



Grace and Gratitude

Happy Belated New Year everyone! I hope your holidays were filled with warm memories and family bonding, and perhaps a few moments to contemplate the year ahead. Typically, at this point I have resolved to cut back on sweets and mashed potatoes and to work a little harder with my trainer, but this year I've been giving a lot of thought to the notion of "grace and gratitude" as well.

You might have heard these two words linked together via the meditation series developed by Deepak Chopra and Oprah Winfrey called "Manifesting Grace Through Gratitude." The concept hit home with me, and although I haven't finished listening to the entire series yet, I have been giving a lot of thought to the philosophy behind it.

"Grace" to me is an attitude. It's about becoming more at peace, being kind and forgiving, and always staying above the fray. Gratitude, of course, means feeling grateful for who I am and what I have. It sounds a little corny, but sometimes I need to remind myself of the basics. Instead of letting negative things eat at me, I short-circuit stress and frustration by focusing on the positive. It pays

dividends in happiness, optimism and feeling content, and by doing so, I've become much better at defusing a tense situation.

Angela LaVista, our new senior designer, is a kindred spirit in this philosophy. She shared a great quote with me from Deepak and Oprah's series, which I will share with you: "Gratitude opens the door to the power, the wisdom, the creativity of the universe." Grace and Gratitude has become my mantra for 2016. What is yours?

All of us at Sweet Peas Design wish you a grace-full, grateful, New Year.

Sincerely,

Susan, Beth, Jennifer, Tod, Lauren, Angela
The Sweet Peas Design Team

what's **in** what's *out*

WHAT'S IN



1. Pantone's Color(s) of the Year Well, this is a first! Pantone has selected two colors of the year: Rose Quartz and Serenity Blue. It's a yin-yang pairing of warm and cool that reflects "connection and wellness as well as a soothing sense of order and peace" for today's turbulent times, said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of Pantone Color Institute. Sounds perfect for our meditations on "grace and gratitude."

2. Formal Dining Rooms We're so glad to see the revival of formal dining rooms at home, and we hope they will be used more often for family dinners, not just for holidays. When we make an event out of dinner with our family it sets the stage for bonding and sharing the events of the day - with cell phones muted - and reminds us to be grateful for each other.

3. Statement Bathroom Mirrors We've been all over this idea for quite a while. No need for same-old rectangular mirrors on the medicine chest door. The right mirror can add some glam and excitement to a master bath or powder room.

4. Techless Living Rooms Imagine having just one room that's a tech-free zone. We're starting to sense some push-back against the pervasive influence of technology at home, at

least in living rooms. No big-screen TV above the fireplace, just a serene space where families and friends can talk or just contemplate their lives. That's a good thing.

5. Mixed Materials in Kitchens Mixing metals, woods, light fixture styles and countertops is an eclectic look that's gaining a toe-hold in kitchens. You don't have to have all chrome or brushed nickel fixtures, or the same cabinet finishes on your island as your periphery cabinets. It just takes some know-how to make it all work!

6. Mad for Plaid We could argue that plaid never goes out of style, but right now it's super hot stuff, and not just for hipsters. Everyone is jumping on the plaid-wagon, from chi-chi fashion designers to furniture makers. We prefer our plaids on the subtle, sophisticated side, but there's a place for bright and bold patterns too, in small swaths.

> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: we-are-scout.com, houseandhome.com, thibautdesign.com, luxesource.com, decorpad.com, housebeautiful.com, architecturaldigest.com, apartmenttherapy.com

WHAT'S OUT

Clutter-Induced Stress

Stress at home can be reduced by editing. We have three easy fixes:

1. Too many throw pillows... You know you have too many throw pillows on a sofa or chair when people move or pile them on the floor in order to make space to sit. Same goes for your bed. Fewer pillows to manage at bedtime means you'll get under the sheets and to sleep faster! And in the morning, less time to make the bed!
2. Overloaded shelves... Too many books, photos and mementos can be visually overwhelming, and messy. We recommend spotlighting just a few well-chosen items. It may find it easier to cut back if you eliminate one or two pieces at a time, and perhaps you could rotate your knick-knacks instead of displaying all of them.
3. Faux greens or floral arrangements... If they are dusty or droopy, eliminate them. Whether on shelves, on top of a bookcase or as a centerpiece. Delete these and replace with new or nothing. Less is more.

sweet
tip

MIA From Your Holiday Entertaining

While it's fresh in your mind, now is a good time to take stock of what was MIA from your holiday entertaining - serving platters and trays, champagne or wine glasses, table linens, bread basket, a special bowl for your yummy cranberry sauce. Start filling the holes now so you are ready for next year's entertaining...or for that wedding shower this spring.



>photo courtesy of: drivenbydecor.com

FABU FABRIC



METAL MESH

We don't often hear the words "metal" and "fabric" together, but in the case of this fabulous fabric we will make an exception. Metal mesh is practical and beautiful and comes in a variety of patterns and colors and has applications as wide-ranging as your imagination. We are seeing it in high-end home décor, fashion and stunning jewelry. For interiors we like it as a room divider, shower curtain, or window treatments that combine the light, airy quality of netting with the industrial ruggedness of metal. It works for lamp shades and pillows, too.

