

between friends

When BHG readers say “out with the old,” they mean it.

One of my favorite parts of January is opening up a pristine new calendar and flipping through the unmarked pages. It's a little like holding the New Year's clean slate right in my hands, just waiting to be written. So I've started a personal tradition. As I jot down the birthdays and class reunions, I also take a few minutes to frame up a larger view of what I'd like to accomplish in the year ahead.

A few months ago, as our editorial team began planning our 2011 issues, we decided to start in a similar way: by asking *Better Homes and Gardens* readers to tell us your goals and priorities for your home, health, and family life in the coming year. (For a quick look at findings from the Your Best Year Ever survey, see *page 6*.) Not surprisingly in this economy, your top goal is shoring up family finances, a topic we'll delve into with our February issue. When it comes to your home, however, your highest objective—miles ahead of any others—was a little more surprising. Two-thirds of you said that “getting rid of extra stuff” is a change that would make your life better in 2011. Out with the old, you said—and in with a more streamlined, organized way of living.

We couldn't agree more. Decluttering is perhaps the most universally attainable, most satisfying way to free up space and bring cool, calm order to your rooms. Notice that I didn't use the word “simplest,” because in real life, decluttering is its own special art form, equal parts perspiration and perseverance. This issue gets you off to a strong start, with smart tips and strategies from six professional organizers to get results fast, *page 39*. You'll also meet families who've embraced the streamlined life: an ultra-organized mom who prefers a not-so-big house; a young designer who runs a small business from a small condo; and renovators with a lean, clean makeover of family living spaces.

I'm taking notes. Last summer, Scott and I decided to whittle at accumulated clutter a box at a time, occasionally sending our daughters cell phone photos to double-check our decisions. It's still a work in progress. But the more we pare, the more we want to keep at it, because what stays are the things we love and use. And we've got a little more clean-slate space to enjoy every day.



Gayle Goodson Butler,
Editor in Chief



What I Learned This Month

About Goodwill

We declutter. They get our excess “stuff.” So what do *they* do with all of it? Well, the old adage about one person's trash being another's treasure proves true: Goodwill sells those donated items at 2,400 retail stores across the country—and at the online auction site shopgoodwill.com. The cash received in return funds Goodwill's mission of training people facing employment challenges for careers in fields such as financial services, computer programming, and health care.

About Salvation Army

This enduring organization's Adult Rehabilitation Centers are self-sustaining, 100-percent funded from the proceeds of the Salvation Army's Family Stores, which sell the furniture, clothes, and household goods we purge. salvationarmyusa.org

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat's ReStore sites sell donated furniture, home accessories, building materials, and appliances to fund construction of local Habitat homes. habitat.org/restores

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