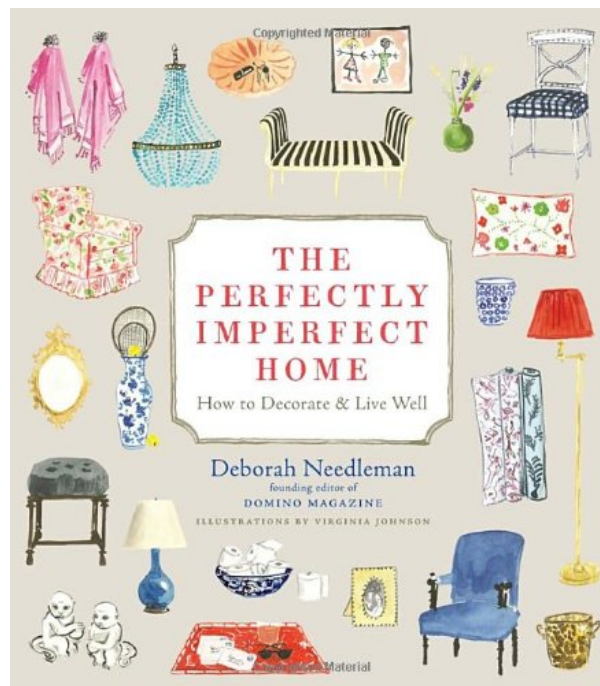
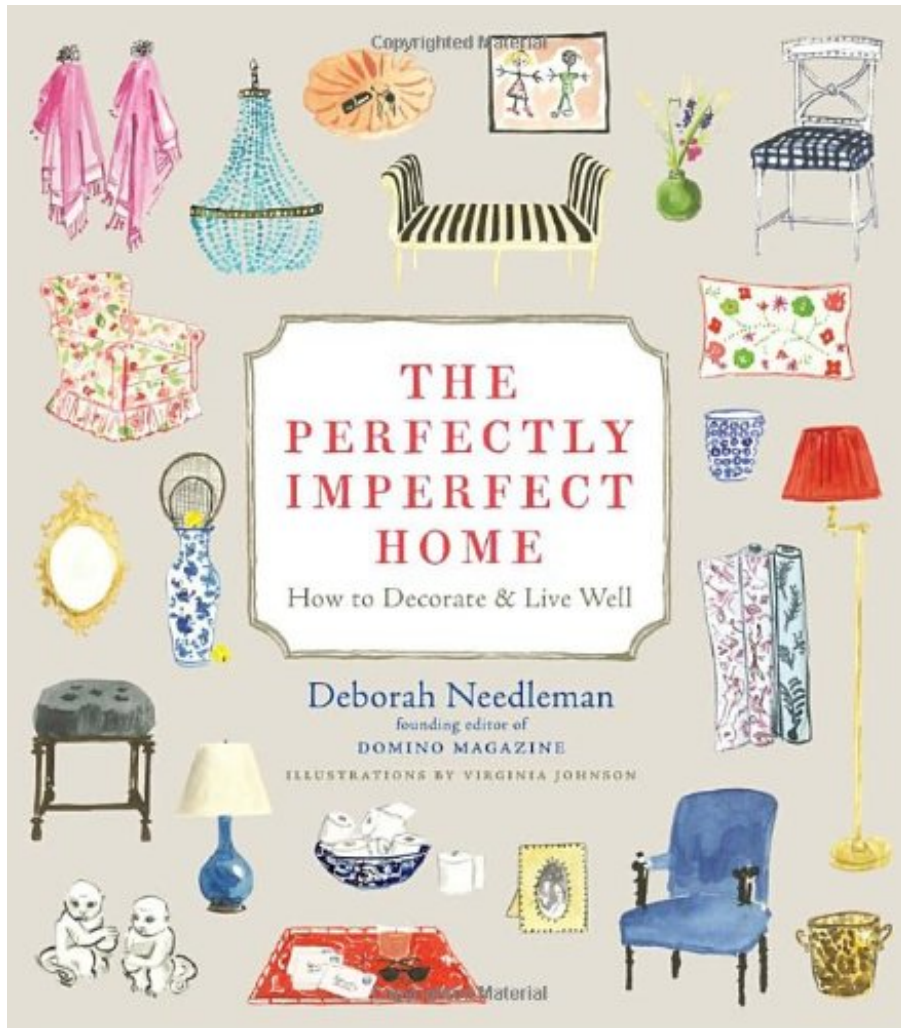


