I know what I like

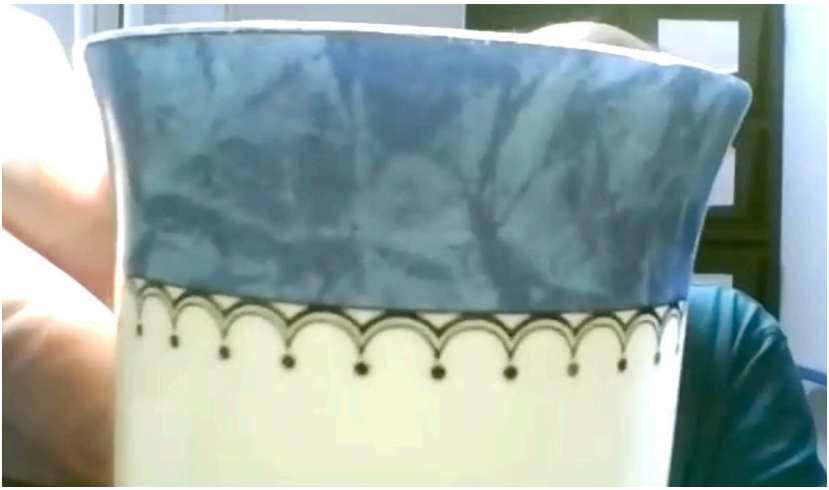
I know what I like

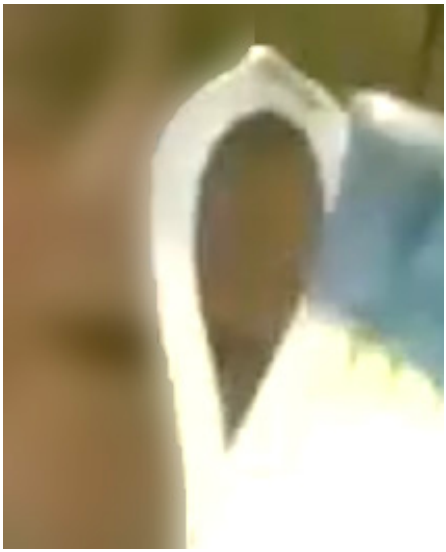
lovely mug ugly mug

Lovely Mug

I prefer really lightweight, delicate, and I like things that are nice to hold and nice to drink from.

And also when you put a hot drink into it, or hot liquid into it, because its so much thinner, it doesn't cool the liquid down so fast. If you put it into this heavy mug, and it's cold out of the cupboard, you know. You get a cold drink basically and I don't like my tea cold!





So I prefer a really lightweight delicate... I've always liked delicate and well made. It's the small things. Like this is flared at the edges.

And it's got a handle that I can put my fingers through.

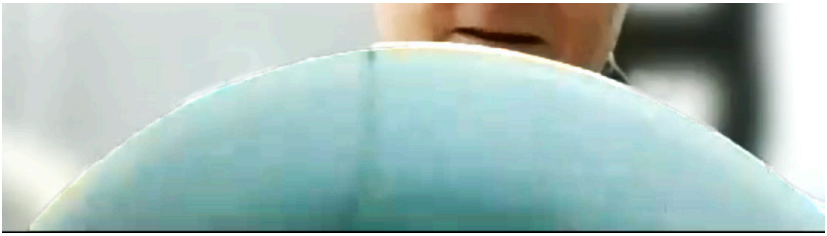
You know, to me that's well designed. I like good design.

This is not particularly practical for a microwave because its got a gold edge. Not that I particularly like gold, but this, it's translucent. Which means it's really thin porcelain.

Being translucent, its basically thin.

It should ring (when you tap it).

I was married to a ceramicist until she passed away. So I had a lot to do with making some pottery and what have you. You learn about the basics of ceramics.



Ugly Mug

I think probably I haven't got my favourite mugs here. They're in Cuba propably, but something I dislike is an overdecorated mug that's got a crack in it.

So its destined for the bin! And it's heavy weight, a decorative style.

I really don't like this sort of thing at all.

They're um… What does it say (here)? '*Bright ideas for creative living*' hmmm...?

That’s rubbish (right) .

