

The 30 Pound Club

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October 20, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Fitting into the Space Available

I read several magazines such as *Fast Company*, *INC*, and *Entrepreneur*. They seem to spend a lot of time on design and how wonderful it is, but it design experts haven't had much influence on the hotel industry—at least, not in any practical way. Staying in hotel rooms as I frequently do provides a chance to see how design is probably 30 years behind the times in the hotel business.

Case in point. After last week's message on chair design, someone reminded me of the curtain rods in hotel rooms. We're so large, shower curtain rods are bowed out so that people can move freely in the shower. Take a bath in those tubs? Many people would run the risk of getting wedged in the tub.

In the hotel room Paula and I occupied this past weekend, the shower-and-toilet area was separated from the sink by a door. Paula observed that the clear floor space in front of the toilet was about 36 inches by 30 inches. The door swung within about two inches of the commode, so sitting and closing the door would never happen. But because swinging the door took up most of the open floor space, even a small person would have to step between the commode and the bathtub to close the door; a really large person might not be able to get their body out of the way to close the door without stepping into the bathtub, and many very heavy people aren't that agile. The only option is to leave the door open and sacrifice privacy, and that's not a comfortable situation for most of us, no matter who we share a room with.

Granted, most hotels were built well before we became this large, but I've stayed in some brand-new hotels where the design isn't much better. Hotels may respond to our increasing girth, or they may continue to make us fit in the design that looks good and costs less to build but isn't fully functional. And don't get me started on airplane seats; we saw one 350-pounder who didn't really fit in even a first-class seat. And the airlines don't upgrade you to first class for free just because you need the extra room; no, you'll pay the first-class price. Weighing 350 is a costly experience in many ways.

We have a choice: take up less space so we can fit in our environment or get used to not fitting in the space available. The choice is still ours.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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