



# Priorities in Design

	I loved the magazine - how do I make my house be like that?	I want a space that has some peace and quiet for once		
	My business needs room – let's take out the second stairway		My partner wants it all their way - and won't be happy till it is just so	
I have the perfect plan for our house - so now what?				They want all their collectibles on display in the family area – uh oh!
We are so busy - we haven't had any time to design together		My partner crabs at the kids - let's just give them their own space		We're miserable & need more room - any way we get it is fine

# Priorities in Design

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## Thinking through priorities in your planning

### *Designing for family purposes*

Famous architect Buckminster Fuller said that, “form follows function.” It is important to remember that when putting together your designs and projects. Life comes first. Relationships, love, and meaning come before things. Plan your renovations to support the flow of love in your home. If you want love to be functional in your home, plan for it.

Some things look really cool on paper or in the store, but in reality isolate people and contribute to relationship breakdown. Yet modifying your plans to bring people together and cross paths can enhance a loving home.

The most common building projects add space to a home. This stems from a desire to not be underfoot and to separate functions that cause traffic jams.

### *Is bigger better?*

I remember when we took our family of 5 from a Tercel to a Caravan. The family outings suddenly changed from wincing-whining to pleasant travel. The same is true at home. We can be very irritable when there is constant competition for the same spaces or resources at home. Bigger can be better.

Before we redid the kitchen, my husband, who is the cook, had 2 feet of counter space and approximately 5 by 5 feet of kitchen to maneuver in. He is also a big man and the family just found it impossible to help him with a meal without becoming a hazard under his feet. If you have situations like this, you also may well need more space.

Be prepared in your designs for what you are obligating yourself to do in supervision: if you make separate spaces for the kids, do you want to be faced with surprises and discipline every time you visit their space?

Are you designing so that adults will also spend time there?

And will you?

### ***Two is better than one?***

But be careful about how you plan things; there is the risk of introducing isolation, which can thwart love and relating. Of course wouldn't you laugh at someone who might suggest that we build two kitchens to solve our tight-space cooking problem? But people do similar things.

For example, many folks who are tired of competing for recreation equipment build separate facilities for the children. At first this seems good, but it can develop problems since supervision becomes unnatural to the flow: the children can then watch inappropriate shows and games, or act badly, fight with each other, and fail to keep the space clean. Be prepared in your designs for what you are obligating yourself to do in supervision: do you want to be faced with surprises and discipline every time you visit their space? Do you have enough positives in those relationships to balance this drain? Are you designing it

so that adults will

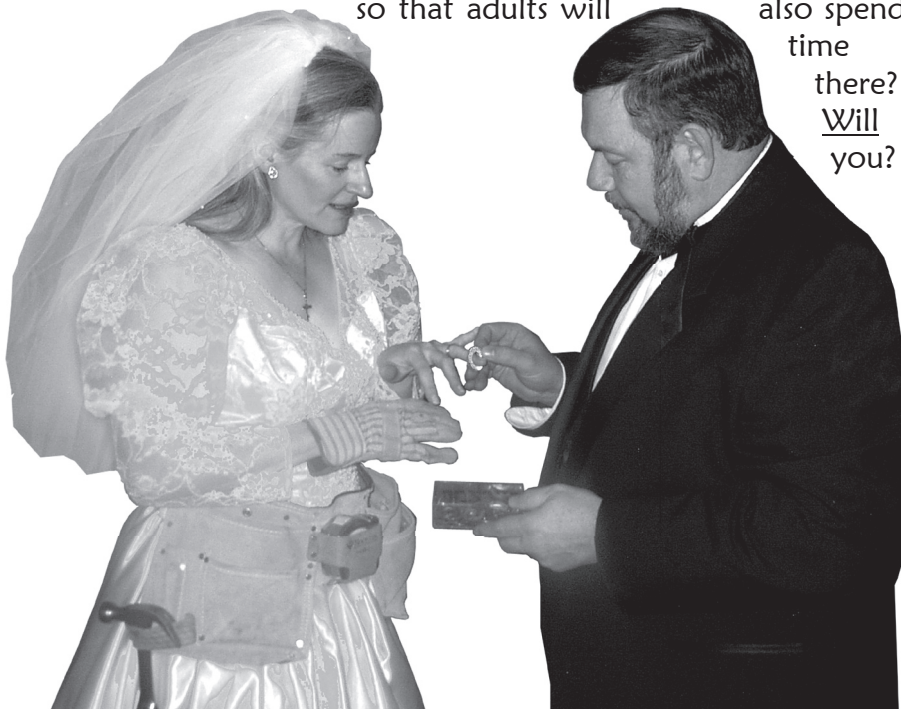
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## ***Priorities for the Future***

### **What's money got to do with it?**

Before putting money into your house, you also may want to do some evaluating of how sound your investment is.

You may have some basic priorities to consider in remodeling:

#### **Resale value.**

If you are considering resale, or just don't want to be trapped in a particular location, resale value can be an important concern. There is a value in feeling free to move – it cuts the bands that could otherwise enslave you to your own property. At one point my husband and I had a candid talk and made a plan to sell our house – at a time that most all of our projects were incomplete. It freed our attitudes so that we could move ahead and finish so much that we were then quite happy to stay.

#### **Location.**

Investing in a location close to schools, work, recreation, or family members can help with the flow of our friendships, and family life. Consider how these conveniences could improve or hamper your family's lifestyle and goals.

#### **Time.**

The time frame of these priorities will be important to consider as you look at what you are investing in your project in money, sweat, and time. Also, being sure that you will have the time to enjoy the main priorities of your life is a consideration. If you build a large house and work all the time on it and have an empty nest before it is done, how is that going to work to bring about a happy home and family?

#### **Down the road.**

Will you be able to let go of your house if other priorities indicate you should leave? It can be so sad for some folks who poured themselves into their homes to part with them if they need to.

Yet it can be so satisfying to live in a place you have constructed well for the many phases of your life. (See Family Life Stages chapter.) Sometimes when I am doing a project, I think about how I will use it when I am 75 and imagine where I will put my materials for my hobbies and how I will get around. It is fun to visualize, and healthy for your aging process if you have things to look forward to in your senior years.

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## **Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work**

The issues also can impact adult-adult relations. At our house, we designed my study to be adjacent to my husband's studio. We were pleased with that design element because it supported our closeness. Yet several years later, we put our computers next to each other at the same desk for a special project and noticed how nice it was to visit and share in that arrangement. We kept them together for a year longer than the project required because we liked the togetherness, but also had to deal with other issues there as a result – such as different neatness thresholds and distracting each other. But this has built our relationship further.

Each positively designed change brings challenges with it. Think through how it will be to LIVE in the environment you are building. It is good to imagine and to talk about it with the whole family. You may hear things that make you reconsider, and things that will enhance your design.



## Notes from Priorities

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### **Look back in the chapter, at the Table: Priorities in the Future**

Think about the project you are considering right now -

#### **Which priorities**

Are strongest for your family now?

Looking ahead in your family - in your next stage, what will be the next set of priorities that will be strong for your **Home Team**?

### **Now, together at your Communication Table -**

Tell your partner 3 ways the project can meet your current needs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

And your near future needs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name 2 ways the current idea could work against your family, your goals, or your values

- 1.
- 2.

### **Talk about those together**

Not against each other's ideas, but just considering the impact they may have in this complex world - it won't be all one way. Some priorities will need to be placed above others - that is a decision for the **Home Team** to make together.

### **Reward yourselves**

*Yes - you got it now - non-alcoholic and fun for both.*

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