

Hear ye or hear ye not?

We weren't looking for a new house, but something about the photo on the Multiple Listing Service caught my eye. A traditional two-story with a big front porch. The house was in a convenient neighborhood, and in the same school zone where we live now, so it seemed like a good idea. I convinced my "I'm never moving again" husband to go take a look.

We drove through the area and immediately liked the surroundings. The houses were set back from the street, which were level and perfect for walking the dogs or riding bikes. When we pulled up to the house, it looked just like the photos. From the porch, there was a mountain view. My husband, Mike, got out and saw the Smokies, then the magnolia tree, the big backyard, the porch that begged for a swing, and he was hooked. But as soon as I got out of the car, I knew I couldn't make the purchase.

You see, there was traffic noise from the nearby interstate. But, given my husband's positive reaction to the house, we went in to see what else the house had to offer. It was just what a traditional two-story should be. The kitchen was made to make apple pies. There was a cozy fireplace in the family room, and the bedrooms were all tucked away upstairs. But the drone of the cars came through the insulated windows. Hmhmhmhmhmhmhm.

"Don't you hear that?" I asked Mike as he was placing our furniture with his mind.

"Hear what?" was his reaction.

Okay, maybe it was just my problem. We went home and discussed the house.

"You won't hear the traffic when it isn't rush hour," Mike promised. So I went back the next day in the middle of the day. I imagined myself trying to enjoy the



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backyard, or being home with the windows open but could not get past the sound of tires whirring on concrete.

"I can't do it," I told Mike. He was horribly disappointed. So I went to the MLS and started pulling listings to see if another one could compare.

"Does it have a mountain view? A big porch, a magnolia tree?" he asked when I showed him one that I thought was attractive.

"No."

"Then I don't want it."

That's when I really realized it. Some people hear background noise and others just don't. Take the morning alarm, the dog or the kids standing beside the bed in the middle of the night, or the TVs that are left on throughout the house. Does Mike ever hear those things? Of course not.

The first thing he does when he wakes up is turn on the TV, he

walks around on the weekends with his i-Pod stuck in his ears, and he can play music on the radio and work on the computer at the same time. I call it his "noise." For him, silence makes him crazy.

I need complete silence to work and to think. I can drive around all day and never notice the car radio is off. There are certain kids' TV shows that touch a raw nerve in my ear and can leave me cranky for hours afterward. For me, silence is bliss.

But, I'm sure there is a family who will visit that house with the big porch, the mountain view and the magnolia tree and not even notice the traffic noise. They will have found the home of their dreams.

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