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WOMAN

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(PG. 421)

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The Blank Page

By: Starr Miller

Often when thinking about a new year or a new opportunity we can see it as a blank page. Everything is new and possible. However, as any writer can tell you a blank page can also be rather daunting. What is the first step, word, thought? How do I begin?

When I was in design school at Parsons, the first semester was spent getting our heads out of seeing obstacles and concentrating on using our imagination. We were not given a white box to start; we had to start by using our imagination and develop the blank space for ourselves. This is one of the harder things to do in life. Build something from nothing.

Frankly, as an interior designer, it is easy to take what a client tells you: I like this color, I only like symmetry, I want this furniture and I don't want changes to the space. That process is a bit like taking an order in a restaurant.

What is harder, yet more intriguing, is to take that information, along with everything else you learn about a client, clear the space of any restrictions, and start from a blank canvas. This allows years of education and experience, pure imagination, and possibility to take over and lead the way. This is what designers live for.



NOW, HOW DO YOU MANAGE A LESS INVOLVED PROCESS FOR YOURSELF?

- 1 Measure out your room and furniture, separately.
- 2 Draw out your blank room (to scale) with zero furnishings in it.
- 3 Then, cut out furnishing model pieces (to scale).
- 4 Start placing the furniture in different places around your room. (Look at magazines to help you think of options.) Sit and think. Come back the next day and review again. Can you imagine other options?



NOW ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING PRACTICAL QUESTIONS:

Have you allowed for proper storage?

Is there enough lighting for reading?

Can you easily move around the space using doors and obvious travel paths?

Is there a floor outlet where you need it?

Does the arrangement let everyone see the fireplace/TV/view?



LIST WHAT YOU NEED TO ACCOMPLISH A WELL-IMAGINED SPACE:

- ✓ Do you need to add pieces?
- ✓ Is the color scheme what you want, and does it suit your taste; is it just the color everyone is using this year or are they the colors you have always used in the past?
- ✓ Do you have different textures in the space to add depth?
- ✓ Have you added enough pattern to make it interesting or are you playing it safe with solids?
- ✓ Have you extended the design to the vertical, connecting the ceiling and the floorplan?
- ✓ Do your choices flow with the connecting spaces?
- ✓ Have you gotten rid of the items you do not really love? If not, do so now!
- ✓ Have you used your imagination?

My philosophy is to embrace the blank page and take your time. If you get "writer's block," go read a book and come back to it tomorrow. My best ideas come in the middle of the night. Maybe yours will too.



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