

# **Acknowledgments**

To Terry and Jack, and to Tom and Linda. To Kelly, Carolyn, Emily, and most especially Damian. For showing me how to make a house a home, for teaching me to think positively, for helping me listen to my intuition, and for encouraging me to let the sparkle show. Thank you.

# Contents

Introduction .....	7
How to Use This Book .....	14
Nest vs. Castle: When Your Spouse Just Doesn't Get It .....	15
The Happy Starts at Home Program .....	17
Chapter 1. Happy Starts with You: Defining Your Perfect Place .....	18
Chapter 2. Happy and Financially Fit: Establishing an Abundant Life .....	39
Chapter 3. Happy and Healthy: Living a Fit and Energetic Lifestyle .....	57
Chapter 4. Happy and Well-Rested: Renewing through Sound Sleep .....	71
Chapter 5. Happy and in Love: Embracing Romance and Companionship .....	82
Chapter 6. Happy with Friends: Creating Spaces for Gathering .....	96
Chapter 7. Happy with Family: Building a Family Identity .....	106
Chapter 8. Happy with the Kids: Raising Confident, Competent Children .....	117
Chapter 9. Happy and Single: Starting Again after Divorce or Widowhood .....	126
Chapter 10. Happy and Empty-Nested: Discovering Opportunities .....	136
Chapter 11. Happy and Creative: Living Playfully at Any Age .....	142
Chapter 12. Happy and Achieving: Advancing Your Career and Education .....	154
Chapter 13. Happy in Your Spiritual Home: Living Your Visible Values .....	168
Chapter 14. Happy with Yourself: Enjoying Strong Self-Worth .....	179
Conclusion .....	195
Selected Bibliography .....	207
About the Author .....	209

**FOLLOW THE ADVICE IN THIS BOOK AND YOU CAN ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING:**

- Understand the impact of your space on your life.
- See your home with new eyes.
- Connect your financial, emotional, and physical health to your space.
- Be inspired to let go of what's keeping you from your best life.
- Know how to spend money more wisely on your home.
- Move on from past relationships.
- Take better care of yourself.
- Know what changes you could make to feel prouder of your home.
- Know what changes to make to get your home ready for guests and friends.
- Feel lighter and find it easier to meet weight goals.
- Be more successful in your career ventures.

Where and how you live affects your whole life: your success, your happiness, your health, and your well-being. The place you call home can't help but affect your life. It either launches you forward, vital and full of life, or it holds you back, stagnant. Your exterior life—home, office, even your physical health and appearance—is a manifestation of your internal, emotional life. If you feel you are *less*, if you feel you are *unworthy*, then you'll tend to neglect your home, health, and social life. If the environment around you reinforces those messages of unworthiness, it's easy to spiral deeper into neglect and despair. On the other hand, when you are in a well-tended environment, you take better care of yourself. Your home can help you feel and live more happily. If you do the exercises in this book, you will see change in your life. Really.

**I AM GLAD YOU ARE HERE.**

If you picked up this book, you probably have an awareness that your home shapes who you are, and that changing your home really can change your life. By the time you are done reading this book, you'll recognize areas where your home could be supporting you better and identify specific areas to make some of those changes. If you are ready for a change, let's get started.

Review your list. Do any themes emerge? Did you buy stuff that you loved at the time but now it makes you feel guilty? Do you have stuff that someone else likes but it only makes you feel frustrated? There is no judgment here, just an opportunity for you to become more aware of your belongings.

**HSAH ASSESSMENT PART 2: EMOTIONAL SCAVENGER HUNT**

Now we are going to do this in reverse, rather like a scavenger hunt. First, list five feelings that you *want* to get from your home (like warmth, hope, and acceptance) and five feelings you do *not* want from your home (like pain, guilt, and shame).

Take the list and find five objects that evoke each of the positive feelings. For each item, identify the good feeling and who brought that item into your home.

Next, find five objects that elicit each of the negative emotions. For each item, identify who brought that item into your home and ask yourself why you keep that item in your life.

Good feeling	Item	Who bought/chose it	Last enjoyed
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Bad feeling	Item	Who bought/chose it	Why I keep it
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

With your list in hand, dig a little more deeply. First, from the good-feelings list, where did most of those items come from? Do you use them? Do you keep them where you can see them, or are they hidden by other stuff?

