

HOUSE RULES

t h e p o d c a s t

Episode 1: How to Know Whose Advice Counts

**I'm Myquillyn Smith and this is House Rules.
Welcome to Episode 1.**

Have you ever had to make a decision in your home, maybe about a paint color or a sofa style, and you weren't fully confident on the direction you wanted to take? You might have asked the opinion of your neighbor, your sister-in-law, your coworker, your BFF and maybe you received four completely different answers and they all seemed legit. Now you're even more confused.

Maybe someone offered advice for something you weren't even thinking about. And now you're distracted, wondering if they are right and if you've been doing it all wrong. How do you know who to listen to and who to ignore? By the end of this episode you'll have a better understanding of whose opinion matters, and one way to decide who to take advice from and why.

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When I first picked up the book *The Perfectly Imperfect Home* by Deborah Needleman, I immediately noticed the lack of photos.

As a reader, collector and writer of decorating books, I was surprised and a little bit disappointed that this book didn't include a bunch of glossy photos of actual rooms. However, as I started reading, I realized that the lack of photos was a good thing.

The Perfectly Imperfect Home is a timeless decorating book full of helpful ideas. And instead of photos, the book features watercolor illustrations by Virginia Johnson. The pages have these endearing, charming, interesting interpretations of real rooms designed by high end designers,

most of whom I've never heard of. It's a little work of art and if you don't have this book I highly recommend it.

The lack of photos that can be dated are precisely why this book feels so timeless. Although it was published in 2011, the watercolors give it an artful, adorable quality that simply nod to the point the author makes and causes the reader to focus on the actual words and truths she's writing about.

I think a podcast like this is the same because we are removing the visual distractions, so you can listen to and truly hear these decorating truths.

When I say "lamp", you don't have to see my weird favorite lamp I have in my home that you might think is ugly.

Instead you think of a lamp in your home that you love.

Or, maybe you think of the fact that you don't have a lamp.

Or you think of the lamp you have and possibly hate and then I help you figure out why you hate it.

See how this can be really helpful.

There's not one right lamp to buy that works for everyone's style, so being told or shown what exact lamp someone has in their house doesn't actually help very many people.

Taking away the distraction of specifics can help us focus on what is true about all lamps. Which we'll talk about later this season. Yes, we're gonna have an episode all about lamps. You're going to love it, and I can't wait.

One of the hurdles I always have to address when trying to teach basic decorating truths is that people think they can only learn from me if they like my style. They wrongly believe if they don't like everything in my house then I'm not for them.

Listen, it's not their fault. I think the access to the design world most of us had growing up was through shelter magazines where they seemed to have a huge emphasis and make a really big deal about "finding and even naming your style".

They made it seem as if you can't move forward making decorating decisions until you know your personal style and have given it a proper name. And they implied that you certainly can't learn from anyone if you don't love and share their personal style. That's all we know.

So, this is kind of sad and frustrating for me because I think that the best thing, the magic of decorating, is kind of like math, but math in a fun way. There are basic decorating truths and

principles and fun little simple formulas that apply to any room and always work out no matter the style of the home or the person who lives there. And we all have unique styles, as we should. This is why decorating is both an art and a science.

We can really enjoy the process, but that doesn't mean it's always easy or that you should naturally know how to do everything.

When you want to learn from someone, **you don't need to find an influencer and imitate exactly everything they've done.** Any robot can do that. I don't want to do that and I know you don't either. I want a teacher, a guide to help me learn how to make confident decorating decisions that get me to my goals.

In my business, I learn from people who run their business in a way I admire. I want to learn from people who live a balanced life, who are smart and say no to things. People who have a profitable, simple business. People who love what they do and look forward to their work.

If someone has a successful business but they're stressed all the time, never see their family, and they don't seem to enjoy their work, I really don't care to learn from them, no matter how successful (I just did air quotes) they might seem or no matter how similar our business are.

I want to learn from someone doing the thing I want to do in the way I want to do it.

One of my goals this summer was to edit my wardrobe and I found a few people to learn from on YouTube.

