

It's a jungle out there

I don't know what to do. I am weary of turning the possibilities over in my head, and I feel the need to consult a good Realtor. My family and I can't decide whether we should sink significant funds into our existing home to remodel it, go out on a financial limb and build the dream home on the acre of land that we bought for that purpose, or just buy something in the middle that is newer than what we have and less expensive than the dream home.

The proverb from the Bible, "Physician, heal thyself," comes to mind. I should be able to figure this out easily, as I solve this type of problem for others nearly every day of the year. When I work with clients, the answers to their real estate dilemmas usually seem very clear.

For instance, when the question of remodeling comes up, there is always the return on investment discussion that happens with it. "No, you won't get 100 percent of your remodeling costs back," I am confident in saying. "And you may overbuild and overprice your neighborhood. But

you will enjoy your house for a longer time if you remodel, and when it comes time to sell, it may sell faster."

When buyers push themselves to their financial limit shopping for a house, I am always nervous for them, afraid that they will find themselves with little extra money for emergencies, for the future or for fun. Ultimately that decision is their own. If they want to take that financial risk in exchange for a home they love, I must trust their ability to prioritize and trust that where there's a will, there's a way.

Buying a newer home appeals to many people. It's so nice to walk into something fresh, with newer light fixtures, newer plumbing, newer HVAC, newer roof and a newer kitchen. The possibility of having fewer immediate maintenance issues and not having to deal with the renovation process often pulls people out of their older homes in exchange for newer ones, but some question



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Homework

whether the expense of moving is worth the trade.

Clients call me when they become weary of working out their plan themselves. We sometimes have long discussions, with me offering plenty of (solicited) advice. It's my job to chop away at the real estate jungle that surrounds my buyers and sellers, helping them clearly

see the path they should take. I am armed with statistics and with a decent knowledge of the Knoxville area. I share my experience with financing, logistics, building, inspections, and real estate laws and requirements. And if I don't know something, I have an army of fellow professionals to whom I can direct my clients' inquiries.

But now that I'm making a personal real estate decision, the blades on my real estate jungle chopping tools seem dull. I am hacking away at an issue that I'm trained to solve, but my perspective has been skewed because it is my

money, my family and my future. The jungle seems to be closing in rather than being cleared. I cannot find my way alone.

You can bet that I will be taking advantage of all of the ears of my Realtor colleagues. I will present my quandary to them so they can help me gain perspective and figure out what is the best thing for me to do. It'll be an easy answer for them, and they will clear my jungle for me. Now I really know why we real estate agents exist – to lead others through decisions when personal involvement makes it difficult to find our own way. Don't be afraid to seek help. Call an agent to get started on chopping away at your real estate jungle.

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