



# Kellie Burke: 5 Things You Can Do To Help Your Living Space Spark More Joy

An Interview With Candice Georgiadis



Embrace your personal preferences. If you love your crystal collection, don't shove it in a cabinet; make it a focal point and a lovely scented candle to set the mood. If you like cars, decorate your garage, if you want a spa, transform your bath into an oasis.

**As** part of my series on the “5 Things You Can Do To Help Your Living Space Spark More Joy”, I had the pleasure of interviewing Kellie Burke of Kellie Burke Interiors.

*Kellie Burke Interiors — Award-winning design firm Kellie Burke Interiors specializes in creating livably luxurious interiors for high-end clientele around the globe. A lifelong passion for travel, creature comforts and unexpectedly lavish details inspires the team to infuse boutique hotel worthy amenities into each project — transforming clients’ private homes into comfortable, chic retreats. Clients seek out Kellie’s team for their lavish, glamorous designs and daring aesthetic. Kellie Burke Interiors offers a range of design services for commercial and residential clientele.*

**Thank you so much for doing this with us! Before we dig in, our readers would like to get to know you a bit more. Can you tell us a bit about your “backstory”? What led you to this particular career path?**

**D**esign and business are in my bones—I’m the daughter of a home builder and renovator, with three brothers involved in the family business. I have fond memories of traveling with my father to his work appointments and watching him interact with clients of all kinds. I was drawn to his work of course, but more so to the possibilities that came with the process.

Growing up, I lived in over twenty homes compliments of my parents renovation gene and I became more interested in the whole process, from renovation to actual design. Their style was so distinct, I guess you could say it was the look of luxury on a beer budget. I remember the 70’s antique mirrored wall in our sunken living room like it was yesterday. There was always music, woodsy cologne in the air, perfectly dimmed lights, expertly placed design details and always lots of dancing.

It was inevitable that as I grew up and went to others homes I'd wonder, why don't they have cool stuff, why are the lights on so bright and how nothing seemed in order. I would help my friends move their bedrooms around, paint murals on their walls and decorate their living rooms.

**Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you started this career?**

Everyday this career brings a new set of interesting stories. No project is the same, it's ever changing with different personalities, different budgets, different levels of transformation and truly that's one of the best parts of it!

Recently during Covid was we were designing remotely for a client who happens to be my cousin, Brooke Burke. We sent a custom chandelier from France directly to her home intended for her two-story great room off her kitchen. Brooke was traveling the day it arrived but there was a crew on site working on other projects so no problem — the builder on site receives the piece and of course, hands off the fixture to the electrician to hang. I guess some details were lost in translation because Brooke arrived home to find a double tiered 8' x 8' diameter chandelier hanging in her primary bathroom, sitting 1' off the floor and taking up the entire room! He spent the entire day installing it with his crew without a single thought that this may look wrong. We were all dying with laughter after seeing this, which gave us a funny moment we always look back on.

**3. Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?**

You make a lot of mistakes when first starting out but as my art teacher once taught me, "It's just paper, turn it upside down, splatter paint on it and start over. You'll be amazed that it will end up being your best piece."

I'd say the silliest mistake I've made is forgetting to measure the front door before ordering a sofa during the oversized furniture craze. Lesson learned after we needed a crane and a carpenter to get the sofa through the door. You quickly learn that a backup plan is always a good idea in the interior design business.

**What are some of the most interesting or exciting projects you are working on now? How do you think that might help people?**

My favorite projects are those that allow us to begin at the architectural phase. There is something magical about being involved from the beginning and it allows for very thoughtful design decisions because you're working side-by-side with the architect and both parties are able to understand each other's work.

When a client has a very specific vision like a French chateau or a home where the architecture speaks for itself like a Tudor home, these are always fun to work on. Recently, we worked on a French chateau design where the client requested pops of modernism. We looked at the project like a true assignment, studying the details and even travelling to the region to develop our design. I worked side by side with the architect to develop this home like it was my thesis in design.

