

Making a Cheerful Home in Dark Times

Some people just have a knack for making a place a home, no matter how humble the dwelling. When we walk into their houses, we immediately feel enveloped in good vibes. These people can even transform a hotel room in a matter of minutes by artistically placing their belongings around in a way that makes their personality shine forth.

By contrast, other houses—even some of the most rich and lavish—are cold and un-inviting or simply a mess.

We all crave and need a home—not just a living space, but a home—that supplies our needs, emotional and spiritual. Sometimes people know a house is perfect for them and are able to afford it, and that place is fun and refreshing. But not everyone is so fortunate, and many times we simply have to make do.

This can be discouraging because most of us aren't trained decorators, nor are many of us made of money. What we forget is that there are many ways we can simply and easily transform a house into a home that welcomes and warms those who frequent it.

Attitude plays a big factor in the enjoyment of our surroundings. Incorporating simple things into your home—such as a print of a painting you love or other belongings placed around artistically—can brighten your attitude and enjoyment. Flowers are another item that go a long way toward brightening your surroundings and mood. They don't have to be from a florist—cheap flowers can be bought at the grocery store or picked outside. Placing them in a vase or drinking glass and setting them on a table or mantle or on top of the radiator will work magic.

Color is another thing that makes a home. It creates mood and encourages serenity or unease, either depressing or giving joy. I discovered this when I moved back to my elderly mother's house to help take care of her. My old bedroom, which my parents had repainted years before, was a dusty rose shade that had faded and darkened over the years. It depressed me. I wanted to leave when I walked into that room.

You do not have to paint your room, but there are other ways to change the color you notice most. Students do this when they decorate their dorm rooms with posters they like or cover the wall with a large piece of material hung like a tapestry. Sometimes just painting one wall will change everything about your space. As long as you have enough of the colors you enjoy, you can focus on them instead of what you do not like.

Repurposing items is another way we can make a house more homelike. If we find ourselves living in a place with carpeting we dislike intensely, we can mitigate the problem by placing a small area rug on top of the carpet. Work with one small item at a time. Move something that bothers you. Trash something you can't stand. Add a find from a thrift shop, antique shop, or your parent's attic. It is such fun to see the energy change in a room or a house. Make a nest that suits you and watch your whole life improve overall. Enjoy it.

You do not have to be a trained decorator to improve your surroundings. There are so many magazines, videos, and of course, the highly addictive Pinterest. Furthermore, we shouldn't be intimidated by someone else's success. Everyone has their own style. Some people prefer minimalist rooms, while others crave clutter. Some want all white and steel and will accent it with gray. People like me crave color, often overlapping and sometimes even clashing, but it works.

In the last two years people have spent more time than ever in their homes. Even though many are now emerging from those homes and getting out more, there's no denying that we live in

dark times. Putting a few little extra touches into making your home a place of joy and cheer will make it a haven from the depressing darkness.

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Image Credit: Piquesels