

K A R E N P O W E L L

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# DECORATING FEAR FACTORS

*Turn Them Into Reasons  
For Taking Action*



CREATED BY DECOR&YOU DESIGN GROUP

*THE STYLEPRINT™ DESIGN SYSTEM*

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StylePrint [stīl-print]:

*A distinctive look, created from your  
personal design dreams, that's all you!*

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# DECORATING FEAR FACTORS:

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## 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 timeframe 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.

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## **#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, 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



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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”) and Worksheet #2 (“Evaluating 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”), 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.