

Designing Your Signature Life

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The Parts and Pieces:

Designing your signature life is not just about your home interiors but instead it is about the whole ball of wax . . . the whole kit and caboodle. It is about truly designing your LIFE! That means interiors both at home and the office, career choices, entertaining and homemaking, relationships, travel and adventure, personal image and style, books, movies and media you enjoy and what you really want from it all. Designing a signature life shows you how to get what you want by making a plan, by establishing goals and creating a map to get there. It is about demonstrating flexibility and patience in each step to maximize the potential and the opportunities we each have. It is about creating a life as unique as your signature!

Interiors:

Designing your home interiors is a process of self discovery; each decision leads you closer to defining yourself where you are right now and where you are headed. The elements you bring into your home represent the experiences you have had and those you want to enjoy still. The artwork you include is not just filling space but is inspiration for everyday. The way you arrange furnishings indicates whether you are ready to invite others in or prefer to maintain a more solo existence. Your signature style at home can be read much like your signature on a piece of paper. Someone who doesn't know you can learn a lot by looking around at the choice you have included. Those that do know you and pay attention will learn more and know how to contribute to your life at this point.

Your office interiors are of equal importance, reflecting your success, and future visions as well as providing an environment fostering productivity and accomplishment. An office is a significant statement about your career choice. Incorporating awards, recognition, and evidence of your successes reinforces your abilities and gives notice of your credibility. An inviting, comfortable space is something you can look forward to working in, rather than dreading the chaos and disorganization so many allow to occur.

Interior design and decorating makes a fundamental impact on the individuals both living, working and visiting a space. The impact is positive or negative based on the effectiveness of the design and sensitivity to its users. Design is a personal statement and as such needs to be a fair representation of the occupant.

Career Choices:

Designing your career path can be complicated and involve several moves, shifts in talents and experience, and even additional education. It is about finding your purpose and your passion and merging them into a rewarding path of doing. It is about being willing to explore a variety of interests and pursuits and expand your horizons beyond the site lines. It is about limitless thinking. It is about creating a life, not just a job. A career is also just a part of what we do and who we are, it does not define us or limit us, but instead allows us to give to others and make a positive impact on those around us.

Many people feel trapped by their work, unhappy they complain relentlessly, but are unwilling to make a change. Notice they are not unable, just unwilling. I am not suggesting that anyone randomly and irresponsibly quit their job; few of us can afford that. But we are all capable of making change, setting new goals, looking toward new horizons. Creating your signature life is all about the willingness to do this, and about knowing who to ask for guidance and direction.

Often a career or business coach is an invaluable investment when making a career transition or move up the ladder. Networking with other professionals and business associates is another important means of exploring new opportunities and paths. Being discreet but determined in your quest is often the real key. Don't allow naysayers to discourage you, they are simply frustrated that they themselves are afraid to make a change.

Relationships:

There is a wonderful old adage that says we are each the sum total of those we surround ourselves with. Are you really surrounding yourself with people that are positive, successful, excited about life, and making a difference? Or instead do you find yourself bogged down by those complaining, whining, and absorbed in victim thinking? It is a choice of who you attract and allow in your life, it is not an accident.

When you exhibit an upbeat attitude, optimism, and a generous spirit, typically you will attract the same into your life.

This isn't to say we don't all have gray days and down moments but it is to say we have a choice in how we process the events in our lives and whether we consider something a failure or merely a lesson learned (however painful) and move on.

Often as with settling into our work and viewing as a job with a finite beginning and end, rather than the joy of a career of purpose and passion, we will settle in relationships. We stop trying; we guess it is better than nothing. The result is often two sides that are not working with each other, not healthy, and not happy. Relationships whether family, friends, coworkers, or acquaintances require continual care and feeding. When they are neglected they will wither. This applies even to our relationship with us and our spirituality. It is important for us to consistently feed ourselves kind words, good self talk, and a faith beyond our own abilities. When we forget to do this, we find our well running dry and our faith may falter. By keeping ourselves strong, our beliefs whole and active, we are there for ourselves and for others.

Entertaining and Homemaking:

Too often people want to entertain, but are afraid. They are waiting for something else, for the house to be decorated, for that next promotion, for the kids to be grown up and gone, for something. Entertaining is not about waiting! It is not about the perfect décor, your status at work, whether the kids are home or not; instead it is about sharing time and experiences with friends and family. If they are truly coming only to see your latest drapery or hear about your raise, consider getting new friends!

Entertaining is a chance to invite others to share in a bit of your life, a bit of your home, and a bit of you. It doesn't have to be grand, expensive, or involve a caterer. Although that can be fun too! Think about having a potluck with a handful of friends. Or maybe a leftover surprise dinner where everyone brings leftovers or cooks up something from things they have had for awhile in the pantry. Better yet, have everyone chip in \$5 and order a pizza. It can be that easy.

