

FEBRUARY 2018

House Beautiful

BEFORE & AFTER

Plus!
IDEAS FOR A 2018
FRESH START



From Our Editor

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Above: In a room by Neal Beckstedt at the 2017 Kips Bay Decorator Show House. Left: A bathroom in Shaun Smith's New Orleans home. Below: My "before" picture includes fine art, like the work by Nancy Fernald (center), and a color study by my grandmother, one of many painters in my family.



SAVVY
SHAUN SMITH
DESIGNED
AROUND THE
RETRO
BLUE TILE!

A PAEAN TO
NEEDLEPOINT—
SEE OUR
NEW BACK PAGE.



What's not to love about a before-and-after story? The visceral relief of watching a misfit space get righted, an ugly duckling turn into a swan. The feeling that you're a few buckets of paint and a Goodwill run away from true beauty. (You probably are!)

I'm a sucker for a white-paint-and-optimism story—there's a terrific one on page 58—but my favorite make-over stories recount a renovation of the mind, like the Chicago couple (page 68) who went on a hunt for a new apartment only to realize that, if they saw a listing for their current place, they'd buy it on the spot. It takes courage and creativity to view with fresh eyes a house you know intimately. Here's a tip: Take a few pictures. That'll help you see your belongings through a new lens.

I'm currently living in both a "before" and an "after." Our bedroom is thankfully an "after"—finally—since I bit the bullet and bought a king-size bed. I dislike them in a small space, though not as much as I dislike feeling a five-year-old wedged between two adults on a queen, so here we are.

But I'm in a standoff with my living room, and it's about more than just design. The conundrum: The look I want to project is at odds with the life I live. I have always been surrounded by art and curios, textiles and doodads, my passions visible for all to see. But I share my space with a curious kindergartner and a baby on the cusp of walking, which is to say, a baby constantly hoisting himself up on something. It's not the ideal moment to display pink Bermudan sand in a glass jar or framed art that leans like dominoes mid-tumble. You wouldn't keep a box of Thin Mints in your house while dieting, would you?

It's time to give this room—and my family!—a breather, but I'm struggling with the thought of scaling back. I feel compelled to wear my originality on my sleeve—heaven forbid a neighbor pops by, looks around, and thinks I'm a bore!

So I'm aiming to renovate my mind, because I know that the creativity is already in me: in the dinners I whip up sans recipe, in my drawings and dance moves, even in the pages of this magazine. It's time to pare back, to hang (not lean!) a few choice paintings and retire the rest. It's not goodbye but so long for now, and I'm betting that the headspace it buys me might just fuel my next creative endeavor.

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