



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

Stay in 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 for Richard to create a design that responds to their discoveries. With that in mind, the most important principle is simple—Learn from the Process!*

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. We can then keep, abandon, or modify the idea and—Learn from the Process!*

Reactions are information—clues to what matters to you.

Concepts start by responding to the *expressed* preferences of the Client. That said, our intent is to create spaces that “feel right.” For that to actually happen, *unexpressed* factors must be surfaced, which happens when the Client reacts to ideas. Therefore, however you feel about something, share this as information, so we can—Learn from the Process!*

“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 one aspect of the design, analyzing whether you like it or not! Most jigsaw puzzles are best worked by finding the edge pieces first and constantly looking at other pieces while referring to the overall picture. Our Placeholders surface “Information” which we sort out and refine until we have a clear picture of what “feels right” to you.

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

The two traits that matter most to you will drive the third. For instance, if it matters most for you to have a certain concept, implemented at a certain level of quality, the cost tends to be whatever it becomes.

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, and so forth. 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.

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

Clients sometimes blame their designer or contractor for budget overruns. Please, account for whether Quality and Concept were your two prime “drivers.” And consider this—while the Internet is great for research and for buying goods as “commodities”, if you remove the profit added by tradespersons to cover their acquisition costs, you can expect to pay more for labor.

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.

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