

#1 AMAZON BEST SELLER

**DOWNSIZE
YOUR LIFE
UPGRADE
YOUR
LIFESTYLE**

Secrets to More
Time, Money, and Freedom

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DOWNSIZE YOUR LIFE,UPGRADE YOUR LIFESTYLE: **SECRETS TO MORE TIME, MONEY AND FREEDOM**

CHAPTER 3: LIFESTYLE DESIGN – WHAT IS IT?

INTERIOR DESIGN - What is it?

A creative process that uses abstract ideas to solve problems and create unique solutions for each client's wants, needs and wish list for residential and commercial interiors. Innovative design concepts that enhance and impact the beauty, comfort and efficiency of how we experience the environment we live, work and play in.

Interior Design Services Design Tools

- Design Concepts
- Space Planning
- Design Development
- Design Consultation
- CAD Drawings
- 3D Renderings
- Blueprints
- Project Management

LIFESTYLE DESIGN - What is it?

Living the life you love... by design. It is living in alignment with your values, passion and purpose each day of your life. It is intentionally choosing how to spend your time, money and energy to create and to experience a higher quality of life in all areas of your life.

Lifestyle Design Services Design Tools

- Journaling
- Inventory your life
- Assessment
- Visualization
- Breakdown barriers
- Downsize/ Declutter
- Prototyping
- Action Steps

LIFE IS A PICNIC

As the daughter of an Air Force pilot, our family had many opportunities to live in various parts of the world. One of my favorite locations was Hahn Airbase, Germany where we lived for almost 5 years. While living in Germany, our family of seven took frequent road trips to neighboring countries. Our mom usually instigated these adventures, and Dad was the consummate planner. In so many ways, they were the perfect team. She was curious, a lifelong learner, and creative visionary. He was our rock, with the open mind and a steady temperament that served him well as he engaged in and followed through on her ideas and inspirations.

Her passion for travel, meeting new people, experiencing different cultures and seeing the beauty in all of it was what she wanted most for our family. Long before “lifestyle design” became part of my vocabulary, Mom designed a lifestyle for our family filled with experiences and memories that have lasted a lifetime. Their gift of experiences surpasses any wrapped presents I received for Christmas or birthdays. The memories of our times together as a family became part of the fabric of who I am and, without a doubt, influenced my passion for living each day to the fullest.

One of my most cherished childhood trips was a picnic in the foothills of the Swiss Alps. What makes that trip so memorable is the stark contrast between the breathtaking beauty of the snowcapped Alps and the absolute simplicity of our picnic lunch of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Even as a child, I somehow realized we could have been anywhere in the world as long as we were experiencing those events together as a family. It just so happened that mom chose the Alps for this particular outing. As Dad maneuvered our large black and white 1960 Oldsmobile up the narrow roads and around the tight switchback turns, each new vista was even more spectacular than the previous one. We each vied to be the one who would discover the perfect spot for our gourmet lunch.

Just as we rounded one of those bends, my entire family collectively shouted, “That’s it!” Dad pulled over to a safe spot next to an alpine trail that was covered with the most beautiful array of bright jewel-colored wild flowers that I had never seen. We were surrounded by nature’s delicate balance of red, yellow, pink and purple blossoms in full summer bloom. Just as Mom laid out our big, well-used picnic blanket, a large brown cow with eyes as big as golf balls meandered toward us, seeming to enjoy the company.

While we were frightened at first, we realized she was just being curious. After all, we were the intruders in her little piece of heaven. We sat down to savor our homemade lunch against the backdrop of a deep blue sky, the majestic mountain peaks, the clanging of the cowbell and the scent of alpine flowers. What do I remember most about that day? The smiles, the laughter, the love and how much I still love PB and J sandwiches!

Each time I share this story and many others like it, I can’t help but be amazed at how our mom **intentionally created moments and experiences** our family will remember for our lifetimes. She was the first (and the best) lifestyle designer I have ever known!

WHAT IS LIFESTYLE DESIGN?

The story I just shared with you is the essence of lifestyle design. I define lifestyle design as **living life on purpose in all areas of your life**, including relationships, family, work, health, finances, and spirituality. It is how you experience your own life. It is how you show up each day living in alignment with what matters most to you so you can live a higher quality of life.

Lifestyle design is about choosing to be present in each moment so you can capture the beauty, the sights, the sounds, the smells, the laughter, and the love. It is intentionally creating and embracing experiences that change you, mold you, and influence you.

As you consider what lifestyle design means to you, give some thought to these questions:

- Have you designed your life the way you want it to be or are you stuck in a mediocre lifestyle and routine that no longer serves you?
- Are you living life each day as if it were your last?

Lifestyle Design involves making choices about how you use your time, money, and energy, as well as your God-given gifts so you can live the life you love... by design. It is living with intention and on purpose.

