

Blending Households:

Combining, Compromising and Creating Your New Abode

HOME RE-DESIGNER LAURA HEITZ GIVES US A FEW POINTERS ON HOW TO DIPLOMATICALLY AND RESPECTFULLY COMBINE YOUR 'SINGLE LIFE' BELONGINGS TOGETHER IN YOUR NEWLY SHARED SPACE.



Home re-designer **Laura Heitz** gives us a few pointers on how to diplomatically and respectfully combine your 'single life' belongings together in your newly shared space.

The key to marital design heaven is the word compromise. Each person brings all of their childhood and adult influences and belongings to the marriage. Your goal should be to have your space reflect your personalities and this new stage of your lives.

Don't start off married life with a bed you shared with a serious significant other. If you're headed towards the altar, first head towards the furniture store and shop together for this significant purchase. Same goes for linens.

When designing a room together, one person should pick the colors while the other sets up the furniture layout. Each person gets one veto and then you have to accept their decision. Go for a classic look as opposed to a theme. Pick furniture in neutral shades and add pops of color with accessories. When guests walk into the space you don't want them to say, "Oh, Kate/Mike got their way on this room."

If you've lived on your own for a while, you may have two of everything. Set a time when you're both relaxed and survey your belongings – one by one. **BE BRUTAL!** Who has the newer (in better condition) couch, fridge, etc. There will be some give and take, but really, do you need two

toasters? Give the second chance items away to charity or sell them. Reward yourselves by utilizing the funds to buy something for the home that you will both enjoy.

Display photographs of your favorite activities: golf, cooking, kayaking, football, painting, etc. These could be shared activities or ones that you like to do on your own. Place each photo in the same frame, same size. Six on a wall (8x10) or (11 x 14) will have greater impact. By displaying them together you are showing the world you are united as a couple.

Women hate 68" flat screen TVs. Men hate 18 pillows piled on the bed. If an item no longer fits with this stage of your lives, let it go. The same goes for gifts. Life is too short to be surrounded by items that aren't useful or pleasing. Take a photo with you holding the item -- you'll always have the memory!

Start a collection together... this could be black and white photography, ceramics, pieces from an emerging artist. It's a great way to express yourselves and tell the world what you are all about as a couple. Organize your collections by color or texture or category.

Lastly, like marriage itself, it's all about compromise: If your partner truly hates it, let it go.

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