And that’s really nice! (left)

Functional Aesthetics

I like functional aesthetics, or aesthetic functionality. So if it works well to me, it's like a work of art then.

I like old instruments. I've got a very early microscope out there. To me it's a thing of beauty. It's all brass, not very big. It's a portable microscope for somebody who is in the countryside.

Its made by the same people who made the instruments on Nelson's flagship.

It's a real quality instrument. It's not worth a fortune but it's very unusual. To me it's really, really delicate, well-made functional whilst being elegant. To me it's a joy, something nice to look at.

An eye for detail

You have to have as an engineer, especially one who goes around repairing things. You've got to see. If you're looking at the same bit of equipment every day, a large machine, or whatever. You need to see these tiny things that are out of place, or leaking.

You need everything; vision, sound, feeling, feeling of surfaces. Engineers feel surfaces. You pick up something that you've just taken to pieces. As you handle it - I can feel that's not round, or I can feel that this surface is not... just the feeling without looking at it. Sometimes feelings better than looking especially if you're underneath something and you can't see what you're doing, and you're checking.

If you're taking a shaft out of its' bearing, you can feel the shaft to see if it's nice and smooth and round still, or the bearing has been spinning on the shaft. When you put a bearing in, it should be just tight enough to grip the shaft - So the bearing should never move on either part, only the bearings in the race.

Just going up to a shaft or something that drives something and just hold it, or put your fingers next to it while it's running and see. Because they've got a huge machine making lots of noise, you can feel the vibration, or you can listen to it. With a wooden stick or something. So if you want to hear inside something you just transer the vibration up to your ear because sometimes you can't put your face that close.

So you are hearing the contact vibration and you can often hear things going on inside, or if there's three others the same you can listen to them and see if there's a difference. It's very simple.

I'm not without artistic talent. I don't draw particularly well or anything but I've got a good eye for perspective and a natural appreciation. If somebody says: "What do you think of that?"

I know I can look at it and go: "Well, yeah, it's OK, but if you did 'that', you'd probably be even happier with it" . Or: "You might be better if it were centred, or up a bit higher..."

Colour choice

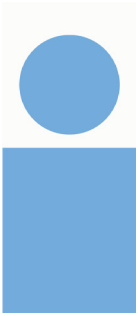
So in terms of colour, colour is very important in both applications and in industrial design and machines.

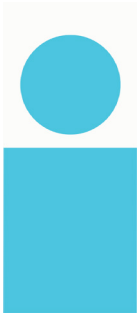
I'm quite tactile. OK. So it's not just colour. It's shape, form function, and then colour comes into it.

And the quality of things? You can often, if somebody handed you something, several things, some of which are really good quality and some of which were really naff you'd probably know without even seeing them.

It's like even if you didn't know exactly what they were, you'd probably be able to say: well, this feels quite good, and it's comfortable to hold.

Even if you knew what it was and you were given two you'd go well yeah, definitely this one, because good design is nice to use. Bad design is... it makes me angry basically.





That range of blues

This is my sort of preferred area of colours.

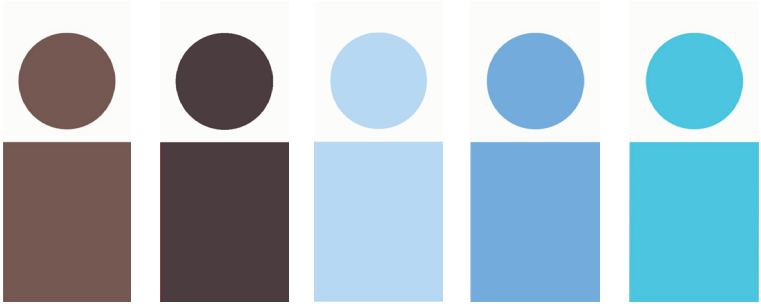
I prefer pastel colours and not too strong. I don't know why but I don't. I don't know why but that seems OK to me.

Certainly I would tend to wear blue and black that not being a choice here, anyway, yeah.

I definitely prefer pastel shades rather than very strong colouring in rooms.

Or plain white with strong colours on. If it's a general background I would like to go for a very, what some might say insipid, colour. I just don't like it in my face!

It's probably got more subtle with age, I don't really think about it much to be honest.

