



Principles for the Designed by L.I.F.E.™ Process

Stay with the Process!

The Designed by L.I.F.E.™ Process (the Process) acknowledges that each client has their own unique set of “tastes” for shapes, as well as the patterns, textures, and colors that “dress” those shapes. The Client may need several “trips around the “mountain” in order to surface and sort out what matters to them and to create a design that responds to their discoveries. With that in mind, the most important principle is simple—Stay with the Process! (And learn what most matters to you.)

All ideas are “Placeholders.”

Ideas are “placeholders” in the design Process. They are not good or bad, right or wrong. We put an idea in place and hold it there until we learn something from it—learn what matters. We can then keep, abandon, or modify the idea and—Stay with the Process!*

Reactions are information—clues to what matters to you.

Concepts start by responding to the expressed preferences of the Client. That said, we aim to create spaces that “feel right.” For that to actually happen, unexpressed factors must also be surfaced. This happens as the Client reacts to ideas. However you feel about something, share this as information, so we can—Learn from the Process—and find what most matters!

“Think within your feelings.”

It is tempting to justify your way past them. Visualizing results can be challenging—more so when we are focused on just one aspect of the design! 3D models enable us to see ideas in context. Most jigsaw puzzles are worked by first finding the edge pieces and then fitting the rest within that frame while referring to the overall picture—our 3D model, in this case. Our Placeholders surface “information” which we sort out and refine until we have a clear picture of what “feels right” to you, as you—Stay with the Process—and learn what most matters!*

The Decisions Triangle a.k.a. “The 3 C’s”: Quality, Concept, Cost—choose any two.

Whatever most matters to you will drive the other two along. By the time the second aspect is determined, the third is whatever it is, in most cases. Very little flexibility will be left.

With respect to Quality: Put quality in the things you touch -- and hear.

The main way we interact with our home is through door locksets, light switches, faucet valves, cabinet pulls, window cranks, and appliance handles, i.e., the things we touch. We connect through the tactile pleasures of surfaces, as we run our hands across them or sit on them, etc. There are sounds that connote quality, as well. The solid sound of a door shutting, the click of the latch as it engages the jamb, the quiet extraction of odors—all these deliver a “Quality” message to us. A room with a lack of touchable things will never feel right.

With respect to Concept: Design drives costs; the Client’s choices drive design.

I personally never run out of ideas. If the initial Concept is turning out to be too costly, we will learn from that, re-aim and take another run at the ideas. That said, re-aiming a “too costly” Concept can be difficult for the Client because they have to reconcile what matters most to them and then change their choices to lower the Cost to an amount they can justify.

With respect to Cost: Priorities drive costs—more than the designer or contractor.

If it matters most for you to have a certain Concept, implemented at a certain level of Quality, the Cost aspects tend to be whatever they become. (Note: While it is tempting to save money by using the Internet to research and buy goods as “commodities”, if you remove the profit added by tradespersons to cover their acquisition costs, you can expect to pay more for labor.) Adjusting the Concept and upgrading Quality during construction will typically lead to budget overruns. Employing 3D digital models mitigates this greatly.

* While in the Designed by L.I.F.E.™ Process, continually ask, “What are we learning?”