It is low maintenance - just brush off the dust or wipe down with mild soap and water - fire resistant, conducts air, doesn't shrink or stretch, resists mildew and is reversible.

> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: cascadecoil.com, cascadecoil.com, cascadecoil.com, retaildesignblog.com, trendir.com

SPOT LIGHT ON A FAVORITE

Pedestals

It's nice when a loved one puts you on a pedestal, but as interior designers we prefer to use pedestals as a base for glass, ceramic, metal or wood sculptures and vessels. They help fill corners and are excellent in front of a window, especially one that does not have a great view. Pedestals add height and balance to a room, too. At home I have a clear acrylic pedestal I love because it doesn't detract from the piece of art on top. But you can find pedestals made from almost anything, including wood, metal and marble.



>from left photos courtesy of: hollyhunt.com, olystudio.com, perryluze.com, modernity.se, christopherguy.com

COMPLIMENTARY DESIGN PANEL DISCUSSION

Are you free for lunch and champagne on Wednesday, January 27? Please come to the open house and free panel discussion on Renovation Trends from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at 1010 Cherry St., Winnetka.

I will be joining Jeffry Harting, President of GTH Architects in Northbrook and Nate Robinson, Registered Landscape Architect at Chalet Landscape, Nursery and Garden Center in Wilmette for a lively exchange about the latest ideas for renovating your home. The panel will be moderated by EJ Silver, general manager of Studio41 Home Design Showrooms in Highland Park, Glenview and other locations. Lunch and bubbly will begin at 11:30, the discussion will start at 12:30. The event is hosted by Luxe Magazine and Linda Martin, a luxury broker for Coldwell Banker, who will be happy to answer any questions about the home. Please RSVP to TColette@LuxeMagazine.com. Hope to see you there!



EXCITING INVITATION

The details are hush-hush for now, but Sweet Peas Design is one of several studios invited to participate in the launch of an exciting, year-long event opening at the Christopher Guy Showroom in River North on June 23. We're hard at work on a project that is stretching our imaginations in a direction they haven't gone before, so we hope you'll plan to stop by for a look. Hats off to designers Loren Reid Seaman of LRS Interiors, Donna Hall of Donna Mondi Designs and Joey Leicht of Joey Leicht Design, who are part of the team, as well. Stay tuned for more details...we can't wait for the big reveal!

PLEASE VOTE FOR US!

We're in the race! No, not the 2016 Presidential campaign - we've been asked to participate in NS magazine's annual "Best of the North Shore 2016" competition, and we're asking you to take a moment to vote for us. It's easy - just click here <http://modernluxury.com/ns-best-of> to nominate Susan Brunstrum/Sweet Peas Design in the "Design Top 5" category, which has the designer option. The deadline expires at 11:59 PM on January 31. Votes may be submitted for one area each. NS is the leading luxury magazine for finding the best businesses, entertainment and services on Chicago's North Shore, from fine dining, nightlife, design and culture to beauty, cutting edge fashion and travel. Thanks so much!



ANOTHER HOUZZ AWARD

Big thanks to all of you who recommended us for a 2016 Best of Houzz "Design" award. This is our sixth award from Houzz, the uber-popular online community for interior design which gets 25 million unique users monthly. The "Design" award is the toughest to get, and we couldn't do it without your kind testimonials!

DESIGN WORKSHOP AT COOK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Planning a kitchen update? Please stop by Tuesday, March 1 for my workshop, "Inspired Ideas: Kitchens," from 6:30 to 7:30 PM at Cook Memorial Library, 413 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville. I will load you up with information on space planning, maximizing function, increasing storage, organization tips and of course, selecting a color palette, cabinets, plumbing and light fixtures, tile backsplash and countertops. There will be plenty of before-and-after floor plans and photos to motivate you!

A big thanks also to everyone who attended our recent workshop, "Inspired Ideas: Family Rooms," hosted by the GLMV Chamber of Commerce at Aspen Library in Vernon Hills. Senior designer Angela LaVista and I loved meeting everyone and sharing our ideas for updating the second most used room in a house. Can you guess the first? Of course, it is the kitchen! Hope to see you in March! Please register at <http://webres.cooklib.org/evanced/lib/eventcalendar.asp>. Advance the calendar to March and click on "Inspired Ideas: Kitchens" on March 1. A registration form will pop up.