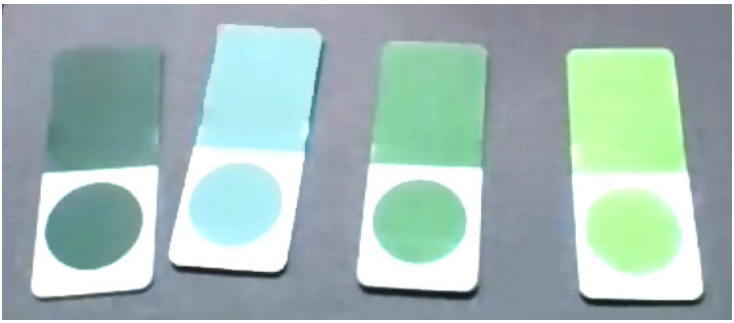


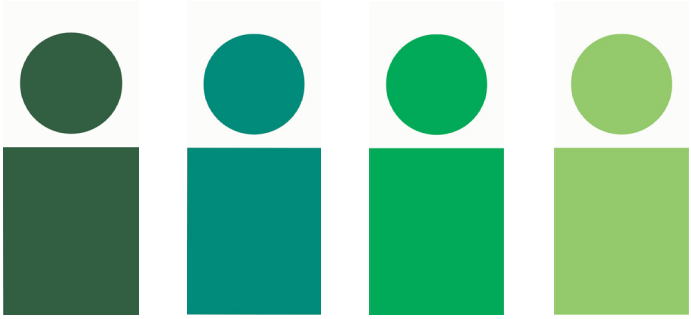
So maybe dark browns. And maybe pastel? Well I wouldn't say that was pastel, but this sort of thing as well.

I don't mind the odd statement of colour but not very large. I went through the flower power bit. Well it went round me really! I am not really extrovert in that sense.

I don't mind standing out when I'm speaking, debating and that, I'll lead a debate, and you know announce a study and all that sort of thing. But apart from that I prefer to be in the background, observing.

It's a degree of subtlety you know, that I like.





I'm not keen on strong mauves and that sort of thing.

I don't mind greens up to a point.

I just like things to be more verging towards natural colouring rather than you know, these fluorescent type colourings.

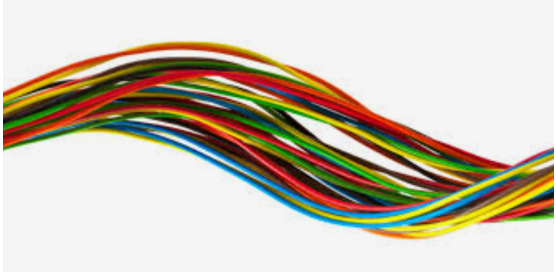
Well I mean there are not actually any colours here that are super bright. If you know what I mean these fluorescent type colours?

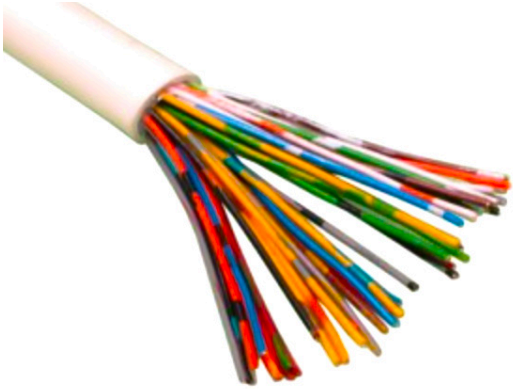
I like pictures and flowers. When I say flowers: egregious greenery! We tend to have quite a lot of greenery around the house and plants growing here there and everywhere. Windowsills with plants. So in those terms I quite like greens. So I suppose you could add greens to this pad here, I dont know.

I think my visual perception of colour is pretty good. What I do find is that when my wife describes a colour, and I describe a colour we're actually talking about two different colours. So my concept of pale blue, particularly where you get cross over as you're going from greens to blues or blues to the next... That is definitely different between people.

That's probably true, but also where I think what I'm looking at is no longer blue, but green or blue and mauve. My wife and I definitely differ in that area. We don't all see the same in general terms for basic colours. I can definitely differentiate between the ten/twelve different colours between black, white, and eight colours in between.

