

Compromise helps create picture-perfect moments

In the real estate ads shown on TV and placed in magazines and newspapers, a smiling couple is usually standing next to the “SOLD” sign in the yard. Only once has a client wanted me to take a picture in front of the “SOLD” sign, and I was thrilled to do so. We even included the family dog, Hairy.

What I find more often is that as I take couples through homes for sale, a house often pleases one person but not the other. Take my clients Mary and John (names have been changed to protect the innocent). We found a home on a small lake that Mary liked. I could tell by the way she lingered on the back porch enjoying the surroundings. John, on the other hand, was missing the workshop space that he desired and had written off the house as one that didn't suit their needs.

The next day, we found a home with a big garage and a basement, which provided all the workspace John wanted. It was priced at the low end of their budget, and John

was already calculating the money they would save by buying the house. Mary, however, was less than thrilled with the surroundings, which provided no quiet lake to sit beside and enjoy her morning coffee. John and Mary are still looking for the perfect house to suit them both, which may be very hard or even

impossible to find until they compromise with each other. To date, there has been no happy photo beside the “SOLD” sign.

Sellers Dick and Jane (names also changed) found themselves in a similar spot. Jane spends an enormous amount of time shuttling kids from here to there and wants a house closer to the activities in which they participate. Dick likes being out of the city buzz and doesn't mind the commute to and from his workplace.

Jane prepared her house for showings and is keeping her eye



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out for the next house, so the workload of finding the next home for her family has fallen squarely on her shoulders. Dick is dealing with the events surrounding this future move as best as he can, but I can tell by his reactions to the houses we tour that he's taking one for the team. It will probably be Jane and the

kids smiling in front of the “SOLD” sign when they sell their house, but it will be Dick taking the picture because he has already compromised for the benefit of the rest of the family.

It gets stickier when the sellers are divorcing and disagreement is at a peak. Deciding which agent will do the selling, figuring out the price, dividing up the duties of mowing the grass and keeping the house tidy, seeing eye-to-eye when an offer has been presented, and coordinating repairs can lead to all sorts of problems for the sellers, buyers and the agents involved

because compromise does not come easily.

As a rule, real estate agents are not lawyers, psychologists, marriage counselors, magicians or mind readers. To give your agent the best shot at finding a deal that will work out to the satisfaction of all involved, the agent must be included in all lines of communication, and everyone must participate. So if you are a buyer or a seller, take off the lens cap, turn on the lights, get all those involved lined up and smiling, get everything in focus, and you'll have an easier time getting a picture-perfect transaction to develop.

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