One thing I'm super keen on for each client is interpreting what they like design-wise and how that applies to their actual everyday life. It's a complete deep dive with each client to understand who they are and what they want to feel in the space. These conversations ultimately inform our suggestions for everything from the layout, the finishes and the flow of the space. I like to imagine the reason that my client will be in that room, what they will be doing, and even how they will dress. Then I put myself in the client's shoes and say to myself, "what will it feel like with my feet up on this table, where will my coffee go...how will I clean the coffee if I were to spill it?" Real life situations — this is crucial to understanding the client and ensuring they feel comfortable in their space. If they feel something when they walk in then I've done a great job.

**Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?**

I have a few favorite quotes that I live by and from completely different people, which makes them even more appropriate. It’s all about the mix!

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” — *Albert Einstein*

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” -Ferris Bueller

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” -Mark Twain

**None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?**

I think we all struggle a bit to find ourselves in our early years and especially in high school (and even beyond!). In high school, I felt lost in understanding how I could use my art until my art teacher pulled me aside and frankly said, “Why are you so afraid to fail? You are talented, don’t try to fit in, be yourself and be bold. It’s okay to mess up, that’s when you know you are succeeding...because you actually tried.” This conversation quickly got me to focus on art in college, it was the small confirmation I needed to get going.

I’m also grateful to my dad for always being there to teach me the business side and remind me my time is not free, it’s a service. I’ll always be grateful to my mom for truly teaching me how a home should feel when you are designing it.

**Thank you for that. Here is the main question of our discussion. What are your “5 Things You Can Do To Help Your Living Space Spark More Joy” and why. Please share a story or example for each.**

Declutter your space. You shouldn't have things in your home that you don't like, if it's time for the trash, fine and if you can donate it, even better. Just because you spent a lot of money on it or someone gave it to you doesn't mean you need to have it in your life.

Tell your story. And no, that doesn't have to be a gallery wall of family photos. Decorating your home is not just about pretty things, it's about how they are assembled in a room, they should tell a story, invite you in and create an enjoyable atmosphere. Find a piece of childhood artwork and frame it. Reupholster grandma's old chair but in a new fabric, you love, such as leopard over chintz to groove it up. Find books that are beautiful to look at but are filled with things you love and stack them on top of your high school yearbooks. If you like to entertain, add a bar cart or even a full bar to your home.

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Always add music. Sonos is my go to speaker system. Have a playlist for the morning coffee moments, a study playlist, and a chill playlist for cooking and of course dance music.

Add dimmers to your home. Light should never be used outside a hospital without a dimmer. Each part of the day deserves the proper lighting.

**You are a person of great influence. If you could start a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)**

I'm a huge fan of paying it forward. I think we each have an obligation to share our gifts, whatever that may be. I'm very keen on the power of meditation, a clear mind is key for everything we do!

If I could start a movement it would be to start a mandatory dance class in schools. Not an organized dance, but just to turn on some music and bust a move. I'm talking loud music...so you can feel the euphoric energy you get from dancing. Kids today have so much responsibility and heaviness in their lives, a little kick start to their day will remind them of their individuality and creativity to heal their soul.

**We are very blessed that some of the biggest names in Business, VC funding, Sports, and Entertainment read this column. Is there a person in the world, or in the US whom you would love to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might see this, especially if we tag them :-)**

I would like to have lunch with Vince Vaughn because he makes me laugh. That spark in his eye when he knows he's on a roll and the wit and wisdom to push the limits on calling you out on your flaws for humor...makes me feel right at home, feels like I'm hanging out with my brothers. If you can't laugh at yourself, what better way than to have someone to laugh alongside you. Flaws are the best part of someone...otherwise they'd be pretty darn boring. Don't ever take yourself too seriously.

**Thank you so much for joining us. This was very inspirational!**