

“The Meaning of Good Design” by Daniel J. Lipscomb '98

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Fiskars has symbolized good design in the design community for decades, and winning design awards is part of the Fiskars culture. For me, a believer in good design, Fiskars is a perfect fit.

A good tool design has a functional form; it is honest and simple, and has a timeless aesthetic. It is not trendy in style and does not have elaborate ornamentation. It simply possesses long-lasting quality, and technological content – whether in manufacturing technologies or mechanism execution. A successful product also must solve a consumer need. These attributes define Fiskars’ design philosophy and create quite a challenge in the design process. To me, that is where the fun is.

We know that a good tool is designed by the use and handling of objects, not by idle thought or by the movement of a computer mouse. I have always loved to garden so it is a pleasure for me to solve garden product issues. One of the GOOD DESIGN Award winning tools started as a thought I had while harvesting vegetables in our home garden, with my wife Debra.

The quality of my design work is driven by the high standards set upon me by the instructors at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design [MIAD] and in particular by Stephen F. Lacey, to whom, in all sincerity, I dedicate these awards. During my Foundation (first) year at MIAD, I was introduced to the profession of Industrial Design. I had the sudden realization that I had been an industrial designer my whole life, yet did not realize it. MIAD gave me the skills to become a practicing designer. We were taught critical thinking and how to analyze a problem, solve for a solution and represent our ideas visually, whether through 2D or 3D expression.

I hope to inspire today’s MIAD Industrial Design student to strive for good design. This has become possible in that Fiskars and MIAD are engaged in collaborative design projects. I believe there is no better way to learn design than to solve for real-world solutions with practicing product development teams. Students quickly become more aware of manufacturing, ergonomics and business practices by participating in these types of collaborative relationships. This relationship is a valuable benefit to Fiskars by delivering fresh new ideas. These new ways of thinking have the potential to provide vision and tap into the innovative young mindset of our future customers. It is the education process that comes full circle, where the student becomes the teacher, a concept that Steve Lacey always preached.