Entertaining can also be about hiring the experts. Get a caterer, develop a menu, hire a party planner, and let them take care of the details! It isn't about the scale of the party, but about bringing people together, and mixing it up. I throw parties for every reason or no reason at all. Few of my friends are comfortable doing this. Yes, it can be work and a lot of it, if you let it. The choice is yours.

Travel and Adventure:

Where do you want to go?? Many of us want to travel, travel, travel! But we don't seem to go anywhere because we don't plan it. We are very routine oriented and can't seem to break loose for that spontaneous road trip or weekend with the girls. Planned or unplanned, it won't happen if you don't just do it. Taking a trip used to require loads of time, a travel agent, and tons of money. Now it requires a few clicks of a mouse, no agent in the middle, and you can do it for pennies. Of course, if you can do it all out and want to, I say go for it. But don't miss an opportunity to experience another country, city, state, neighborhood, or culture. Don't wait until you are too old and physically unable, with all the resources, but no ability. It happens too often.

Travel is about exploring, about adventure, about newness and different, and exciting and sometimes scary. It is about tasting unfamiliar foods, smelling new smells, experiencing other customs, seeing different living environments, appreciating alternative architecture, touching novel textures, and hearing unique sounds. It is about taking a bite of life! It is about living bigger.

Often travel really makes us value home that much more. And sometimes we really need that extra dose of perspective to appreciate what had become ordinary to us but is really quite special. It can also make us realize how big the world really is and put our lives and our own challenges in a new light.

Personal Image and Style:

Renowned costume designer to the stars, Edith Head, once said, "You can have anything you want in life, if you dress for it." This may well be true. The key is in making a personal statement and showing a sense of unique style. I always get a grin out of those that try to tell me to wear scarves. It won't ever happen. It is not my style. It was my Mother's and sister's style and they did it with panache and grace. But not me. It would be comparable to making a man wear a bowtie that didn't fit his own sense of style. Finding and defining your own sense of style is very important, it is tantamount to creating your personal image signature. I have a business associate who always wears a hat, it makes a big statement about her and gives her a unique importance. She also stands out from the crowd and wants to. Some gentlemen wear suspenders or a pocket handkerchief with same panache and are remembered for that.

Clothing and image are inextricably tied together. What we wear, like it or not, makes a statement loud and clear about who we are, and what we are about. Are you flashy? Sexy? Elegant? Professional? All buttoned up? Bohemian? Tailored? Frumpy? Old Fashioned? Dated? Fresh? Do you have savoir faire? Do you vogue? Are you saying what you want and mean to say based on your wardrobe and personal presentation? Is it a consistent message? Or, are you all over the board?

Fashion and image also relate to your interiors. Typically when you have truly defined yourself at this moment in time, you are consistent in your appeal. Your interiors will suit you as your wardrobe suits you. You will appear as a cohesive whole and not a series of confused fragments. Working on one aspect leads to subconscious work on the other aspect, and there is professional expertise available at all levels for all aspects.

The Goals and Benefits - Getting Balance:

Often we think of balance as something that will eventually just happen or we will magically find it. The truth is that it is up to each of us to create it. What represents balance to one person may not to another. It is an individual definition but typically means that our life is flowing smoothly, our goals are on track, we feel on purpose and secure, and we are enjoying time for our priorities.

When out of balance we feel stressed, burned out, overloaded, and stretched too thin. It happens a lot but few realize that it is really a matter of evaluating priorities and delegating those that don't mean as much. Yes, we can do it all, but we don't have to and it isn't healthy to. Achieving a healthy balance is about looking forward to each day, knowing that we can tackle the responsibilities at hand, that we have rewards to celebrate, and that we are truly living by our own design, not anyone else's.

A Life of Legacy:

When we are living a life of our own design, when we are writing our signature on the world each and every day, we are making connections to a legacy. We are forming alliances and relationships with many that will feel a lasting impact. Very rarely do we get a chance to know how much we have influenced another's path, but instead have to trust that each encounter is never coincidence but intentional and with reason. We have a great deal to learn and a great deal to teach while in this life. It is by crafting our legacy and our significance with purpose and passion that we will make the greatest difference.

A Life Plan:

Creating a life plan is not an exercise we will do once and forget, but instead it is about learning the tools and skills needed to continually shape and redefine our goals, priorities, and passions. As we grow and change, our priorities will shift, what was important in our twenties seems silly in our thirties, and different still in our forties and fifties. We cannot predict, but only be open and flexible to opportunities, directions, and experiences, always keeping in mind our personal core values and seeking a fit with those values in all we do.

Creating a signature life is about learning the interior of you and finding the happiest way to share and express that with the world. It is about feeling fulfilled and secure in all you are and do, despite the frequent hiccups in everyday living, and occasional disasters and thunderstorms of tragedy that invade every life. Find your signature, design your life. LIVE.

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