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5 INTERIOR DESIGNERS SHARE THEIR UNIQUE PATHS TO SUCCESS

These five designers are introducing personal angles to their craft as a way to stay authentic to what they love while differentiating their business models.

Kimberley Wray

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For interior designers, the challenge can be what's coming next, what niche needs filling, where do we find growth opportunities, and how do we work together in our industries to raise everyone up? From focusing on a sense of home as a sanctuary to finding business opportunities that help other interior designers grow their businesses, these five designers are introducing personal angles to their craft as a way to stay authentic to what they love while differentiating their business models.

Finding Sanctuary



Lisa Kahn

Lisa Kahn is calling from an airport, on the next leg of a journey following a week-long retreat at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, where she was focused on the “interplay between consciousness and our spaces, the exact intersection between the human spirit and the built environment.

“Interior design is evolving,” says the award-winning designer headquartered in Naples, FL, who has carved her stylistic niche in the residential decorating world as a purveyor of calm. Her popular blog, findingsanctuary.com, is just one of the business endeavors that has grown out of her experiences as a working interior designer and the mother of a special needs child. “As an interior designer, when you are facing tough times and you really don’t know what to do in your own dark night of the soul, you turn to your space,” she says. “And it really was through those hard personal days that I came to really understand that our spaces have an unbelievably profound effect on our mental health, our physical health, our emotional health and our spiritual health, and I discovered that there is a wonderful opportunity there for designers to tap into that, and really use their power for the good of all.”



Kahn has been developing an e-commerce site where she will sell both curated products and those she has designed and produced. She has a speaking series and is also currently at work on a book and expects to launch Sanctuary Consulting before long. “My firm is going to turn 20 in 2020, and I’m very excited about that thanks to my growing understanding that Sanctuary is so much more at this point than just a design style or a design philosophy,” she says. “It really is a life philosophy and I find myself applying it to all these other areas of my life, from the way that I treat money to the way I treat my body, my friends and my relationships. It’s really interesting to see how this deep, ever-unfolding understanding that I have is really affecting so many different parts of my life in such a positive, marvelous and wonderful way.”

What can others take from this? “We really have an awesome responsibility and opportunity,” Kahn says. “We have always known that we can really affect people’s quality of life, but I don’t know that we’ve really capitalized on that, that we understand how profound that can be, how we can really help people transform their lives through their spaces. That is an enormous statement, but I mean it.”