We definitely differ on our colour perception and what we would like so I defer to my wife! Yeah, sexism, you know, the other way round! But we do agree that the simplest thing to do is have all white walls. Then you can put anything you like on it. It doesn't matter what you buy, it'll always blend.



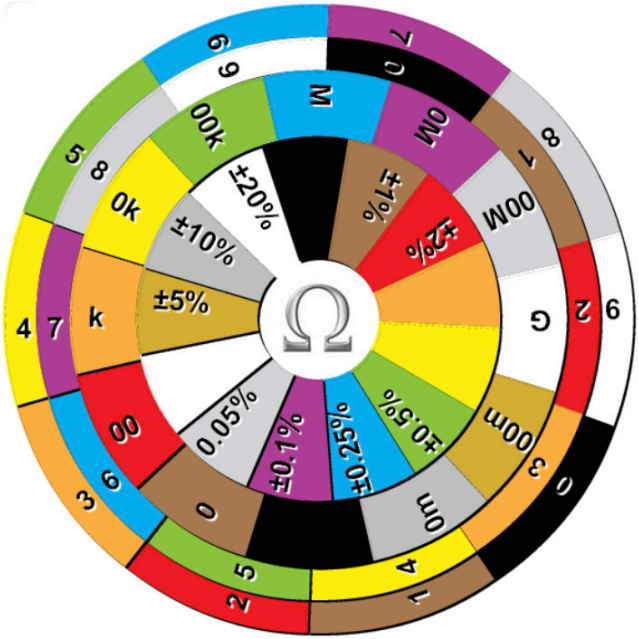


So in terms of colour, colour is very important in both applications and in industrial design and machine.

If I'm dealing with wires and things like that. I want really strong contrast. That's a totally different thing. You really want to be able to see if you've got wires with tracers on them, you know. spiralling colour on a white background on a wire.

Then you need them to be really clear, and the difference between them needs to be easy to see. Most wiring sets come with 7,10, maybe 12 to15, maximum15 different colours.

It's very functional. I started off as a post office engineer and believe you me, colour is really important. Red, green, blue, brown. Sorry red, blue, green, yellow. Starting with one colour and finishing with another in each layer in a cable and that sort of thing.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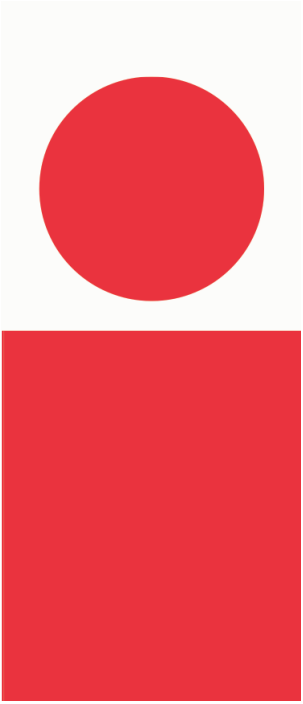
There is a numeric equivalent to the colours. I have to really think about it now but if I had them in front of me and I was using them I would pretty quickly know. The association would be there immediately. Also identifications of resistances. If you have got a resistor, I haven't got one to hand here. They're colour coded, and that's by number.

By looking at the colours. They don't have numbers written on them. They have colours written on them which tells you its value. Because they are circular bands of colour when it's inserted into the board originally you don't have to orientate it. Whereas if you had a number written on it, you'd have to make sure that number was visible so they can always be read.