I would pull up a video, balance my phone on a nearby surface and start going through my drawers and closet.

I realized I never even looked up at the screen or worried about the exact items they were pointing out in the video. It was their METHODS that I needed. They were geniuses in knowing how to help me figure out what I love, what I didn't love, what I was doing wrong, what steps I was skipping, and what to do next.

For example, a few YouTubers all suggested the same kind of practice:

At the end of the week, dump out your laundry and look at it. This is the stuff you truly wear, the stuff you're drawn to, and the stuff that you feel comfortable in.

Next they said to try to figure out some things these pieces have in common. What colors, silhouettes, what level of formal or casual are the items that you wear on the regular?

I was able to follow those steps and learn about myself with their guidance. The practice was valuable and applicable and it didn't matter if I liked the blouse the Youtuber was wearing. The

point was for me to like the blouse I was wearing. And then to figure out why, so I could buy more blouses that I liked. To wear.

There were tips, methods and guidelines that helped me find MY own style. Not a list of things I needed to buy so I could dress like them in their style.

And listen, sometimes you just need or you want a list – sometimes you want a link to the most amazing pair of jeans someone is wearing on Instagram. Or you're looking for a big beautiful pillow for your sofa and you're so grateful it's tagged on the account you're following.

That is one way to make progress.

But I think that the ultimate way to level up your decorating game and your confidence in your home isn't from having a list of specific stuff to buy. Most of us don't have an empty room and a full budget and a desire to have an exact replica of our favorite designer's room.

We have pieces we love and pieces we kind of like and other pieces we're a little bit sick of but we're not ready to get rid of just yet.

We have half finished rooms and mantles full of items we bought but we can't figure out why we don't love it all together.

We've got people coming over and we want to be able to focus on them but instead we're distracted by our sofa.

You don't have to learn to make great decorating decisions from someone who has your exact style. **You're not looking for a creator you can copy. You want a mindset you can model.**

If your goal is to love your home – you should learn from someone who loves theirs.

If your goal is to make confident decorating decisions, you should learn from someone who understands how to do this and is confidently making decorating decisions in their own home.

If your goal is to host, and to volunteer your home for parties and to decorate seasonally without being a slave to a bunch of plastic bins full of stuff that lives in the attic 11 months out of the year, find someone doing that and learn from them.

Spoiler: I am that person, if that's what you're looking for.

I absolutely love my home. Not only that, I've loved all of my homes and we've lived in some weird, questionable, soulless places with circumstances I didn't love. But I believe every home has a silver lining and I see the world through house colored glasses.

I make confident decorating decisions. That doesn't mean I never have to return something or have to repaint a wall. I certainly do. But I'm not afraid. I know how to troubleshoot and what to change when something looks off. I know how to take a calculated risk. I know what to focus on and what not to worry about and my favorite thing in the world is figuring out why some things look great and other things look weird and then teach that to you.

I volunteer my home for gatherings and love to host. And I'm the poster child of an introvert. Did you know that hosting is great for introverts? We had 17 people here for dinner last week and I didn't fret over my house at all. And that's not because it was perfect, it was because I'm okay that it's not.

You can love your home.

You can make great decorating decisions.

You can be the go-to hosting home if that's what you want.

You don't need a creator you can copy, all you need is a mindset you can model.

If you want to have more style with less stuff,

If you believe it doesn't have to be perfect to be beautiful,

If it's important to you to have a welcoming, beautiful, meaningful home,

Well, you're in the exact right place.

Our homes have so much to teach us, let's learn from them together.

Here's to home.

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Thanks so much for listening. If you found this episode helpful and want to hear more words about home, I'd love for you to subscribe and leave a review.

I know I just went on and on about how it can be nice to not have visual distractions, and I believe that. There's a time and place to be inspired visually.

If you'd like to see some beautiful photos that relate to today's topic, along with some gorgeous Savs + Favs, join the 100,000 people already on my weekly Cozy Minimal email list.

You can expect pretty encouragement in your inbox every Tuesday, September through May. My promise to you is you'll always find simple encouragement for wherever you are on your home decorating journey.