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INTERIOR DESIGN NEWSLETTER

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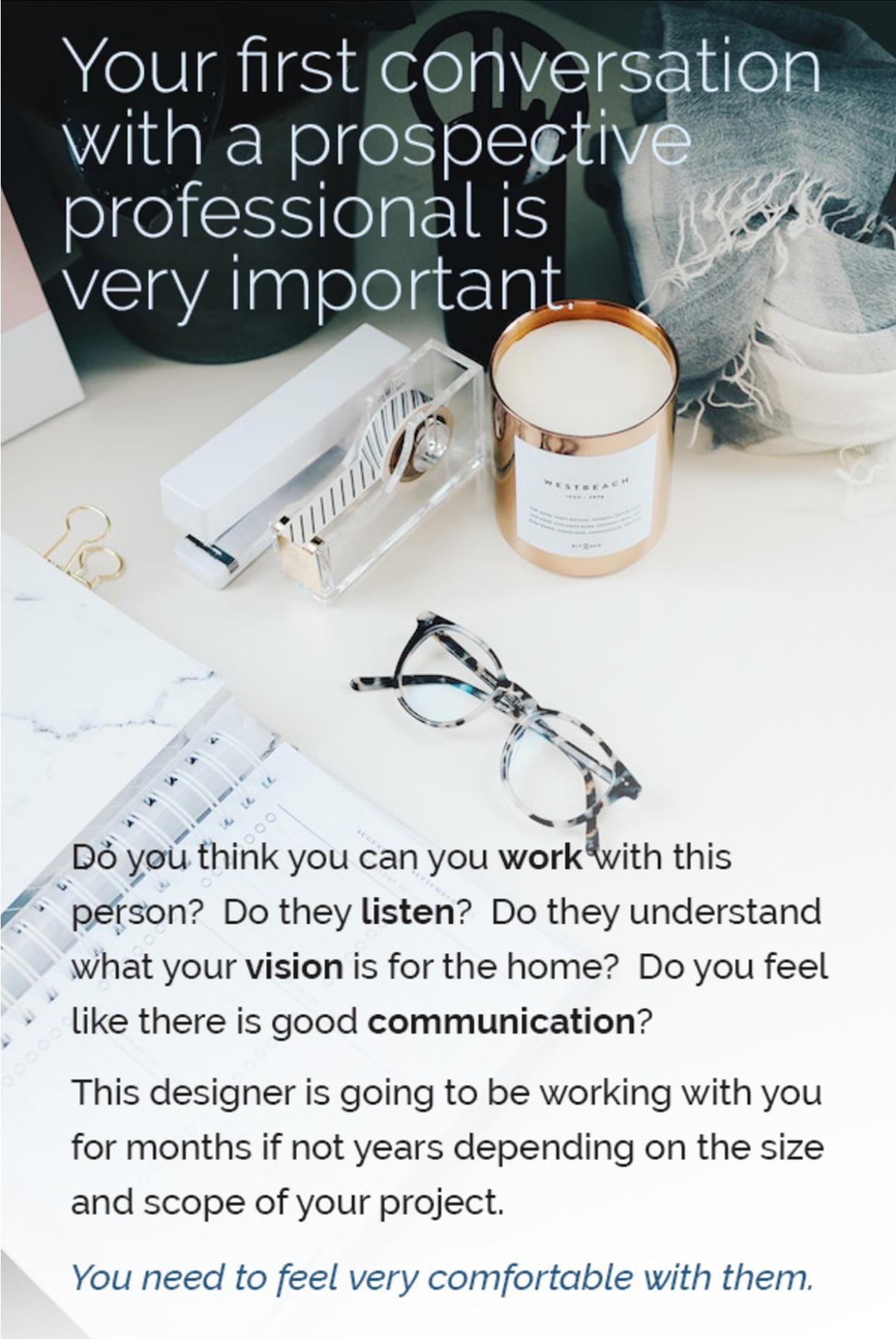


Asking the right questions can make or break the flow and outcome of a project, in any profession.

This month, I would like to address some of those questions and encourage you to organize your thoughts and stimulate ideas behind the questions you should keep in mind when taking the step to hire a professional for your interior or exterior upgrade.

## The first things a Designer wants to know:

- Has the potential client ever worked with a Designer before?
- This will tell us if they are familiar with the design and construction processes, terms, pricing, timing, etc.
- What would you like to invest in your home? There is ALWAYS a number.
- The timeframe. Are there any deadlines you need to meet for your project?
- Have you been in the market place and looked at materials and prices?
- Have you collected ideas? It helps if you have done some homework. Designers will quickly understand what style you are comfortable with.