Take a moment to journal your thoughts:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**At this time in my life:**

Money is \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gifts I get are \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gifts I give are \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I buy important things \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I buy fun things \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I spend \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 The things in my home are \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**In the future in which I want to live:**

Money will be \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gifts I get will be \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gifts I give will be \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I'll buy important things \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I'll buy fun things \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 I'll be able to spend \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 The things in my home will be \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 9. Taking Action**

Now that you've completed Activity 7 and Activity 8, what have you discovered about your relationship with money and the ways your home affects it? What three things would you like to change? What resources do you need to make those changes? By what date could the changes happen? What is the very first small, tangible step you can take to make progress today?

**A change:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date this will happen by (both a date I'd like and that is achievable): \_\_\_\_\_

Resources I need: \_\_\_\_\_

A step I can take today: \_\_\_\_\_

**A change:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date this will happen by (both a date I'd like and that is achievable): \_\_\_\_\_

Resources I need: \_\_\_\_\_

A step I can take today: \_\_\_\_\_

**A change:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date this will happen by (both a date I'd like and that is achievable): \_\_\_\_\_

Resources I need: \_\_\_\_\_

A step I can take today: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 21. Making Friends**

Let's assess your social life. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, and your preferences may differ from others in your family. Maybe you draw energy from quiet moments relaxing on your own. Perhaps you love a good party, but only occasionally. A "good" social life might involve hundreds of people, or just a few close friends. The only cue to follow is your personal contentment level. But if you feel you are lacking in the social and friendship departments, take that as a sign to create change and evaluate how your home can help. If you are content and feel fulfilled in your relationships, don't feel you "should" change anything!

**Complete the following phrases:**

- The last time I had friends over was \_\_\_\_\_ and it made me feel \_\_\_\_\_
- The last time I apologized to someone for the state of my home was \_\_\_\_\_ and it was because \_\_\_\_\_
- If friends were to drop by right now, I would feel \_\_\_\_\_
- If my boss were to drop by right now I would feel \_\_\_\_\_

Based on your answers, take a moment to journal on the status of your social life and changes you would like to see in it:

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Activity 22. Taking Action**

Now that you've read this chapter, what three changes would you like to make in your friendships and social life? What resources do you need to make those changes occur? By what date could those changes happen? What small, tangible step can you take to make progress today?

**A change:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date this will happen by (both a date I'd like and that is achievable): \_\_\_\_\_

Resources I need: \_\_\_\_\_

A step I can take today: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter 7.

## Happy with Family: Building a Family Identity

***“In every conceivable manner, the family  
is link to our past, bridge to our future.”***

**—Alex Haley**

**OUR HOMES, OUR *NESTS*, ARE PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIONS** of our family identities. What we choose to have around us says who we are, or at least how we wish to be perceived. From the American flag and basketball hoop out front, to the chicken coop and raised garden out back, our homes both *tell* the story of our families and *reinforce* that story.

The design and decoration of your home doesn't just reflect your family narrative, it also profoundly impacts your family life. What you have, or do not have, in your home affects how you play and work together. How you set up your furniture affects where and how you eat as a family, how you spend your time together as a family, and how you identify both as part of, and independently from, your family. What I mean is that the things in your home not only result from who you are, but also affect who you will become. That means you control the direction of your story. You are not only living it; you are writing it.



---

**The things you keep in your home  
not only represent who you are, they  
also affect who you will become.**

---

# About the Author

Certified design psychology coach and interior designer Rebecca West helps create spaces that support, rather than sabotage, the people who live in them. She believes a beautiful home is not about the sofa or what's on trend, it's about what works for your family and fits your lifestyle. It's about having a home that makes you happy.

After living the nomadic life of a military child, Rebecca has created her own happy home in the Pacific Northwest, where the natural environment and unfussy Seattle lifestyle influence her clean, fresh, livable designs.

The popular designer, blogger, and speaker showcases her before-and-after photos at [happystartsathome.com](http://happystartsathome.com) and invites readers to share their home transformation stories at [design@rebeccawestinteriors.com](mailto:design@rebeccawestinteriors.com).