



july inspiration...*the D Word*

Inevitably, there comes a time in every designers career when a client calls and uses the ***D Word***. They call you up. They need your help.

Yes, all little children, fingers in your ears, *Downsizing!* *****

*****(*D-----g*, as in taking a 6,500 + sq ft Dream House and consolidating the contents into a much smaller condo or other shelter of its equivalent.)

Now, I know that most of you are probably saying, "So...what's the big deal? After all, business is business. A new project is a new project. Ok, so it's not the *Dream House*....it's the *Empty Nester House* or the *I've Entertained Way Too Much House*, or the *Get Me Out of Dodge House*".

All of that is true, but even the most loyal clients (the clients that invited you to their daughter's wedding, their son's Bar Mitzvah and their 30th wedding anniversary party) at one point or another, during the *D-----g* project look at their designer with "That Look". It's the "*why did you let us buy all this stuff?*" look.

See my point? Somehow, we designers are responsible for not only magically fitting our client's most prized possessions into their new abodes, but they somehow subconsciously hold us responsible for the contents that do not fit. They also frequently assume that what they need to sell just has to be *perfect* for some other project our office currently has in the works. That means that the challenge becomes the designers, because after all, who's idea was it to buy all that furniture in the first place? *Sigh...*



This March we received a call from clients using the ***D Word***. We have worked with these clients on numerous projects - multiple city apartments, a house in New Jersey, a condo in Hawaii, and several country houses on Cape Cod. Over the years, they accumulated a lot of interior furnishings. For them, finding a location for the contents of a house as they moved onto the next, has never been a problem. They always had another house where we were able to send the overflow. This time it was different.

They called to tell us they had just sold their present Beach House Property that totaled approx. 12,000 sq ft (which included the main house, guest quarters and several large garages) and were *D-----g* to a smaller 4,500 sq. ft. house in the same town. Well, you can do the math, that's a lot of *D-----g*. If you are a glass half full person you would call it a "challenge". If you are a glass half empty person, you would call it "OMG!" Either way you look at it, it was a project that was not for novices.

There was a lot of editing that needed to be done.

For the purpose of this essay, and to protect their identities, I am going to call these clients Dick and Jane. After working together for so many years, we all know each other very well. Jane and I are totally simpatico as client and designer. Jane has great taste, is always willing to try something new, and if I can use the analogy of skydiving, she has no problem jumping out of the plane. When it comes to design decisions, she has total trust in me, so when I say "*JUMP!*" she usually does. She has no fear that the parachute won't open- that's my job. Considering all of the projects we have worked on together, there have only been a few times when the parachute might have gotten... just a *tiny bit stuck*.

Jane and I have always worked together as a team, and when it comes time for installations, she likes to participate. In our younger years, we once moved a pair of club chairs on our backs, loaded them into a van, unloaded them on site, then sealed our *sister partnership* with a high five. We once left her Rolex watch as collateral with a local antiques dealer as we crammed the back of her car full of antique furniture, paintings and accessories.

We don't mess around!

Dick, on the other hand, has always had a few more reservations than Jane. Sometimes he needed a bit of a *push* out of the plane. I don't think he ever forgave me for suggesting to his architect at a site meeting that they should add an oculus window on the north wall of his office. While Dick was pondering the suggestion, the architect borrowed an electric saw from the contractor and began cutting a hole through the wall...but that's another story.

Back to the D Word...

To the client, *D-----g* must seem a bit like, "catch as catch can".... using the same placement in one house as in the other or just tossing the furniture in the air and seeing where it lands. Easy peasy.

It is not

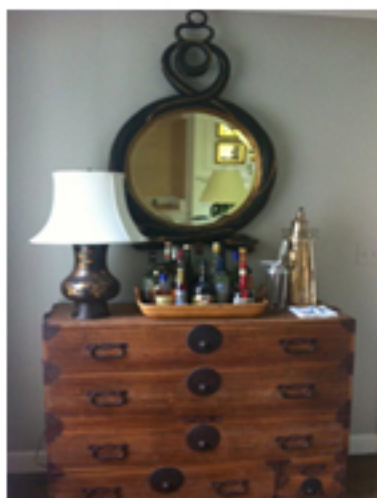
Our first trip in March consisted of taking photos and dimensions of all of the furniture in the existing house, creating an inventory in order to decide what to take to the new house and what to leave behind. We then measured the dimensions of the new house and drew furniture layouts for each room indicating placement for upholstery and case pieces. For example, the *old* library sofa was too big for the new library. We ended up using it in the *new* living room paired with the club chairs from the *old* master bedroom. More often than not, the fabrics don't work together. That means there is a lot of reupholstery to be done. After all, you can't have fresh, newly upholstered furniture placed alongside upholstery that is covered in 15 or 20 year old fabrics that are starting to show wear.

Think of it as a large three dimensional jigsaw puzzle

Dick and Jane moved into their new house at the end of May. Before we arrived, the movers placed all the furniture as was indicated on our furniture plans. We arrived and we did need to do a bit of tweaking and placing things just so, but it all started to take shape by the end of the first day. The artwork and accessories were staged in the garage, and the following day we began to move lamps, mirrors, and accessories and placed the second layer. Rummaging through those items became a trip down memory lane. Out of context it was fun to place-*how, when and where* they originated as it was all jumbled together like a scene from "PICKERS".

The artwork presented more of a challenge. Dick and Jane had collected wonderful art over the years, and where to hang their favorite paintings in a house with fewer walls took some creative thinking. We ended up hanging all of the very large still lives from the previous wine room, dining room and other larger rooms in the entrance foyer as it had a very high ceiling height. We then filled in with smaller paintings and threw in a few mirrors creating a wonderful "Salon" in the entrance.

The house was installed in 3 long, 12 hour days



After three days of hard work, the house (missing only a few details here and there) was installed. Jane and I are happy to report that we are still strong enough to lift a pair of club chairs, maybe not on our backs, but at least across a room. We can still hang a series of framed prints (all evenly spaced), and set up a "mean" bar (three to be exact).

Dick, over the years, has learned not to question our antics and he trusts that in the end, all will be well. At the of each day, there he stood with our cocktails of choice - shaken (not stirred) to perfection.

A job well done by all!

Cheers!

President

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