

7 Secrets of Upgrading Your Home To A Sanctuary



What is a sanctuary?

The dictionary definition of sanctuary is:

1. a place of refuge or safety.
2. a nature reserve.
3. a holy place; temple church.



For some the word sanctuary conjures images of Gothic cathedrals, zen gardens, mosques, or a peaceful natural environment such as a waterfall, beach, forest or mountain scape. Whatever your image is, a sanctuary is a place where you feel safe, comfortable and peaceful. And that is exactly what your home can be every day of your life. Many of us want to live in a beautiful clean environment, one that is comfortable, accommodating, and is an expression of our inner nature. And for each of us that will look and feel different. Here I will offer you what I feel are the seven essential components of making your home your very own sacred space. These are basically generic notions that can be adapted and adopted by anyone. There are many more than seven ways to make your home feel and look like a sanctuary, but these seven will get you started and you are sure to notice a difference, in most cases, immediately.

1. Clear out the clutter. You don't have to be a minimalist to create a sanctuary, but decreasing the clutter can dramatically change the way your space looks and feels. Clutter creates a feeling of burden, stress, mess and chaos. The goal of creating your sanctuary is to feel at peace, serene, comfortable, and fluid. You will want to create a place where you can come home and truly relax, be nurtured and commune with your family. If you live alone have a place that feels like a refuge, where you can easily rejuvenate. One of my clients decided to downsize the amount of books she had. She kept her favorites and important reference books, but got rid of over 200 books. This simple act gave her so much more space in her home. She was able to use all of that free space to add other items. After she had downsized her books, she did the same with many of her other possessions.

Professionals can quickly assess how to help you best and create systems that will help you maintain efficiency and beauty.

Bonus tip: Do a deep cleaning on your home at least 4 times a year and treat yourself to having your windows professionally cleaned.

2. **Display photos of your family**, friends, and favorite life memories in beautiful frames. Life is about relationships and having meaningful experiences. You might want to create a special place in your home to honor special family members, and showcase in some way images of fun times you have had with family and friends. Seeing these images often will bring joy and connection, and remind you to create more of these moments.



When my Mother passed away I created a special altar for her, which displays not only photos of her life and our family, but also a few small tokens from her life that remind me of her. In other areas of my home I have photos of my son, other family members, and images of me on one of my many adventures. Beautiful frames can be found in a variety of shops. You can browse antique and second hand shops, craft stores like Benjamin Franklin, or even family department stores like Target. If you are the crafty type explore making your own frames, that way you will have exactly what you want.

Bonus tip: Remove all photos of the past that give you negative feelings, such as photos of old boyfriends, a vacation that went bad, and faded friendships.

3. **Have candles in your home and light them on special nights.** Have beautiful holders for them, and make sure to buy unscented or only naturally scented candles. Everything looks better by candle light..... it just does. I use candles for all of the following: nightly dinner, meditation and yoga, and my weekly bath. I even like to light candles when I cook dinner. Candles come in all shapes, sizes and colors, so you can really have a lot of fun with this and your candle holders. I have a penchant for the Middle Ages, and I have found a few really cool antique candle holders that look like they belong in a castle. The feeling these create in my home makes the difference between a place where my stuff is verses my sanctuary. Warning: Lit candles have to be attended, meaning it is unadvisable to light a candle and leave the house or room where it is. Playing with fire comes with responsibility.

Bonus tip: Choose the color of your candles according to how you want them to make you feel. White will give you a sense of peace, purity, and clarity. Blue will help you relax and can be good for spiritual work as is indigo or violet. Red is great for the dining table or the kitchen as it can cause you to feel hungry.

4. **Bring a plant or two or more into your house.**

Plants are the great givers of Earth! They give us food, medicine, materials for building homes, creating art, making cloth, and they clean our air by filtering out carbon dioxide and other harmful chemicals. Sure, not all plants are practical to bring indoors. If this is new for you, it's ok to start small. My absolute favorite house plant is aloe-vera. Known in Egypt as the plant of immortality, it is one of the easiest to grow because um (I know this sounds terrible) ... you can forget about it for a few days and it will survive.



Meaning it doesn't have to be watered every day. It also doesn't have to be in direct sunlight. So really it is a win/win situation. It also has many medicinal purposes, it is best known as an ointment for cuts and burns. Put it in a beautiful pot and voila, you have enhanced your space! Second hand shops, antique boutiques or local artist coops are great places to find beautiful pots.

If you are looking for plants that will improve the quality of the air in your home here are some of the other famous greats: spider plant, gerbera daisy, snake plant, golden pothos, chrysanthemum (floral mum variety), red edged dracaena, weeping fig, azalea, warneck dracaena, Chinese evergreen, bamboo palm, peace lily, and Boston fern.

Bonus tip: only bring in a few plants, too many will cause your home to feel cluttered and imbalanced.