Being mindful of even the smallest decisions you make each day can make the biggest difference, not just in your own life but in the lives of those you love. Here are three examples of the powerful impact of small choices:

- Jason, a busy young executive, committed to leaving work early so he could watch his son's ball games through his Little League years and all the way through high school. Rearranging his work schedule was a small price to pay for the loving relationship Jason has with his son many years later.
- As a single mom, Miriam juggled many roles but she was committed to creating a loving, stable, and nurturing home for her three children. She made dinner time together her highest priority. Today, her teenage kids love bringing their friends over to hang out at the kitchen table... music to every mother's ears.
- Karen is a retired grandmother who offered to spend at least 2 days a week taking care of her grandchildren while her daughters were at work. These two years of precious moments with her grandchildren were priceless, not just for Karen but for her entire family.

Choices made. Lives changed. All based on personal values and what mattered most to them. They each chose to be present to what was happening in their lives at that time. They realized that the choices they made today would impact their tomorrows. They understood that they would never get those moments, days and years back. They intentionally prioritized how to use their time, money and energy to impact the quality of their lives and the lives of those they loved.

“Shoulds” and “Have-tos”

Sadly, many people live their lives as if they were programmed to do or to become what others want or expect them to do or to become. Living in the shadow of “shoulds” or “have-tos” means they are not living a life of their own choosing.

Several years ago, I mentored a young woman who had checked all the right boxes. She went to a prestigious college, graduated summa cum laude, and was accepted into one of the finest law schools in the country. An overachiever, she persevered through many grueling years of hard work, then landed a position at one of the largest law firms in the area.

However, when I first met Cindy at a networking event, she was miserable. After several conversations, she admitted that who she had become and all that she had accomplished did not reflect

her own true passion. She had been living a life her parents wanted for her. She was unhappy, unfulfilled, and yearning for something that aligned more with her desire to empower other women to live their dreams.

Her parents might have had good intentions in encouraging her to aim for these lofty goals, but Cindy never learned to make her own decisions and did not trust herself to make choices that reflected her own wants, needs, and wishes. She had been so programmed to have the big life decisions made for her, she was startled and speechless when I asked her what was stopping her from pursuing her own dreams. It took several years and a tremendous amount of courage for her to walk away from her parents' idea of a successful career.

She realized that in order to have the life she really wanted, she had to redefine her idea of success. It wasn't easy and it didn't happen overnight. But when she finally faced her fears and insecurities and started to visualize her unique dreams, she was able to achieve what she most wanted. Today, she is the executive director of a non-profit, a position that is fulfilling and meaningful to her. She is grateful to have the opportunity to empower other women to make decisions about the direction of their own lives. Ironically, her non-profit helps women find employment that contributes to their personal, professional, and financial growth so they can realize their own dreams.

Cindy disrupted the trajectory of her own life by challenging herself to question what mattered most to her. She chose a career path that aligned with her true passion, one that is rewarding and making a difference. This is just one example of how life-altering lifestyle design can be. It changed her life; now she is changing the lives of others.

According to *Success Magazine*, "Over 50% of Americans are unhappy in their jobs and over 50% of America's marriages end in divorce." Not great news. Certainly not a way to live – really live.

When do you know that you are not living the life you are meant to live?

Do you often find yourself thinking these thoughts?

- You would rather be anywhere other than here. You have a feeling that just about anything would be better than... You fill in the blank.
- You want so much more, but you may not know what "it" is you are missing.
- You have a dream and this is not it. Your dream is so different from the way you are living now that you can't imagine how you could achieve it. So you just don't try.

Perhaps, like Cindy...

- You feel trapped, afraid, and see no way out of your current circumstances.
- You feel stuck in a career that provides a paycheck but no meaning or fulfillment.
- You are in a toxic relationship that continues to drain life and energy from you.
- Your life is a vicious cycle of pressure and demands that leave no time for you and your own personal and professional development and growth.

While living the life you love might seem like a distant dream and impossible to achieve, I would like to challenge your thinking.

DON'T LET FAILURE STOP YOU

One of my favorite sayings is, "If it is to be, it is up to me." The only one who can change your circumstances is YOU. Weigh what you long for against what is preventing you from having it. Once you have identified how you want to live and once you have figured out what distracts you from having that life, then it will be well worth doing whatever it takes. The power to change your own world lies within you.

Change is never easy. It requires you to confront your expectation, step out of your comfort zone, and take risks. You will probably make a few poor choices along the way. You might even fail a few times. When you do, you may view failure as "proof" that you are not good enough or smart enough to succeed, so you should just give up. Let that sink in for a minute. If we are ever to succeed at anything, we must first try.

As you begin to think about your life and changes you want or need to make, there are two points I would like you to consider:

1. Reframe the word "failure" as an opportunity to learn from your failure and mistakes. Every time you fail to achieve a goal, make a choice to learn and grow from it.
2. Failure stops us *only* if we let it stop us. It is important to pick yourself up and begin again every time you stumble.

