

Marry Your Styles

DECORATING ADVICE FOR NEWLYWEDS—
OR ANY PARTNERS WITH DIFFERING TASTES.

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Furniture and other items can be repainted, re-upholstered or re-purposed for another use.



newlyweds. “When you have a neutral base, the sky is the limit,” she says. “You have so much opportunity for things to work.” Pro tip: Make sure the undertones of the neutrals match and are reflective of light—otherwise a room can look drab. Those undertones will also be your guide as you introduce other colors. Start with the clean slate of neutrals in paint, furniture and flooring, then experiment with color and pattern.

CREATE A NEW STYLE AS A COUPLE

Look at your favorite items—whether it’s an old keepsake or new item the

two of you agreed on. Flesher says it’s important to ask yourself why you like the piece so much. Is it the color? The shape? Once you’ve identified the element you really love, you can “springboard from it,” she adds. Start with the piece of art, a pillow or whatever the small piece is, and design your space around it. You have the exciting opportunity to develop a whole new style together.

TRY SOME BUDGET-FRIENDLY DESIGN TRICKS

Don’t feel bad about starting small. You’re not yet certain of your combined style, and you’re likely on a budget. Flesher says pillows are one of the least expensive ways to add color and a whole new feel to a room. Assess the room for quick fixes—small things that can make a big difference. Flesher emphasizes lighting, noting that 2700-3000 Kelvin light bulbs are ideal for bringing out colors and improving the look of your space. Paint is also an affordable option to achieve a drastic change. In the process of re-purposing items, Flesher adds, you can take on some fun DIY projects as a team and literally build your space together.

“It’s give and take in everything with a marriage, and design is no exception.”

MONIQUE FLESHER
DESIGNER

Getting married is busy enough. Who has time to design a new space? My new husband and I are currently in the thick of this, melding two lives and two completely different design styles. I’m hoping we’ll eventually come up with something we can both happily call “home.” In the meantime, I touched base with Monique Flesher, the Salt Lake City-based owner of Monique Jacqueline Design, and she has some very helpful insights.

For any pair with differing styles, this one’s for you. Here are a few quick tips for tackling the task of designing your shared space:

LET IT GO! (FOR THE MOST PART)

This is mostly me interjecting here, but it’s important. My husband and I

each have several years of moves, experiences and *stuff*. Our first step has been some major cleaning, reorganizing, throwing out and donating. It would be difficult to design a mess. Now that that’s out of the way (literally)....

RE-PURPOSE OLD FAVORITES

Pause before getting rid of some things. Take inventory of what you already have, Flesher says. “Everyone has pieces they feel are near and dear to their hearts. Some of us might say we are not sentimental, but there is something keeping us from getting rid of something.” Adopt an unspoken rule to honor that some things just have meaning, no explanation necessary. Furniture and other items can be re-painted, re-upholstered or re-purposed for another use. These

sentimental items can help you design a space that feels very “you.”

GET SOME INSPO

“One of the things I tell everyone to do is go shopping together,” Flesher says, “And not even necessarily physical shopping. Go online.” She recommends looking at favorite home store sites, particularly large-stock sites such as Wayfair, and selecting items to save in a cart or images to collect somewhere like a Pinterest board. Before mapping out your projects, Flesher recommends combing through the collection of what each partner likes and looking for themes and patterns. You’ll start finding harmony in your styles.

START WITH NEUTRALS

Flesher favors neutrals in her designs, regardless of whether her clients are



COMPROMISE, COMPROMISE, COMPROMISE

The most important advice Flesher has for design-ambitious newlyweds is to give and take. If you must keep a certain thing, perhaps be willing to part with another. Or if you keep it, and your spouse doesn’t love it, be willing to “allow it to change” with a new stain, paint or use. If you love florals and he doesn’t, maybe find a light paisley pattern. There are many opportunities to find a middle ground and develop a space you both love. “It’s a give and take in everything with a marriage, and design is no exception,” Flesher says. I couldn’t agree more. ■

You can find Monique Flesher’s work at moniquejacqueline.com.