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Does your home truly reflect you?

By Amanda Eck



Photos provided

In today's world we are constantly bombarded with images of beautiful spaces, from Instagram, Pinterest, magazines, home décor TV shows and don't get me started on the inundation of local home décor retail catalogs (some weighing more than my first born). We live in a world of information and visual overload and that can feel overwhelming. There is no faster way to make a mistake with interiors than to start ordering furniture inspired by a recent trend or some pretty pictures you just saw in a catalog.

Your home is your sanctuary, your private retreat from the world's ills. Your home should be a place of restoration, not anxiety. To decorate like you and create a home that will make you happy, you need to first turn the outside world off.

1) Get quiet. Before you do anything, turn off the phone and get off social media. Remember that comparison is the thief of joy. I notice a pattern when I am feeling down or not quite enough; it is because I have spent too much time looking at others' lives and not living my own. Find a quiet spot in your home or get out in nature. Take some time to just be still. Have a pen and paper on hand to jot your thoughts. Ask yourself these questions:

What do you really love? What inspires you?
What makes you feel happy?

Where have you visited (hotels, cities, restaurants, shops, spas, etc.) that inspired you or made you feel welcomed?

What hobbies or traditions do you and your family love?

How do you want to feel when you are in the room? It can be a different feeling for each room in the house. The more detail the better.

Suspend disbelief for a moment. If you had unlimited funds and time, where would you live and why?

Write it all down, even if it's silly or doesn't make sense, just get your thoughts on paper.

2) Put it into words. Now look through your list and find three to four words that represent how you'd like your home to feel (i.e. cozy, casual, sophisticated, bright, fun, relaxing, etc.).

3) Ask a friend or two. Now here is where you have to get a little vulnerable. Take some photos of your current space and show them to a friend. Ask them if the words and feelings you wrote down represent your home's current state. Ask your friends to show it to someone who doesn't know you, and describe the person they think lives there. Does it match who you are?

4) Shop the house. Now before you torch the whole space, take a moment to see what's in the room that you do love and that lines up with your top four words. The best interiors have every aspect of you in them, and that includes your history. Don't run out and buy all new things (yet). Grab a pen and paper and the list you wrote down and walk through every room in your home and see what matches your notes. Decide what pieces and items you are going to keep, sell or donate.

Look to see if you can repurpose some pieces. Maybe move that table from the living room to the bedroom, or switch out the artwork from the dining room to the living room. Do you have quality pieces of furniture that could use reupholstering? Adding some of your history in your interiors not only helps the budget, it will add character that is uniquely you. Every day that piece will remind you of something in your life story.

5) Step out of your comfort zone. Everything you surround yourself with in your home has an effect on you. Every piece of furniture, art or textile in your home can make you feel a certain way. To find the interiors and style that is the true you, you have to step outside of your comfort zone. It's time to take chances and do what you haven't done before. Paint the walls that bold color that terrifies you. If it's wrong, you can just paint it again. But if it's right, it just might be what you needed. Life is too short to play it safe, let down your hair and have fun with it. Don't worry if it doesn't fit what you see on social media or what is showing up in every home décor catalog (i.e. all things gray). Think outside the box. The goal is to have a space that screams "you live here," "this is what our family is about." And maybe you start small with a small corner or an extra bedroom that doesn't get used often. The point is to not only "live" in your home but "LOVE" living in it.

I hope these tips encourage you to take some time to decorate your home in a way that is a true reflection of those who live in it. Until next time dear friends!



Photos provided



As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well- appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.

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