it. After all, we don't actually live in "look at," magazine-type rooms.

**Solution:** Think about maintenance early on, and make it a part of your plan. The furnishings and materials available today have many features that help you keep them looking good despite people living on and with them.



*Photo courtesy of Kelly Murphy, Styleprint Designer*

## **#7 AND #8 PLANNING: WILL THE SPACE BE COMFORTABLE AND FUNCTION AS I WANT AND NEED IT TO?**

The answers to these questions depend on your planning. When you prepared Worksheet #1 ("Focus Step"), were you thorough? Did you delineate these concerns? And when you prepared Worksheet #2

(“Evaluate Your Space”), did you list these requirements in the columns titled, “What is to be added?” or “What is to be replaced?”

**Solution:** Take a few minutes to go back and review these worksheets and make any changes that will be important to the success of your project.

One important thing to note here: if you choose to work with professionals, an added benefit is that you also have the opportunity to bounce ideas off them. You might say, “This might be a wild idea, but ...” or “Gee, I’ve often wondered what if we paint only one wall? How would that work? Is that a totally crazy idea or not?” The professional might respond by asking other questions to determine if the idea is valid, and if it doesn’t have merit, discussing why not. In the end you will have the satisfaction of knowing that all options were considered. This will contribute to your confidence in the direction selected.

**#9 UNDERLYING DRIVE: WILL I REALLY LIKE IT WHEN IT IS FINISHED? WILL IT MAKE ME SMILE, AND WILL I BE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS?**

These fears are high on your list because you want the results to reflect the time and resources that you invest. It’s your home, and you want it to look, feel,

and function based on your personal preferences, not someone else's. And you don't want the result to miss the mark.



*Photo courtesy of Dana Petrie,  
Styleprint Designer*

**Solution:** You must take the time to ask yourself questions about your preferences and focus for the room, and you must think about your room in detail. If you are not clear on what you want, your result will be mediocre at best. How could it be any different? It takes time to carefully plan for what you want and to think things through.

Let's recap Styleprint discovery. This chapter is about:

1. Thinking about your space and imagining what you would like it to be

2. Analyzing your space (what works vs. what doesn't) from three perspectives:
  - its intended function
  - its physical characteristics
  - your personal preferences
3. Evaluating principles of good design:
  - light
  - color
  - arrangement within the walls
  - the details
4. Evaluating options with respect to
  - investment
  - complexity
5. Being aware of fear factors and their impact on the project:
  - creating a plan
  - implementing the plan

In the next chapter, we will take the next step: following through on your project to select the items and their specifications to meet your personal preferences and expectations of good design and prioritizing those items with respect to what you are willing to

do, the level of investment, the order in which to do them, and a targeted timeline.