




Planning a Project

Asking other people what they think - isn't that a nuisance?			Let's just get started; what's to plan?	
		We need a road map for planning - to piece it together	I never can find anything, how can we get organized?	
	They expect me to build a deck for them this weekend			Too many pictures from magazines, let's just pick one & do it!
What are good ways of developing ideas together?		There is so much to do, where do I find the time?	We start quickly, but then so many mistakes; Oh Yuck!	

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Planning begins with ideas -- and we can help each other with ideas WE do need to stand back when the inspired moments come to our partners, so let them have the time, energy, and support to contemplate their ideas. They are cooking up a loving offering for the family's ideal home and will need some time for reverie to achieve this. For the thinker, the very first step in planning must be in your head and heart.

& In the dream stage of planning you may have private reveries where you seek the vision that will guide your mission. But quite soon after inspiration, you must let go of your grip on the idea so that it is no longer a possession of yours but a contribution – a gift to the family – to enhance everyone's environment. This is an acrobatic internal act but is an important leap to make for keeping family harmony.

What if we don't try to communicate & decide together?

Well, we can get very bound up in our own ideas & need to have our way if we get too determined with our singular vision. Sometimes we can go quite far in the wrong direction and stubbornly over invest in plans that will not work for our family.

The alternative – communicating and cooperating in the planning – can help the process and the outcome work for all of the folks involved.

Asking to enter the idea space –

First, consider the person's ideas and their positive motives here. Wait until you have this clearly (and dearly) in mind before stepping in. Then, nicely offer assistance in any way you can. You will be demonstrating that you are on the same team in this way. When they are not busy, you can ask if it would be all right to discuss the plans together sometime. Let them choose the time & situation, and then you follow through on it, using the above road map.

Who is in on the planning?

You & your partner are the most logical choices. You are the main decision makers and will bear the burden of the project's labor and resources. You also hold the family's vision and are responsible for the home environment.

The kids may be involved if you want, but give them an idea of when and how they can pitch their ideas. This can be quite fun as children can be very creative and not bound by convention. Some excellent solutions to project jams-ups have come out of the mouths of babes.

Experts, relatives, and financiers may end up having input as you deal with codes, funding for mortgages, and home insurance requirements. Relatives who contribute funds, or who need special accommodations such as elderly access, can also have an impact on the project. It is important to get these requests at a time and in a manner that suits the process of the main decision makers – the Home Team doing the project. So, you may want to invite the relatives' input at a specific time, asking the questions early on about what is needed, so that you don't go too far afield and

wind up either out of code with the insurance company or receiving awkward criticism from an embarrassed elder who can't use the new bathroom. It is good to check with these types of folks early in the project and also before committing to the work, since your plans may have changed and their requirements may also change along the way.

Tracking the plans

Some main planning materials need to be kept accessible during the project. Some sort of organization is needed to keep track of these things so you can find them – sometimes in a hurry.



Stage &	Purpose	How is it done? How does it look?
Idea stage	Collecting & musing stimulates dreams	Use clippings from magazines and sketches; drive together and notice other houses that you like; spin stories and share memories.
Specific suggestions	Actual ideas emerge	Several ideas are on the table -- some with details, while others are just suggestions. It is important to keep all of them on the table, even if some are less polished. Each may have an angle that can help with the project's completion.
Living with ideas	Progressive conversations develop shared visions and preferences	<p>A question here, an answer there: ideas are mulled over, as the tasks and weeks go on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A preference is shared and feelings revealed in passing, or while doing something else together. - A sorting of values, desires, priorities occurs; they are shared and slowly blended as overlap is sought in passing conversations. - The conversations seem to layer the options according to preferences. This sorting talk about the ideas can be quite casual.
Blending of ideas	Discussions promote thinking and sharing of project ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parts of ideas get talked about together. - Notice which ones are nice for both of you -- "agreement treasures." - Identify and isolate the portions you disagree about "hot spots." - Commitment not to commit -- not yet.

It is a good idea to look over the stages of planning and get an idea of the lay of the land. It can feel like certain activities are just plain delays if you don't understand the point. And a person can get suspicious if that goes on too long. But really - there is a purpose for all that talking and sharing - so take a peek at these steps and see where you are in your walk toward starting your **Home Team's** project together.