5. Create a beautiful outdoor space to hang out in.

Whether it is a yard, porch, deck, or balcony, have a space where you can eat a meal, have a cup of tea, write in a journal, star gaze, people watch, meditate, do yoga, or simply listen to the birds. Add candles, plants, and a few beautiful items related to that space and you are done. Call me crazy, but food tastes better outdoors. Don't ask me to explain the science behind it, but fresh air and food are a magical combination. Recently I purchased a fire pit, because I wanted to commune with fire again. I rarely bar-b-que, and I live in a tropical climate so having a fireplace isn't practical. For months I fantasized about sitting outside in my backyard and having a bonfire while looking up at the stars. I finally did it and now it is a special ritual I do a few nights a week. Every time I do it, I am humbled by the grandeur of the sky and rejuvenated by the chilly night air. A simple therapy. Invite nature into your life, which means YOU have to go out into IT.



6. Get an essential oil diffuser.

Sanctuaries are attractive because they entice all of the senses. The way they look, feel, sound and yes, smell unite in perfect harmony. Our sense of smell affects us immensely. Humans can distinguish a trillion different scents. A particular smell can trigger a memory in an instant, whether the memory was bad or good it doesn't matter the scent will transport you there. Smells evoke emotions. Of course in your sanctuary you'll want to have smells that create a positive reaction in you. One of the easiest and healthiest ways to bring the power of scent into your home is through an essential oil diffuser. There are many companies and styles of diffusers. If at all possible try to find one that doesn't look like a piece of plastic. Some companies make lovely ceramic diffusers that work from the heat of a candle. Aromatherapy, the science of healing through scent is ancient and modern studies show how extremely effective it is to sooth, energize, and heal. Some essential oils also clean mold spores and other pathogens out of the air. If I happen to be having a challenging day I put a few drops of orange and lemongrass in the diffuser and it does wonders for lifting my spirit. Peppermint is famous for energizing, and lavender is famous for relaxing.



7. Go chemical free.

Create a chemical free environment. Natural over synthetic means healthier, more comfortable, more ethical, and in many cases more beautiful.

That means replacing harmful toxic household cleaners, synthetic materials, and anything else that brings chemicals into your house, with a natural version. This last secret is one you've probably heard before, but it may seem impractical to live by. Modern culture has bombarded us with chemicals on every front and the more aware we are of this the easier it is to eliminate them from our life. This might sound daunting, but taking baby steps will get you there quickly. And yes, in some cases you can not get rid of all of it.

What do I mean by this?. If let's say your kitchen cabinets are made with synthetic materials, in most cases it isn't practical to rip them out and buy new ones, even if you own your home. Luckily it's easy to replace hundreds of other common items in your home as there are natural versions of all of the old school products a lot of us grew up with.

Here are a few things beyond household cleaners that can be replaced:

- beauty and personal hygiene products
- shampoos, body lotion, deodorant, makeup, etc.
- laundry detergent, bed linens, kitchen and bathroom towels, clothing, curtains, rugs, and the most important...
- food.



Bonus #1

Ok, so you want an awesome clean house, but don't want to fill your house with toxic cleaning chemicals right? Well look no further, read on and follow directions and you'll be on your way to a sparkling clean house, sans toxic chemicals. I love me some Spring cleaning, Winter cleaning, anytime cleaning really. Using natural cleaners is something we can all do to reduce environmental pollutants. Here is the recipe for the best cleaner in the world. I've been using this recipe for 20 years. This cleaner will work for nearly all of your surface cleaning needs: floors, counters, windows, appliances, leather upholstery and woodwork.

What you will need:

1. Empty squirt bottle
2. Citrisolve
3. White vinegar
4. Clean water
5. Unscented dish soap

Fill empty squirt bottle halfway with white vinegar, and then almost to the top with water (leave space for the next two ingredients), add a dash of Citrisolve, and a dash of the dish soap - a dash means whatever you deem appropriate, and bingo bammo, you've got the best household cleaner that ever existed on the planet to infinity and beyond, that means it's unbeatable. The Citrisolve smells orangey which keeps bugs away, and also according to aromatherapy uplifts your spirit. Need I say more, give it a go.

P.S. For household cleaning I use old rags that can be washed and reused instead of paper towel.

Bonus #2 Although I do not rush to kill insects, when an infestation and attempt at home takeover occurs, I feel forced to take action. So when I learned about a natural alternative to the popular, but toxic bug spray chemicals

Bonus 2 continued:

I was very excited. This option gave me the ability to get rid of my ant problem and not expose me or my family to toxic chemicals in the process.

If this excites you too, here is a list of what you will need and how to make it:

- a clean, dry lid from a jar, such as an ice tea jar (as many of these as you want to use)
- borax
- powdered sugar
- corn meal - I buy this in bulk from the health food store

Mix equal parts of each ingredient and save in your choice of storage container. I use a small plastic bag. Fill as many jar lids as you want and disperse around your house where the bugs like to gather, such as under sinks, behind toilets, near the trash. Replace approximately every three months.

Enjoy a bug free home...Cheers!

Wishing you daily peace, comfort and beauty in your sanctuary!
May all your dreams come true!

If you need help implementing any of these ideas or to learn about more in depth methods of making your home a sanctuary, visit <http://www.zoeweston.com> or contact me at zoe@zoeweston.com.

Zoe Weston