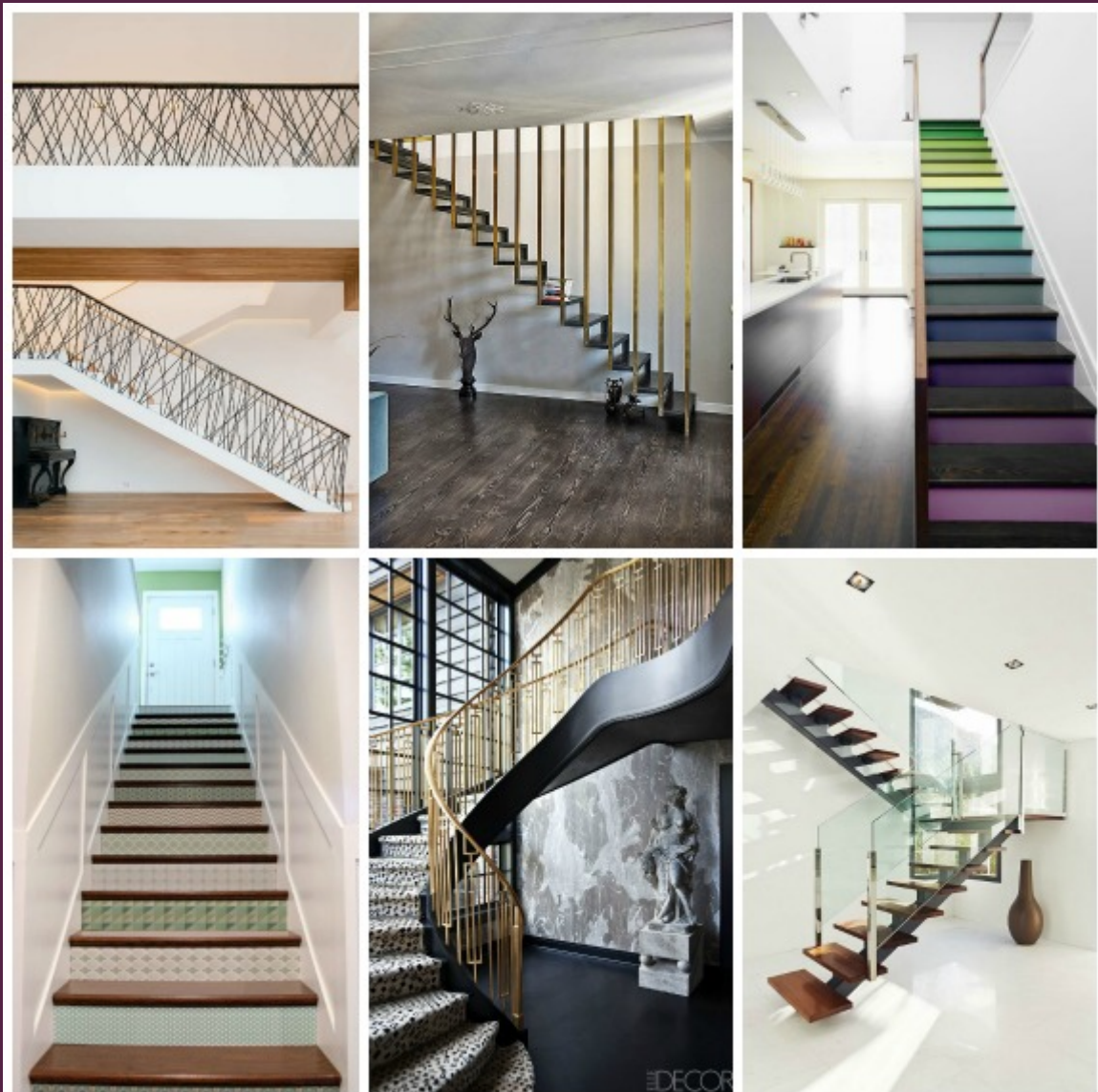
ASK SUSAN

Got a design dilemma? We're very excited to announce that we have launched a new feature called "Ask Susan." Anyone who is interested may submit two or three digital photos of a room you want to update or renovate and I'll choose one lucky winner for a mini-consultation via my blog. Send your photos and a short description of the room, what you want to accomplish and a little bit about your lifestyle to susan@sweetpeas-inspired.com. If you are chosen the results and photos will be announced in a blog, name and location withheld. Looking forward to hearing from you!

DESIGN TRUST IN BIG APPLE

Last month Susan spent several days in New York City at a meeting of The Design Trust Ltd., a think tank for a select group of designers nationwide who meet periodically to brainstorm about the business and creative sides of interior design. As a board member of the group, Susan serves on an advisory panel with design-related furnishings firms.

GET THE LOOK



Staircase Updates

Kitchens, baths and living rooms get a lot of attention, but staircases deserve some love too. At High Point Market last fall we discovered Mirth Studio, a firm that designs painted risers for staircases in bold or simple colors and patterns to apply to existing risers. Associate designer Lauren says: "They're a bit whimsical, funky and way cool, which is the perfect recipe for great design!"

You could also update by swapping out wood spindles for metal, or eliminating spindles and installing glass or acrylic panels instead. Or how about new newel posts?

You don't have to go that far to change the look of your stairway, however. Think about installing a new runner with a pretty binding along the edges, or a patterned runner. It doesn't have to be the same as your carpeting or other flooring, it just needs to be compatible.

If you're adventurous, consider installing a "floating" staircase. They're dramatic, though they can be a little scary if you have vertigo!

> upper left photos courtesy of: decorpuzzle.com, pietorusso.com, apartmenttherapy.com, mirthstudio.com, elledecor.com, deavita.com

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- > **Website:** www.sweetpeas-inspired.com
- > **Blog:** www.susanbrunstrum.com
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