

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

Stay in the Process!

The Designed by L.I.F.E.™ Process (the Process) is about discovery and learning. Each client has their own unique set of “tastes” for shapes and the patterns, textures, and colors that “dress” those shapes. This information has to be surfaced and understood; it is the most important part of what “feels right” to you, the Client. As such, the Client may need several “trips around the mountain” in order to sort out what matters to them and for Richard to create a design that responds to what is being learned. With that in mind, the most important principle is simple--Stay in 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--Stay in the Process!*

Reactions are “Information.”

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 and--Stay in the Process!*

“You can’t think your way to a feeling.”

Or justify your way past one. Visualizing results can be challenging. You will compound the difficulty, if you focus on one aspect of the design and analyze 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 trips around the mountain will lead to “Placeholders” which, in turn, will surface “Information” which we sort out and refine until we have a clear picture of what “feels right” to you—and a “Decision.”

The Decisions Triangle: 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: Your design team is not expensive; your choices may be.

Clients sometimes blame their design team for how much their project is costing. Please, account for what directives you gave and whether you chose Quality and Concept as your two prime “drivers.” *Design drives costs, yet your choices drive design.* Another comment: “I could have bought it cheaper over the Internet.” While the Internet is a great place to do research and buy goods as “commodities,” the mark up added by tradespersons typically covers their acquisition costs. Remove that profit and 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 get the Cost within justification.

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

Initials _____