

Earning your master furniture coordinator stripes

It doesn't happen often, but it *does* happen. You've walked into the furniture store with the intention to purchase *an entire room* of furniture. You'll be the envy of all your friends and neighbors but with great power comes great responsibility. How do you coordinate all the pieces of a room for maximum impact? The answer lies in treating your room like a blank canvas and layering on color, style and personality.

The base coat

The best way to coordinate any room is to start with something you really love. Maybe it's a sofa or a bedroom dresser. But it could just as easily be a paint color, a soft cashmere throw in a color that makes you happy or a framed photo of your mother when she was 16-years old. The key to bringing life into your selected room is to start with something that elicits a positive emotion.

If a piece of furniture is what you love then you and the piece are already where you need to be – the furniture store. But salespeople are always excited when a customer brings in a paint chip, a throw pillow or an accessory that they want to use to build a room. Your shopping trip becomes a treasure hunt and that's fun for everyone!

It's all in the details

Be sure to bring your room's dimensions, including ceiling height, and photographs of anything that will remain in the room like floor and window coverings, built-in shelving, a television or lighting fixtures. Your salesperson can help you determine furniture proportion so that you'll have a sense that everything fits perfectly in the room as long as he or she has the room's measurements and available space to work with.

It's also helpful if your salesperson knows how many people regularly use the room and what other uses the room may have. For instance, does the room double as your home office, craft room or homework central? And if the room is the main gathering place for your family you'll want to make sure there's enough seating for everyone!

Another question your salesperson may ask is how do you want to feel in your room? Calm? Energized? Inspired? Color, fabric and texture choices can be narrowed down once your salesperson has a better idea of your needs.

Color theory

Something else you should bring to the furniture store is an open mind. Maybe similar colors and fabrics make it easy to choose furniture, but if you want to *feel* something every time you walk into your room, color is an easy way to add vibrancy to a room. Don't worry, color doesn't automatically mean lime green and red. But it

can mean that you move away from everything matching and toward everything coordinating. There will be suggestions that will cause you to think (or say) “Absolutely not!” but there will also be suggestions that make you go, “Hmmm...” It’s those hmmm’s that will solicit the most compliments from others and make you happy when you’re in that room.

Playing well together

A room with coordinating furniture and accessories is like a sandbox full of happy toddlers. Everybody gets along and occasionally there’s a giggle or hug. The room feels not too boring, not too overwhelming. It feels just right.