THE PERFECTLY IMPERFECT HOME: HOW TO DECORATE AND LIVE WELL BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN



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Review

Deborah Needleman is a terrific editor--of words, and now, of rooms and living spaces. In her very readable book, *The Perfectly Imperfect Home*, the author offers her advice and expertise on a very important subject--how to make your house your home. She includes succinct advice from the great decorators, sage commentary on what to keep and what to throw away, and valuable rules for what to add to a room to make it exactly right--for you and your family. -Martha Stewart

I used to think that my taste was so irredeemable and so rooted in some kind of male, post-college, National Football League time warp--I own a green velour couch!--that no one, not even Deborah Needleman, could help me. I was wrong. -Malcolm Gladwell

Beautiful in a similar way is Deborah Needleman's *PERFECTLY IMPERFECT HOME: HOW TO DECORATE & LIVE WELL* (Clarkson Potter, \$30), with Kalman-like illustrations by Virginia Johnson. Ms. Needleman, the editor in chief of *WSJ Magazine* and the founding editor of *Domino* magazine, has a terrific eye and a dry sense of humor. This is a decorating book for how we live today, and it's for the 99 percent as well as for the swells. Chapter titles include: "Places for Chatting," "Cozifications," "A Bit of Quirk" and "Spots for Books, Drinks, & Feet." This has the feel of a minor classic, and aren't the minor classics so often better than the major ones? -Dwight Garner, *New York Times Holiday Gift Guide*

About the Author

Deborah Needleman is the Internationally known editor-in-chief and creative mastermind behind *Domino* magazine - a cultural touchstone that amassed more than a million subscribers in just four years. Now the editor-in-chief of *WSJ Magazine*, Deborah is a widely published expert on interior design, style, and gardening. Virginia Johnson's illustrations have appeared in books by Kate Spade and on textiles carried in stores such as Liberty, Barneys in New York and Net-a-Porter.

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THE PERFECTLY IMPERFECT HOME: HOW TO DECORATE AND LIVE WELL BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN PDF

Style is a luxury, and luxury is simply what makes you happy.

Over the years, founding editor in chief of domino magazine Deborah Needleman has seen all kinds of rooms, with all kinds of furnishings. Her conclusion: It's not hard to create a relaxed, stylish, and comfortable home. Just a few well-considered items can completely change the feel of your space, and The Perfectly Imperfect Home reveals them all.

Ranging from classics such as "A Really Good Sofa" and "Pretty Table Settings" to unusual surprises like "A Bit of Quirk" and "Cozifications," the essential elements of style are treated in witty and wonderfully useful little essays. You'll learn what to look for, whether you are at a flea market or a fancy boutique—or just mining what you already own.

Celebrated artist Virginia Johnson's original watercolor illustrations bring the items and the inspiring rooms of world-famous tastemakers to vibrant life. Styling tips and simple how-tos show you techniques to put it all together to create, say, a beautifully made bed (the fast way and the fancy way), an inviting reading nook, or an effortlessly chic display of pictures.

According to Deborah, the point of decorating is to create the background for the best life you can have, with all its joys and imperfections.

This book will show you how.

Deborah Needleman is the editor in chief of WSJ. Magazine and creator of the Off Duty section of The Wall Street Journal. She was the founding editor in chief of domino magazine and coauthor of domino: the book of decorating.

Virginia Johnson's illustrations have appeared in books by Kate Spade and on textiles carried in more than one hundred stores, including Barneys, Liberty of London, and Net-A-Porter.

perfectlyimperfect.com

- Sales Rank: #66844 in Books
- Brand: Needleman, Deborah/ Johnson, Virginia (ILT)
- Published on: 2011-11-01
- Released on: 2011-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.33" h x 1.18" w x 8.33" l, 2.35 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 256 pages

Review

Deborah Needleman is a terrific editor--of words, and now, of rooms and living spaces. In her very readable book, *The Perfectly Imperfect Home*, the author offers her advice and expertise on a very important subject--how to make your house your home. She includes succinct advice from the great decorators, sage commentary on what to keep and what to throw away, and valuable rules for what to add to a room to make it exactly right--for you and your family. -Martha Stewart

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Most helpful customer reviews

73 of 74 people found the following review helpful.

Read it cover to cover

By A. Holmes

I purchased this book after listening to an interview with Needleman on a podcast I subscribe to. I watch a lot of HGTV and DIY, but beyond that I am very new to the consumption of interior design products, and every magazine I've bought on the subject only served to depress me about the lack of money and skill I have to reproduce the results in the photos.

