

Take the Stress Out of Homebuying

Buying a home should be fun, not stressful. As you look for your dream home, keep in mind these tips for making the process as peaceful as possible.

1. Find a real estate agent who you connect with. Home buying is not only a big financial commitment, but also an emotional one. It's critical that the real estate professional you chose is both highly skilled and a good fit with your personality.

2. Remember, there's no "right" time to buy. If you find a home now, don't try to second-guess interest rates or the housing market by waiting longer — you risk losing out on the home of your dreams. The housing market usually doesn't change fast enough to make that much difference in price, and a good home won't stay on the market long.

3. Don't ask for too many opinions. It's natural to want reassurance for such a big decision, but too many ideas from too many people will make it much harder to make a decision. Focus on the wants and needs of your immediate family — the people who will be living in the home.

4. Accept that no house is ever perfect. If it's in the right location, the yard may be a bit smaller than you had hoped. The kitchen may be perfect, but the roof needs repair. Make a list of your top priorities and focus in on things that are most important to you. Let the minor ones go.

5. Don't try to be a killer negotiator. Negotiation is definitely a part of the real estate process, but trying to "win" by getting an extra-low price or by refusing to budge on your offer may cost you the home you love. Negotiation is "Give and Take".

6. Remember your home doesn't exist in a vacuum. Don't get so caught up in the physical aspects of the house itself — room size, kitchen, etc. — that you forget about important issues as noise level, location to amenities, and other aspects that also have a big impact on your quality of life.

7. Plan ahead. Don't wait until you've found a home and are ready to make an offer to get approved for a mortgage. Investigate financing options, home insurance, and consider a schedule for moving before considering making an offer. Presenting an offer contingent on a lot of unresolved issues will make your bid much less attractive to sellers.

8. Factor in maintenance and repair costs in your post-home buying budget. Even if you buy a new home, there will be costs. Don't leave yourself short and let your home deteriorate.

9. Accept that a little buyer's remorse is inevitable and will probably pass. Buying a home, especially for the first time, is a big financial

commitment. But it also yields big benefits. Don't lose sight of why you wanted to buy a home and what made you fall in love with the property you purchased.

10. Choose a home first because you love it; then think about appreciation. While historical data shows homes in the U.S. have experienced consistent appreciation, the primary value of a home lies in its ability to provide a comfortable and secure living space.