

The art of creating home

A home that feels calm and nurturing



BY CHANTELE GRADY

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Introduction

There is something rather wonderful about entering a welcoming home. It has a way of calming and nurturing the soul. Of whispering the unique story and journey of those who reside within its walls. It gently invites you to relax into and bask in the comfort and love that it provides.

There is quite an art to creating a home that feels this way. And when we learn the art and care about our home it contributes positively to our wellbeing. Our home can help us feel happy and it can help us thrive.

What home looks like and how a home should feel means something different to all of us, however, what we all seem to share in common is that we long to have a home that helps us rest and recharge. One which allows us to express our true and authentic selves. Where we are free to create, to love, to laugh and play, in the company of those we love most. And when we are in the company of only ourselves.

While I've always cared about home, it became even more meaningful when my children entered my life. I hoped to create a home that enriched their lives. That allowed us all to flourish as a family. A home that feels calm and comforting, safe and secure, and generously opens its doors to those we love most. This desire also arose through sensitivity to my surrounding. I often feel overwhelmed when surrounded by mess and clutter, or amidst noise and chaos. It became really important that I create a space that helps me feel calm. I'm much happier as an individual, and as a wife and mother when I'm in harmony with my surrounding.

And as someone who has a deep appreciation of aesthetics, surrounding myself in what I see as beautiful can lift my mood and inspire me to create the way that I do. I genuinely believe that being in a calm and beautiful surrounding can contribute greatly to our happiness, no matter who we are.

“*Beauty is the soul-balm that rejuvenates and soothes.*”

- Jenn Granneman, founder of Introvert Dear

In the pages that follow I share with you my art of creating home. It comes from a background in styling, interior design, and a curiosity and passion for learning about what it means to live well in life. It also comes from someone who isn't wealthy. We are still renters and have financial struggles like many. But I believe that despite living in a purchased home or a rental, we can still make a home feel special.

I share with you how to not only create an aesthetically beautiful home, but one filled with warmth. A home with an atmosphere which feels inviting and nurturing. I hope that by the end of this book you will be inspired to create a calm and beautiful home yourself. A home that helps you thrive, and the lives of those that you welcome into it.



Home and happiness

Our physical surrounding can influence our state of mind. It can positively or negatively affect our wellbeing and how we go about our daily lives. When we live in a peaceful and orderly home it can reduce stress and tension. Which can be greatly beneficial for those with anxiety or who are highly sensitive. A tidy home can improve our focus and help us be more productive so that we can go about our everyday with ease.

On the other hand, when we live surrounded in clutter and mess it can cloud our mind and frustrate us. Untidiness and having too many choices available is distracting, making it difficult to focus. It can cause problems within relationships too, as we are more likely to argue when we feel irritated or when looking for items that have gone astray. We tend to lash out at others when we feel overwhelmed ourselves.

“The environments we inhabit - our living rooms, bedrooms, offices, backyards and gardens - are outer manifestations of our inner minds.

Make a commitment to ensure that your environment remains in line with your ideals.

Doing so will bring you happiness, because you will be in harmony with your environment, because the environment is in harmony with you.”

- Anthony Seldon, Beyond Happiness

Our home also provides privacy and freedom to express ourselves. It's a visual reflection of the person we are and what we care about. A space where we can be our true and authentic selves. When we surround ourselves in what we see as beautiful, it can enrich our lives and help us feel happy. Studies throughout time demonstrate this.

Semir Zeki is a British professor of neuroaesthetics. His main interest, the organization of the primate visual brain, led him to conduct a study based on the aesthetic appreciation of art. In the study, he presented people from all kinds of cultural, gender and age backgrounds to works of art and music. He found by looking at MRI images of his subject's brains, that when people look at something beautiful, a portion of their brain lights up. There is increased blood flow in that area and it stimulates the feel-good chemical dopamine in the brain. And when presented with something displeasing, it lights up a completely different part of the brain.

What we experience through our senses has an impact on our state of mind and on our emotions. Being thoughtful about what we choose to surround ourselves with daily can have a positive effect on our wellbeing. Our home can help us feel happy.

It benefits all of us to have a home that feels both calm and nurturing. To have a space that we can retreat to at the end of a busy day that provides comfort. Where we can practise self-care.



We can learn a lot from Denmark when it comes to aesthetics and quality of life. Consistently ranking highly on the World Happiness Report, Denmark is very much a design society, with many Danes sharing a deep appreciation of aesthetics. Many Danes welcome good design and put a great deal of care into creating a beautiful home.

“Children come to school and interact with quality architecture and furniture, and so from an early age they develop an understanding that functional yet beautiful design is essential to realising the good life.”

- Helen Russell, *The Year of Living Danishly*

Our home provides a space for quality connection. Within ourselves and with those we care about. Honest and authentic relationships are essential to our health and can potentially increase our longevity. When we feel good in our home we are more likely to share it with those we love and trust, and gather with them more often.

Like a work of art, our home has the potential to have depth and beauty. With thought and care, it can become an environment that enriches and nourishes our soul. That provides peace and respite from the noise of a busy world. A home filling the pages of a unique and beautiful story.





About the author

Chantelle is a wife and mother of two from Australia, with a background in design, interiors, styling, photography and writing. She is deeply passionate about wellbeing and the philosophy of aesthetics. Believing that our physical environment affects our state of mind. And that when we are in harmony with our surrounding it can help us feel calm and happy.

When Chantelle isn't writing she also works as a photographer. In her spare time she loves reading, documenting family life, sitting quietly by water, and gathering with her family and closest friends.

You can read more of her work on chantellegrady.com

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