

# Living with Intention

by Julie Kane



*Overwhelmed.  
Stuck.  
Stagnant...*

*These are the kinds of words that Twin Cities home consultant Ann Drew Yu often hears from her clients when she asks them to describe exactly how their homes make them feel.*

## *How to Create A Home That Reflects Who You Are.*

Oftentimes, clutter or color are the “tangibles” clients tend to want to focus on, but according to Yu, the roots of their discontent usually run deeper. “I believe that an intentional space is one that aligns with what you value,” says Yu, who has been working as a consultant and speaker on simplicity, balance and intentional living for several years.

“Space is a very personal issue. The disconnect for people often comes to light when they admit ‘my space doesn’t feel like me’. Something is off in their environment,” she continues. “I’m there to help clarify what that is and really help them identify what they are seeking.”

Yu’s two-hour home visits include a top to bottom walk through, the prospect of which is likely daunting for some when Yu makes a simple request at the time the appointment is set up: resist the urge to tidy up before she arrives.

“It’s hard to talk a lot of people into that,” says Yu, with a laugh. “But for me, it’s so helpful to consider the whole system of the house because everything is interrelated.” What Yu offers is a fresh perspective and a completely objective viewpoint, gathering her ideas by listening to clients as she walks with them through their home.

“The service I provide is really person-centered,” she explains. “As I start hearing those ‘feeling’ words in our conversation, it helps me better define some of the ways they can change their space to better align it with their personal vision of what home means.”

Yu is quick to point out that she is not an interior designer (“I don’t travel with color palettes”) or a home organizer, and isn’t there to offer clients suggestions on how they should drastically change or remodel their space. Rather, she typically addresses environmental topics like the arrangement of a room, lighting, color and how the energy flows in and out of the home.



“I would say that one of the more common themes in homes, no matter what the size, is the absence of boundaries,” explains Yu, who is also certified in feng shui. “There aren’t zones created within the home to provide different experiences: a place for conversation, a place for media, a quiet place for reading, a place for boisterous play.”

So when clients tell Yu they feel like “the world is closing in”, she explains to them that by re-shaping their home for these individual functions, they will start feeling differently about the space. “When you dedicate rooms to different purposes, which can be relatively easy to do, the environment automatically changes,” she says.

Rather than offering redecorating advice, Yu says often all that is needed are suggestions on how to refresh ▶

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a space, thereby refreshing the way life is lived there. One of the best places to start is at the front door. “When you drive into your driveway, the first emotional connection you make with your home is the front door,” she explains. “So love it up. Put potted plants and flowers around it, hang a beautiful wreath. You want it to reflect who you are as a person so it should stand out in some way.”

Yu says her clientele runs the gamut from first-time homeowners to empty nesters. “The common thread is basically that they are ready to make some kind of change and I am part of that process,” she says.

Maureen Brackey was on the verge of a major remodel in her family’s Mendota Heights home when she called Yu for a consultation. “I wanted Ann to make sure I was catching everything,” says Brackey, the mother of four boys. “And what she did was bring sharper focus and a better perspective to what I was trying to do.”

Brackey even acquiesced to Yu’s “don’t clean your house” suggestion and is glad she did. “Ann is seriously the most nonjudgmental person and she just ‘gets’ it,” Brackey says. “The experience was actually humbling and liberating at the same time because her assessments were so right on.”

Prior to Yu’s visit and the subsequent remodel (some of which changed as a result of Yu’s suggestions), Brackey admits, “I didn’t totally love this house. I just felt like I wasn’t settled in it, but I didn’t really know why.” With Yu’s help, Brackey recognized certain things that weren’t working for her. “She offered such great suggestions that didn’t cost a lot of money,” Brackey adds. “It was just all about that fresh vision.”

At the end of a session, Yu provides clients with a written assessment and concrete suggestions regarding all the topics discussed during her visit. “When I leave, I explain that the time frame to implement any or all of the ideas is entirely in their hands,” she says. “The feedback I receive from clients suggests that the 48 hours after the session are the most productive in terms of creating change. And even in that short amount of time, they are already noticing how much better they feel about their space.”

“I believe home should be a retreat, a haven, a place that feels light and optimistic,” Yu continues. “It’s important to love where you live and the truth is that every space can be improved. Changing your space can truly change your life.”

## Do You Have An Intentional Home?

- Every house tells a story. What story is your home telling?
- What feeling words would you like your home to elicit? Serene, calm, inspired?
- Is your home meeting the needs of all your family members?
- Is your home growing as you grow as a person?
- Do you enjoy your home?
- Is your home a source of energy and rejuvenation or is it an energy drainer?

## More Tips From Ann Drew Yu on How to Refresh Your Space:

Freshen up for spring and summer by rolling up rugs and enjoying your hardwood floors.

Swap out heavy throws and pillows – bring in colors and styles for the season that will produce lightness and airiness.

Declutter by developing action piles and file away items not needed right away. Less clutter creates improved energy flow.

*For more information on Ann Drew Yu or to sign up for her newsletter, visit her website at [www.anndrewyu.com](http://www.anndrewyu.com). or call 952-929-6290.*