

# INSPIRED LIVING:

TRANSFORM YOUR HOME TO TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

BY TERESA GRISWOLD  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAULETTE PHLIPOT

HOME



**WITH WINTER APPROACHING**, there's no better time to look inward to your home for more peace, improved productivity, or simple ways to rev up your passion. Laura Carlin and Alison Forbes, sisters and co-creators of the blog *Inspired Everyday Living*, are convinced that when you change your home, you change your life. They make it their livelihood to ensure that homes are set up for success with an approach called "Life Design," which combines Feng Shui principles, life coaching exercises, clutter clearing, and decorating tips to infuse your home and life with vitality.

One of the simplest (and cheapest) transformational strategies they offer is moving twenty-seven small things around and surrounding yourself with things that have meaning for you. "Your home is connected to all aspects of your life. Small changes in your home lead to big changes in your life," says Alison. The act of moving twenty-seven small things around serves as a reflection of your internal compass, and sets the intention that you are ready for a shift. (You can rearrange twenty-seven small things or move one large thing, like turning the sofa around.)

Ideally, "You come in and just move things; it does not have to be perfect," Alison says. "It can be a fast process like moving a wastebasket two feet away so it is easier to reach from your desk. What is important is the intention. You are saying, 'I've changed, and I want my home to change.'"

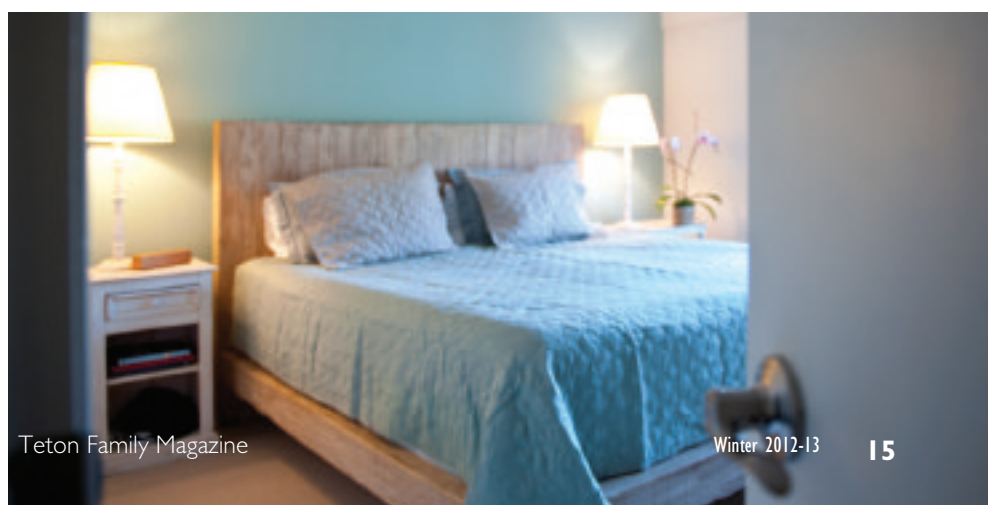
Alison suggests going through pictures you have displayed around the house and making sure they still have meaning to you. "Maybe you need pictures that are current with where you are now," Alison says.

If you really want to make a big shift, move your bed and/or desk into the "power position," the sisters say. "Simple things have big effects. It says you are more open to face opportunities. If you get better rest at night then it ripples out."

The ideal power position for the bed is to have a solid wall behind the head of the bed, while having a view of the bedroom entrance, but not be in the direct path of the door.

Likewise, the power, or commanding, position for your desk, whether at home or work, is to have a wall behind your back and a view of the room and door. "We do not feel comfortable with our backs exposed. It's our animal instincts," Laura says.

Laura recommends trying this out for a week to see if you, like most people, feel more energized. "If you are feeling stuck at work, it's worth trying; it can give



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your career a little bit of juice,” she says. However, she adds, if you have something that’s already working, don’t change it.

Clutter clearing is another powerful tool of transformation. Although it can be a big project, Laura says, it is a surefire way to get unstuck.

To clear your clutter, take absolutely everything out of the drawer or closet first and clean out the space, then put things back in, mindfully. “Only keep what is useful, beautiful, and cherished, and let go of the rest,” Laura says.

Adds Alison: “Whenever you clutter clear, ask yourself, if I was moving would I take this with me? Don’t keep it [simply] because it is already there.”

Check in with the “meaning.” Something might have been meaningful to you ten years ago, but has it retained that meaning? “Look at your life,” Alison says, “and ask yourself, ‘Am I happy? Are things going the way I want them to go? What’s my home reflecting? Does this still have meaning?’”

**“Only keep what is useful, beautiful, and cherished, and let go of the rest.”**

So often people don’t want to get rid of things because they think of it as wasting money. However, Laura says, “It is a waste of time and energy to hold on to things” that are no longer needed or have lost their meaning. Alison adds that taking care of our stuff takes an enormous amount of time, so we want to make sure what we spend our time and energy on is valuable. “Clearing clutter makes more time,” she says.

You can have a lot of stuff and still be clutter-free if everything has meaning and value to you. Some people are comfortable with having stuff, the sisters say. Think of clutter as excess things that are not useful or cherished, are in disrepair, or conjure up a bad memory.

It is important in winter to be particularly mindful of clearing clutter, especially before the holiday season. “You spend more time indoors, which can give you that feeling of cabin fever,” Laura says. “So create as much space indoors as possible.”

It is also important to have a storage plan to accommodate all the gear for winter activities. Laura, who lives in Sun Valley, Idaho, does not have a formal mudroom or entryway. To get around this, she took a corner section of her garage near a window, laid down some tiles for a floor, and added some hooks

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Laura Carlin and Alison Forbes, sisters and co-creators of the blog *Inspired Everyday Living*.

and benches. This created a defined space where her children can hang up their coats and stow their snow boots. “Think about function, like having a shelf for each child to store winter things,” she says.

Alison agrees that functionality is key. Provide storage, like a big basket, close to the door in winter to accommodate the extra clothes like hats, mittens, and gloves. She and Laura also recommend clearing closets for winter clothes and going through all your kids’ clothes to see if they still fit. “It can serve as a mini-clutter-clearing session,” Alison says.

In the winter, we close up our homes, and they can get stuffy. The Environmental Protection Agency says that air pollution is two to five times higher indoors than outdoors, due to off gassing from things like cleaning products, furnishings, and dry cleaning. Laura recommends cracking a window every once in a while to let fresh air in and keep the air flowing.

The sisters say it is important to make your home warm and inviting in winter. They recommend putting out comfy throws just for winter to make your home feel cozy. They also say to open all the curtains to let in as much light as possible, and keep the windows clean. Mirrors are helpful in bringing light into a space, they add, as are candles and holiday lights.

Finally, placing living things in your winter home—a vase of fresh flowers, fresh cut greens, or even big bowls of fruit—keeps us connected to nature inside our homes even during the frostiest months.

Find more of Laura and Alison’s tips, subscribe to their newsletter, and learn more about their book, apps, and guides at [inspiredeverydayliving.com](http://inspiredeverydayliving.com). 🙌



**Teresa Griswold** is a healthy living activist based in Jackson who is devoted to making the world a better place through her writing. She hopes to inspire others to make positive lifestyle changes by providing information about achieving optimal wellness.

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