A top-down view of a desk with various items: a laptop, a white stapler, a clear stapler, a gold candle in a white jar labeled 'WESTBEACH', a pair of glasses, a gold paperclip, and a stack of papers. The background is dark, and the foreground is light.

Your first conversation  
with a prospective  
professional is  
very important.

Do you think you can you **work** with this person? Do they **listen**? Do they understand what your **vision** is for the home? Do you feel like there is good **communication**?

This designer is going to be working with you for months if not years depending on the size and scope of your project.

*You need to feel very comfortable with them.*

PHOTO BY [STIL ON UNSPLASH](#)

Things you will want to consider and ask:

Many designers specialize and have their own aesthetic so you will want to figure out what your **design style** is first or, at least what you tend to gravitate towards. Look at shelter magazines or online design sites and collect ideas. Then, take a look at their portfolio and see if their style is compatible with yours.

When creating your budget, ask and factor in the **Designer's fee** upfront, and ask how the fees work. Designers have multiple ways of charging fees for a project depending on size and scope. One design fee does not fit all projects so ask what would be best for your project.

Before you get **bids**, decide on what pieces you will be keeping, replacing and/or refurbishing. This is where your materials and furnishings' budget begins to take shape and where your research is most helpful. The information you gather will also help you make those decisions. Once you factor those things in, you should get a complete estimate. If your designer is already onboard, they can help you create a tight budget.

Again, ask them to **put in writing** exactly what you are getting for their services. Every designer should have a contract that details exactly what the project scope entails and the services that designer will provide. Some designers are full-service and others offer limited services.

It is not unusual to be confused about how to **compare designer pricing**. Designers are not 'apples to apples' pricing. The wide range of services a designer provides can be difficult to quantify and shouldn't be expected to be priced as a "commodity." You are purchasing not only their years of expertise and experience but their unique style and vision. No two are identical.

*Here is a short list of what may or not be included.*

## SOME OF THESE ARE OFFERED AS ADDITIONAL FEE SERVICES WITHIN THE CONTRACT

- Photography and Measurement of Spaces
- Floor Plans
- Renderings
- In-Home Consultations
- Meeting with Contractors
- Shopping Trips with Clients
- Handling Delivery and Installations
- Housing All Furniture Until the Final Install
- Overseeing of Final Installation
- Styling of Rooms with Recommended Accessories for Additional Purchase
- Purchasing of materials and furnishings

Other variables also drive time and price.

What level of furnishings and materials would you like? You can't expect to build a Ferrari on a Toyota budget. Stone costs more than porcelain, an eight-way hand tied sofa will cost more than a mass manufactured one. There are differences in quality.

Listen to your designer, this person deals in these materials 24/7 and knows why some are better and some are not depending on the needs of your project.

- Do you want to shop with your designer?
- Do you want to leave for Europe and return when everything is 100% complete down to the last vase?



PHOTO BY [SARAH DORWEILER](#) ON [UNSPLASH](#)

Don't do business without a contract.

It is in no one's best interest and, a **contract** will alleviate potential misunderstandings.

Ask for referrals and read the testimonials on their website.

If you have **construction**, know that there are always variables that are unforeseen. No one knows what is behind a wall until it is opened up. There could be leaky pipes, HVAC that must be re-routed. So it is a good idea to have an additional 15% on top of the budget for potential variables.

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## What is the timeframe?

Tight **deadlines** require more people on the project and this affects all aspects of the job. From purchasing to the production of custom pieces. You may need to break up the project and this is when that decision and the advice of an expert is advantageous. You can do the project in phases because there may be a lot of construction or there are budget constraints. Talk to your designer up front to create a strategy.

Remember, you and your designer are going to spend a lot of time together.

Have the discussions upfront and not while the kids are running all around the house and the baby is crying. Plan out some uninterrupted time to conduct your interview. This is your life, your hard-earned money, and where you will create memories.

Your designer understands that and wants to give you the home you have always been dreaming about.

Best Regards,

Lauren



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If you have had this newsletter forwarded to you and would like a regular copy, click below to sign up, we are happy to have you as our new guest. And, if you would like my sage design advice and style tips more often than once a month, you can follow my blog, [Lauren's Style Library](#). It is my pleasure to share with you.

*Best of Houzz - 3 years in a row!*



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