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<p>Almost there</p> <p>to allow ideas a chance to consolidate in creative unconscious loving ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put your agreement treasures out first. • Remember that no one owns the ideas – they must stand on their own. • Now, take out the alternatives that complete the picture of the project. • Are some of those ideas incompatible with the things you both already agree on? Those will get lesser consideration. • Of the rest, which ones will enhance your family’s mission in life? Will this project promote the values you want in your children? Really? • How about: Which projects are affordable and doable in your time window? • Some ideas will gain strength in this process while others will diminish. • Of those now left in consideration, it is time to listen carefully to each other’s feelings of preference and reasons for & against each of the remaining top ideas. • Now – Don’t decide! • It is important that you give your brains a chance to consolidate what you have just absorbed. It cannot happen all at once. Sleep on it, dance on it, hike on it, swim on it, but don’t decide on it – not just yet. <p>And -- Maybe the next day...</p>
<p>Seeking...</p> <p>Yes, finally!</p>	<p>Next, you sit down again and review the top options and express your revised preferences after having mulled it over. You may even have some creative blends to propose. If you need to repeat the last step with new ideas, do so. You will refine many considerations with this approach and you will be very close to consensus at this point.</p> <p>It is now time for compromise and “gifts” to each other. Gifts can be special allowances made to the preferences of the other – just because you love them. This will be a give-and-take matter and needs to remain loose. If you get tightened up or demanding, it is time for another recess. Take as many as you like.</p> <p>Repeat the process until the blended idea has consensus and all votes are in.</p> <p>If it gets harder, take heart, and go on to the chapters on Decision Making and also Deep Communication.</p>

Idea collections – torn from magazines or simply the whole book – with bookmarks

A bulletin board or side of the fridge
– with ideas posted

A binder or file – organized or not

Bookshelf, drawer, or nook – with materials collected

People should know who is authorized to go in and look and comment – mostly the adults – but if the kids have parameters and will not cause disarray – their input is also valuable.

Contemplation Moments –

The nice thing about having materials and ideas available for viewing is that folks can come & sit & think at their own pace and can come up with some very valuable contributions.



Some categories for organizing planning notes and materials:

Sources ideas & literature & pictures

Brainstorming topics & notes

Materials procurement information & quotes, etc

Actual plans & notes that go with action steps

The tracking is often well done if handed to the “Organizer” in the family. Let that one set up a binder or files for the literature & notes as you go. You will want to visit this area and these materials regularly for reference and review. See also the chapter on Maintenance.

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Planning does not mean immediate action –

It is very important that the family understands what stage of the process you are in – that this is PRE-action, an important distinction – so that an impulsive “helper” does not take it upon themselves to demolish a wall or shed because it is on an idea list.

Warning:

The sharing and communication of 3-dimensional ideas stretches us beyond our usual vocabulary. Each of us may find ourselves tongue-tied or stumbling over words that do not fully capture the notions and spaces we have in our mind. And, with the different types of minds assembled together in our families, the translations can become confusing or comical.

Antidote: Study the chapters on communication to learn some of the unique ways that might work for your crew. You will probably find that you become involved with some unconventional methods; but it is important that they work for you and your family's **Home Team**.

Notes from Planning a Project

Circle your top reasons you would want to jump to the project right away.

And your top 3 main reasons you might take the time to plan together.

My reasons to Get going right away:

Weather is great
Event is coming up
Want to make use of energetic enthusiasm
Someone will offer to help
Materials will perish otherwise
Winter is coming
I hate talking when I could be doing
I don't want an argument
I don't want too many suggestions
Time's a wastin'
If I talk & wait, I'll lose my thoughts
I like to keep busy
I want to do it my way

And some reasons to Plan together:

My partner will make me sit & listen
I'll never hear the end of it..
I want their ideas
It will help us be happy
I want to share the work
Their input has helped before
I need a cup of coffee and a chair
The kids are busy while we talk
I don't want to tackle the mess right now
Nothing's on TV - just reruns
Can't get to it now anyway
It's their turn
Not much time before dinner

You might notice --

That these are not all positive reasons. That is ok. We are not always all positive. But understanding why your partner is not into the sit-down-talk-and-plan process can help you both address the reasons why it has been hard to do planning before. So, share the lists above and then look back at the chapter - many of those steps can be done on the run. Be responsive to your partner and their needs. It is in sharing yourselves and accepting each other in good humor, that your whole family will improve.

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