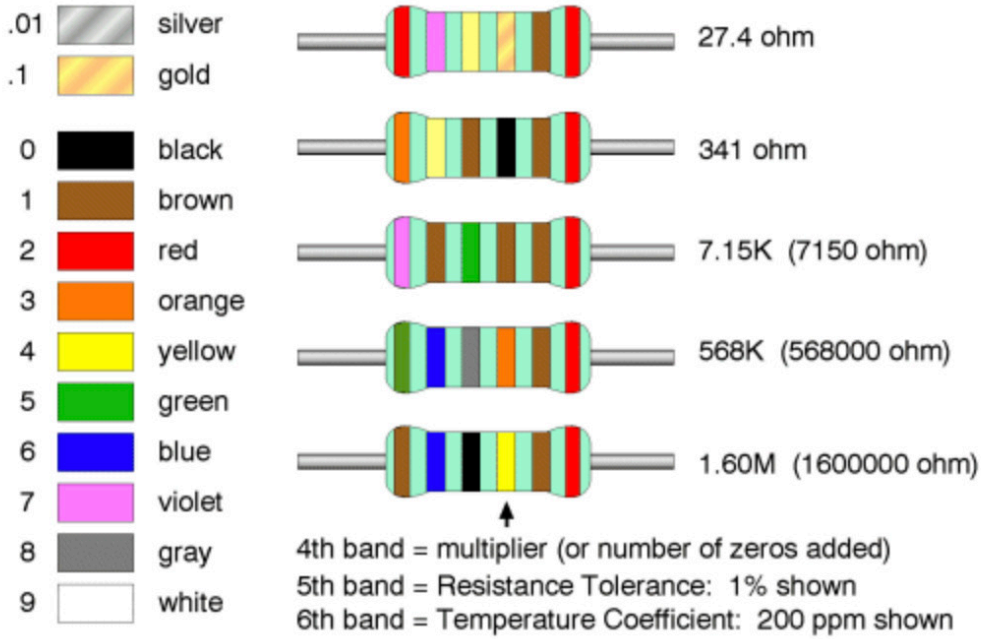
So if you're trying to select the correct resistor, it doesn't matter where it's wrong, because they are usually round barrel shaped with a wire at each end. So you can just pick out, get to recognize the combinations of colours.



It's fairly universally used for alarm systems, and that sort of thing. If you're looking for something to hit or stop button it's likely to be red but it's not guaranteed to be red.

Fire engines are red.

But then warnings, you know. If you're talking about warning signs and stuff like that, they're very often fluorescent yellows, aren't they? Or oranges to get your attention.


.01 silver
.1 gold
0 black
1 brown
2 red
3 orange
4 yellow
5 green
6 blue
7 violet
8 gray
9 white
27.4 ohm
341 ohm
7.15K (7150 ohm)
568K (568000 ohm)
1.60M (1600000 ohm)
4th band = multiplier (or number of zeros added)
5th band = Resistance Tolerance: 1% shown
6th band = Temperature Coefficient: 200 ppm shown

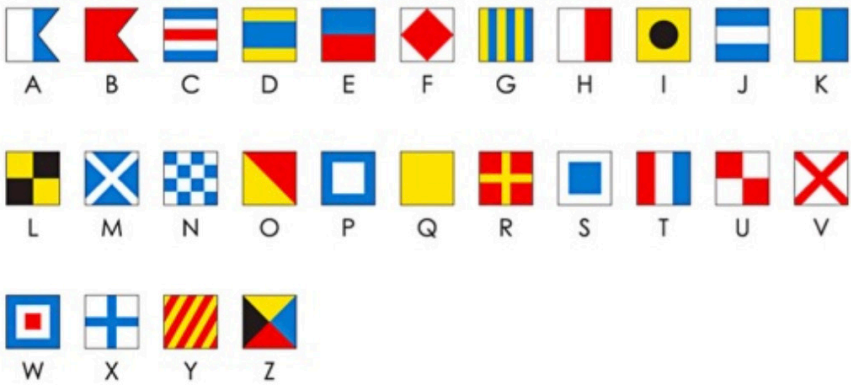
Well now, this discussion has revealed to me that my knowledge of colours and use of colours in different situations is virtually unaffected.

I should be able to run off the 9 colours in the right order. My biggest problem with dementia is, it causes you to do the reverse of what you're thinking. It's like putting letters in the wrong order. I've always done it. But I do it and I'm totally unaware I'm doing it. I'm reversing letters and reversing numbers now.

But if I picked up a resistor now, I would know the value of it just by looking at it.

I'm semi-ambidextrous. I forced myself to do things with both hands. Because I can pour a cup of tea with boiling water with my left hand more or less as well as within my right. I've practiced that for years, so that if you have a stroke... Often when you're doing wiring and working up a telegraph pole and reaching up, you have to use both hands. Otherwise you've got to get it down and turn it round and climb back up the ladder.