Almost every successful person has experienced failure and doubt at some point, but they were not stopped by it. Many well-known celebrities turned failure into great successes:

- Michael Jordan was kicked off his high school basketball team because his coach didn't think his skills were good enough to play.
- Warren Buffet was rejected from attending Harvard University because his grades weren't good enough.
- Richard Branson was a high school dropout and was told he was likely to fail if he went to college.
- Martha Stewart greatly expanded her business empire after going to prison for 5 years.
- Oprah Winfrey was born into poverty to a teenage single mother and overcame numerous other challenges before becoming a beloved TV host and multibillionaire.

Those people that I mentioned are all famous household names. These others may not have the same immediate name recognition, but never the less, they built massive companies despite all odds:

- Kevin Plank, CEO of Under Armor, was almost broke when he began selling his signature athletic clothing.

- Barbara Corcoran, Real Estate Guru and Shark Tank celebrity, turned \$1,000 into a billion dollar business.
- Andrew Carnegie spent the majority of his youth performing manual labor at a cotton mill. He built an empire in the railroad industry.

They all turned their failures or perceived failures into remarkable success stories that have inspired countless other people to follow their dreams. They each had a vision. They each set goals and had a plan. They intentionally lived a life they once could only dream of.

YOU WILL NEVER KNOW IF YOU CAN HAVE THE LIFE YOU DREAM OF UNLESS YOU TRY

You can design your own life too if you face your fears and commit to doing what it takes to have what you say you want. If you want to accomplish anything worth having, you must start by taking action, even if they are baby steps. That will give you the drive and confidence you need to keep going. You will begin to see results and start gaining momentum.

When you take control of your life, you will start living life on your own terms and in your own unique style. You will experience a radical shift in mindset and momentum that will get you closer to living that life you once thought impossible. The more you live with intention, the easier it will be to embrace the one and only life you will ever have and live it to the fullest every day.

Lifestyle design allows you to create and design a life you were meant to live. The choices you make today will impact your tomorrows. The possibilities are endless. What are you waiting for?

If you really want a better life, why not start today? You can do it! Try it! You will discover a whole new confident, powerful, and unstoppable you.

In an effort to help you move forward so you can begin having the higher quality life you want, here are 10 steps you can take right now. As you begin to practice these steps, you will start to experience a greater sense of peace, confidence, well-being, and happiness. Once you realize that you can create anything you want for your life, you will become unstoppable.

10 Steps to Begin Living a Life You Love

- 1. Try something new each day.** In Luann Kahn's Book, *I Dare Me*, she dared herself to try something new each day for an entire year. Having the courage to do this changed her thinking and her life.
- 2. Learn something new.** Challenge your thinking. Change your world. Take a course, attend a seminar, and invest in your own personal growth and development.
- 3. Surround yourself with people who are learning, growing, and challenging themselves to new heights.** Expand beyond what you ever thought possible. Grow in areas you want to know more about.

4. **Travel.** Take a trip to somewhere you've never been. Be inspired by discovering something new, immersing yourself in a whole new world.
5. **Lighten up!** Stop demanding perfection of yourself and others. Embrace imperfection. Take imperfect actions. You don't have to know all of the answers.
6. **Forgive yourself and others.** Stop letting what happened in the past hold you back. Put your past in the past. Set yourself free from long-held upsets and resentments. You can't change the past, but you can change your future.
7. **Trust yourself.** Take risks. Learn from your mistakes. Embrace new opportunities that you would have previously stayed away from. Trust yourself to try some new skinny branches.
8. **Seek advice and opinions from other people who will only tell you the truth.** Learn from the experiences and wisdom of others. Get a mentor or trusted advisor who will provide new insights.
9. **Give back.** The more you give, the more you receive. Do something each day that will encourage, inspire or empower others to be their best self is your gift that will keep on giving.
10. **Live in the moment.** Each moment is an opportunity to create experiences and memories that will last your lifetime and beyond. Today will never come again.

If you are 50+ and in transition due to life stage (empty nest, pre-retirement, retirement) or a significant life event (divorce, death of a spouse, job loss, or health-related issues) and you are seeking ways to navigate the journey to “what’s next” or “what now,” book a complimentary 30 minute call (<https://calendly.com/rwilkins/coaching-call-with-rita?month=2020-07>) with me to discuss ways to get clarity for next steps and my lifestyle design service options.



Rita Wilkins, as known as The Downsizing Designer, is an interior design expert, bestselling author of *Downsize Your Life, Upgrade Your Style: Secrets to More Time, Money and Freedom*, and a TEDx speaker *Downsize Your Life: Why Less Is More*. Through speaking, webinars, online courses, and masterclasses Rita helps people in transition rediscover, reimagine, and reinvent their lives so they can have more time, freedom and clarify to pursue what matters most to them.

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