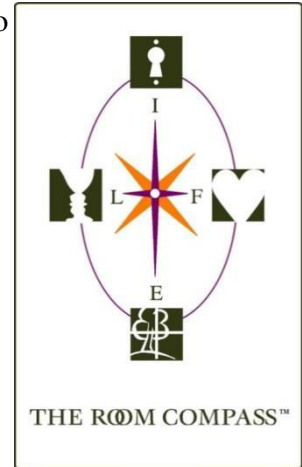


For designers, the size of a living space is often the main consideration. To help us look beyond these static dimensions, I created The Room Compass. With it, we will discover a solution that “looks great, works well, and feels right” for you, my client. My basis for developing ideas is the internal and external components of the four Compass ordinals. They spell out L.I.F.E.:



1. **Lifestyle Factors:** What do you want to do in the space?
2. **Interior Flow:** How does your home handle the Six Pathways—View, Light, People, Sound, Smell, and Touch?
3. **Feelings Created:** How are your aesthetic preferences—things that feel right to you—revealed by your responses to my Visual Language survey and by all the images you’ve collected online?
4. **Exterior Connections:** How are your rooms affected by their Exterior surroundings and the location of windows and doors?

Lifestyle Factors

Activities—how you actually *use* your home—define your lifestyle. As you engage in them, you may circulate about, distribute items, or find that many items collect in one area or zone of your home. In the kitchen, I have found ten distinct Activity Zones that sort out this way: Circulative, Distributive, and Collective. For instance, virtually all kitchens have at least one zone where all items related to either coffee or wine collect. Harmonizing these zones with your lifestyle always creates the “feels right” kitchen.

Interior Flow

When I first visit your home, I will ask to walk through the surrounding spaces. Is the kitchen a destination or a hub? Rather than adding more space, we may be able to create a more interesting, appealing, and functional home by reshaping the spaces within it, a technique explored well in the *Not So Big* books by Sarah Susanka. Let’s avoid the “remuddled” home feeling!

Feelings Created

When a client tells me the “look” they want, the challenge is this—though we all know what the word “cozy” means, “cozy” may conjure up a cottage or a cabin in my mind, when your home is neither! Using my Visual Language survey and your image collections, I can tap into your own reservoir of favored shapes, colors, textures, and patterns and reconcile differing perspectives for that “feels right” space.

Exterior Connections

How do the “eyes” of the room (windows and doorways) currently shape your connection to, and perception of, the outside world? In particular, kitchens can too often feel disconnected from their site. If that describes your kitchen, the door is open (pun intended) to explore repurposing and reshaping the spaces of your home.

Residential Therapy

The Room Compass framework clarifies the design process while inviting everyone involved to enjoy the Process. For many couples, it prompts one of them to reveal things of which the other was totally unaware. In that light, maybe I should call myself a residential therapist! After all, I am reconciling the issues of L.I.F.E.!