NAUTICAL FLAG ALPHABET



It's very much horses for courses, because, you know, if you were at sea and in boats and sailing, then, blues and greys are not what you want, because you can't differentiate between the horizon and the sea and that sort of thing. You'd think that you you'd easily steer a large vessel. That's not true! It depends on the cover..

I did when I was young my father had a yacht? No, nothing massive, but it was definitely in its time it was quite when it was really at the beginning of people having boats everywhere, you know.

I did sailing courses and the basics of navigation, and whatever. Again, you've got colour codings for flags, and distress, and all that sort of thing. So again colour is, you can't say it's not important. It is important.

Again, if you're looking for somebody who has fallen overboard or abandoned ship. That's why life vests are yellow I think yellowor orange. They stand out in the water. Although they say it's very difficult to find anybody in the sea even with the life jacket on.

I couldn't sail fast dinghies and that now you know. You have to be quick changing sides, and that. I mean if you put me on a yacht now I could sail it, and I know what the names are of what different types of sail are, and what their functions are, and what to do in an emergency. But then I learned that when I was sort of 15/16 years old.

And that sort of stuff, surprisingly stays with you. But I can't remember what I did with something 5 minutes ago.

My biggest problem with dementia

It causes you to do the reverse of what you're thinking. You know it's like putting letters in the wrong order. I've always done it. But I do it and I'm totally unaware I'm doing it. I'm reversing letters and reversing numbers now.
I tend to type most of the time

But also if I'm operating something it can be really drastic when you, if your brain doesn't do what you are thinking is doing. You move the wrong lever at the wrong time.

Machinery operation needs to be totally autonomous. You don't need to. If you're operating something like a forklift like that, all the controls it needs to be instinctive. Not yeah. Like when you drive a car you don't think i'm changing the gear? - Not that many cars have gears now, but you know in high, and low ratio only the levers just in a well designed vehicle they're all you know: everything is just where you expect it to be. It becomes difficult when you get into a right hand, drive car in America. because then you know everything is back to front in that.

It is quite interesting, actually, because I've often been designing. Not software and that but, if you're setting up a workstation for a new job or something like that, putting things in the the most convenient position and even taking regard of whether people are left or right-handed, this sort of thing. Very few people are really ambidextrous.

I tend to type most of the time. But also if I'm operating something it can be really drastic when you, if your brain doesn't do what you are thinking it's doing, you move the wrong lever at the wrong time.

Bad Design

I hate it when they design things, so that the important things are not scattered about, and they're in sub-menus that there's no lead and that sort of thing. It's just crap design basically! I'm pretty savvy with this stuff, but it can throw you sometimes. So an obscure thing being wrong, where do you start looking? There's so many options.

The problem I find is you're using so many different applications. I don't know whether they just do it to be different or so they can't be accused of plagiarism. You're in one App and the escape is down at the bottom, right hand corner, and then the next App you're on, it is somewhere completely different. So your brain's having to work unnecessarily hard because there is no sort of basic standardisation.

You really do look at some stuff, and you think why? Where stuff overlays over where you're working it brings up something and it's right in front of the area you're working. Why don't you put things in the left hand corner always?

I can't see that if we can have standardization in the form of a querty keyboard, why can't we have a standardisation of where your general purpose keys and controls are? I'm very fussy to be honest about computers and keyboards. Some keyboards are awful to use and some are really nice. I'm not led by a brand name. I'm led by brand functionality. Is it really well designed? Does it work? Is it nice to use? or does it leave you wishing you'd never been near the damn thing!

But like what we've had today, isn't it? (setting up sound on Zoom) OK, it was actually me at fault. Well, not at fault, because it didn't actually say to you: "You're on headphones". In other applications it tells you you're using the headphones.

When I went into the settings menu, normally it's in the application. But I went into windows settings because I thought, this is really strange, is there anything wrong? Because on this thing, it was saying the audio is fine, and connected.

There's a terrible habit now of moulding controls into black bodies. They put a symbol on it, saying: microphone, speaker, blah, blah, blah. But you've got black on black? How are you meant to see that there's anything written on the keys and tiny buttons. That is just cheapness. Well, it's not even cheap often.

I've start taking up this echo thing. Oh...Alzheimer's strikes! (Alexa) So you know there's 3 buttons up and down, volume and something else. Mute, mute microphone. They're all black on black and they're small. There's just no reason why they should be. It's silly, isn't it? It's much cheaper to just mould a character in than put a colour.

