The Three Essentials of Decorating

Now that you're familiar with the tools you use to decorate, the elements of a cake, the six basic tube designs, the icing recipes and the procedure for preparing the decorating bag, you're ready to learn the three essentials of decorating that are necessary to the success of any technique you attempt.

**1. ICING CONSISTENCY:**
If the consistency of your decorator icing isn't just right, your decorations won't be right either. Flowers require a stiffer icing consistency, or the petals will droop; borders require a medium icing consistency or the uniform designs will disappear and writing requires a soft icing consistency or the stringwork won't flow smoothly out of the tube.

**2. CORRECT POSITION:**
The angle at which you hold your decorating bag and tube must be correct in order to produce a satisfactory decoration. For the decorating bag there are two basic positions: the 90° angle and the 45° angle. In the 90° angle, the decorating bag is held perpendicular to the decorating surface. In the 45° position, the decorating bag is held at a slant to the decorating surface.

**3. PRESSURE CONTROL:**
The amount of pressure and the steadiness with which it's applied to the decorating bag will determine the size and uniformity of any icing design. Some decorations require even pressure, other a varying application of light, medium or heavy pressure. In any instance, the more rhythmic and controlled the pressure, the more exact the decoration.

**SPECIAL NOTE TO LEFTIES:**
If you are left handed, hold the decorating bag in your left hand and guide the decorating tube with the fingers of your right hand. If the instructions say to hold decorating bag over to the right, you should hold your decorating bag over to the left.

A right handed person will always decorate from left to right. A left handed person should always decorate from right to left. The only exception to this rule is when you are writing or printing.