Needleman's book did not inspire the same defeatism; in fact, it has energized me to redecorate my home on my own budget and to my personal taste.

Pros:

- Needleman's writing and tone is accessible and interesting. She was just enough authority and technical terms to make me feel that I was in the hands of an expert and just enough joking and asides to keep the material from being dry.
- Love the water color paintings. Most magazines give you snapshots of someone's perfectly designed house, which actually limits your ability to imagine how you'd recreate the look or modify it for your own home. The water color somehow subverted that and was just beautiful enough to be inspiring.

Cons:

- No chapter on home office

- The kitchen chapter could be more substantial (most of it focused on the dining area)
- In terms of class consciousness, I couldn't help but be regularly reminded of my staunch middle-classness at times, especially when being told that a certain candle from Italy is really the only candle worth having. Use of French was at times a bit pretentious.

Overall:

I read this book cover to cover, and plan to re-read it as I redecorate my own home this spring.

85 of 90 people found the following review helpful.

Really Nice

By Dan Herman

The Perfectly Imperfect Home: How to Decorate and Live Well by Deborah Needleman is a terrific resource for home decorators. Needleman writes that the point of decorating is to "create the background for the best life you can live." As a designer myself, I fully agree with this sentiment.

This book is the opposite of what a staged home would be like...(staging is when one creates a home to appeal to all and depersonalizes it.)

According to Needleman, one does not decorate simply to have a home look good...one decorates to feel comfortable, to fit ones lifestyle--functionality, and to feel good in. "Decorating improves ones life!" She claims.

The reader is asked to decide what you want your home to do--what functions should it serve? Next, how does your home make you feel? With this information, you are guided in furniture and styling to make your home work best for you.

The goal is to make your home personal and comfortable and highly functional. she writes: "Luxury is simply what makes you happy."

The remainder of the book is divided into sections with many tips on how to make a functional, personal and comfortable home. Within each of the following chapters, these are discussed:

- * Lighting
- * The entry way
- * Areas for conversation
- * "A bit of quirk"--personalizing your space to reflect you
- * "Spots for books, drinks, and feet"
- * "Cozifications"
- * Bedroom
- * Bathroom
- * "Glamifications"--wallpaper, objects
- * "Dinners with friends"--making entertaining special with pretty objects and functional with a well stocked pantry
- * Personal stuff
- * Smells--adding flowers, scented things
- * History--adding antiques, crafts

Altogether, I highly recommend this book. Another book I recommend to my clients and friends is

HARMONIOUS ENVIRONMENT: BEAUTIFY, DETOXIFY & ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE, YOUR HOME & YOUR PLANET for more great tips on how to decorate your home for living well.

73 of 78 people found the following review helpful.

Depressingly perfectionist

By Sophie C. Sensat

From the title, I was expecting this book to be a refreshing look at the obsession with perfection that so many of us have toward our homes, and a reminder that no, we don't have to be perfect all the time, and neither do our living spaces. Maybe with some awareness that not everyone has the time or money to make their homes look fantastic, and some basic advice for making things look good without spending all your time and energy on decorating.

Sadly, it seems to be filled with just as much this-is-what-you-MUST-do advice as other home decorating books. A few pages in, I was already overwhelmed with rules and extremely specific "advice" I know I'll never be able to afford to follow. I should be symmetrical, but not TOO symmetrical. I should fill my home with beautiful things, but also add "a bit of ugly." I need Egyptian cotton sheets that were made in Italy, and if I'm unlucky enough not to have my own "in-house laundress," I can "treat" myself to getting them professionally washed and ironed. Ironed! Life is far too short to waste time ironing sheets.

It's pretty obvious that this, like so many other decorating books, is written for people with much more money than I will probably ever have. Did you know that ottomans are "a personal matter between me and my upholsterer"? I can't even imagine saying the words "my upholsterer" with no sense of irony. I suppose the words "founding editor of Domino magazine" on the cover should have tipped me off.

The watercolor illustrations by Virginia Johnson are gorgeous, and I like that they're drawn and painted rather than photographed. It makes this book unique, and also lets your imagination fill in the details rather than thinking "okay, I have to have THIS chair and THIS wallpaper," etc.

And to be fair, I'm sure my home would look beautiful if I followed the advice in this book. But for that to happen, I'd have to be able to afford to move out of my tiny apartment and buy furniture that didn't all come from Craigslist.

I'm sure people can find some great nuggets of advice in this book that will work for them. Meanwhile, I'll keep searching for a decorating book that doesn't require a six-figure salary and a personal upholsterer.

See all 110 customer reviews...

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