If you haven't got good eyesight (and a lot of people don't have good eyesight) you won't see it at all. I certainly can't see it without my glasses on and it's not even tactile. It's so small. You can't feel the characters or there isn't a standardized physical symbol for blind people. So when it pops up you will actually see it.

STANLEY
FATMAX
4V
MAX

My examples of good design

Particularly in tooling. I've just bought an electric screw-driver and nut runner. They are really beautifully designed, because when you put them in your hand they fit you like a glove. The first time you put it into your hand and everything you need to control it is just there where it should be.

Also it's balanced. So it's got quite a heavy battery on it but they've designed it so that when it's in your hand it's not trying to revolve in either direction. That might not sound important, but it's really important when you're using it all day long because you don't want to be counteracting some other force when you're trying to feel what the other end of it's doing.

A good machine or a good piece of equipment, it just fits in your hand. For want of a better description it fits in your hand and you don't have to think about how to use it.

I know what I like

Personal Space

My posessions in Cuba

About 95% of them, well virtually a hundred percent (are in Cuba) because we came back here for a short visit (and then Covid happened). One or two things are here. But they're at my sons'.

But everything you see around here behind me, is second hand. Because we were homeless, and with a bag in each hand. So over the last three years we've had to .... Fortunately I brought two of my laptops with me, one of which I'm using now.

It's a communist country. We don't own the properties. We did them all up over the years and there's Cuban people living in it now, family and relations. Over that ten year period (I didn't do all the work myself it would have been impossible) I converted two buildings. Brought them up to western standards. From my house, upstairs, you can see the Placa de Revolucion and the Capitol Building. (I say my house, it's a family house, not my house)

.

Having considered hurricanes, you get them there, you know. I've built some really big, covered areas in Cuba.

Well, I didn't build them, I had them built for me. One area is really huge. It's about fifty corrugated sheets. It's a big structure, quite substantial. But normally you would take (the roof) to the wall. But in Cuba I left all this open above, and so when the wind comes in... because you're right by the sea there and it's one of the stormiest parts of the world.... So when the hurricane is blowing in, you can't pressurize the roof. But if you've got this huge opening ..when the wind blows at 140mph in a gust, instead of all these sheets flying off in all directions and killing people, the air can just go out the other end, straight through.

We've had now two or three really large, not major, fairly decent hurricanes. Not the worst, and the roof looks as it did the day it was put up. So I've got it right.

My workshop in Cuba

I've got a vast workshop, which I'll probably never see again. Bigger than the standard garage and twice as high: completely full. There's about, I don't know, somewhere between thirty and fifty thousand pounds worth of tooling in there? It was what I've accumulated over a lifetime.

If you've got a proper workshop, which none of them have got, and they can go in there and use a vice or a proper wire brush on a machine to clean the rust off of things, and the oils and greases and airlines and compressors and drills and lathes and welding machines etcetera, etcetera.

All these black boxes up there. They're full of... Each one of them's got something different in it. And I've got another twenty outside... because I buy it secondhand, most of it. That way I can repair more or less anything I'm looking at. I can assess whether it's viable to repair mainly by looking at it and seeing whether it's just... Because most of the stuff that's thrown out is perfectly good. Nothing wrong with it at all. It just needs servicing, cleaning.

Constructing a shed for our scooters

Yeah, probably if I went back in life. I'd probably make a very good designer actually. I tend to think way ahead when I do things. I am sort of constructing a shed in the back garden for our scooters out of rubbish basically that's being thrown daily away. You know, bits and pieces.

You can't actually see it from where you are now but this room is shelved with sides of things. If I want something, I'll just drive around for a few minutes, or on the way to somewhere and bring it back with me. I get some odd looks when I've got 6 foot long pieces of timber, behind my scooter ...

I've just come back and I brought an old table. A gate leg table. Small. It must be 1950s, I would have thought, looking at it. It's got wooden legs, real wooden legs, and formica. But it's got piano hinges made of brass on it and I'm using all the parts to form bits of.. I'm using the sides of throwa-way furniture for shelving. ..basically, as long as it's not got wet, and it's reasonably supported, it's free.