

ANN ABERNETHY



BUBBLE OR BUST

**49 FAST FIXES TO SELL
YOUR HOME IN ANY MARKET**

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For Morgan, Lacey, Mike, and Gary

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THIS BOOK IS BROKEN UP INTO 7 CHAPTERS WITH 7 OF ANN'S FAST FIXES!

DID YOU DO THE MATH? IN ALL, YOU WILL GET 49 OF MY QUICK AND EASY STEPS ON HOW TO GET THE BEST PRICE FOR YOUR HOUSE IN ANY MARKET.

FOREWORD

I have a virus. Some might call it an addiction. I love to transform houses, land, and ranches that need help. The thrill of rescuing and transforming the "ugliest house" on the block will never leave me. It's in my DNA. I'll never forget mentioning to a friend that I was buying the ugliest house in town, and she knew exactly which one it was! I love every step of the process and am never happier than on demo day.

Transforming a home from a blank canvas into a gorgeous showcase isn't a big leap from my background in television and advertising. The creative process is quite similar to producing a television show. Pulling disparate elements of design, people, pacing, and production together is the same. The end result is different, of course, but both share inevitable ups and downs, excitement, unpredictability, and teamwork. It takes a team to create the vision and arrive on deadline for showtime.

If you are someone who wants to add value to your home to live in or sell, you will need to do some pre-production to create and present your home in the best light.

Whether your home is priced at tens of millions of dollars or thousands, the steps to presentation are very much the same. I've done it over and over... every single time.

I HOPE THIS LITTLE GUIDE HELPS YOU ON YOUR WAY TO A SUCCESSFUL CLOSING, OR JUST A SUCCESSFUL LIFE LOVING THE HOME YOU OWN.

Bubble or Bust: 49 Fast Fixes to Sell Your Home in ANY Market is here for you. There are tips to try on every page. I wish you all the best and much joy on your journey. I would be thrilled to hear how my tips have helped.

INTRODUCTION

These are the best of times and worst of times. Who knows which? From 2020 to mid-2022, we lived through the HOTTEST real estate market in history. A worldwide shortage of inventory and massive demand have driven home prices to an unsustainable level. Sunday real estate sections, television news, and business magazines are rife with “Bubble or Bust” headlines that have us all shaking in our boots. Is it real? Will it happen? Does anyone know for sure? For every article predicting a boom, there’s one that answers with a bust.

The truth is, no one really knows. What we do know is real estate, like the stock market, is cyclical. I’ve seen 3 real estate “corrections.” They all happened for different reasons, but the outcome was the same. As mortgage interest rates increased, demand decreased. The only thing we couldn’t predict was how quickly prices appreciated and, conversely, depreciated once again.

How would it feel to know what it takes to sell your home in ANY market, no matter what? Forget about bubbles and busts. Think about how unpredictable life can be and all the unforeseen events or circumstances that could force you to sell your home. You could be downsized, outsourced, fired, get married, have a baby (or two), send your children off to college, or retire—all of which might require a change in real estate.

THIS BOOK WILL LEAD YOU THROUGH AN EXPERT’S SECRETS TO **SELL YOUR HOME NO MATTER WHAT. BUBBLE OR BUST, YOU’RE IN CHARGE.**

With my “Bubble or Bust” approach, we’ll go step by step through my own personal to-do list for selling your house. I know it can be daunting to think about how to tackle an entire house, which is why I’ve broken it down into 7 sections comprised of 7 easy-to-follow steps. You will learn how to add value without spending a lot of money.

Pick and choose what works for you, but trust me, these tips are tried and true. I’ve used them throughout my career too many times to count.

You'll have to set the stage to make your house stand out, even in a red-hot market with a sea of "for sale" signs. In this little primer, you will learn how to create excitement in the eyes of other agents so they'll beat a path to your door instead of the nextdoor neighbor's. Whether it's a sizzling hot real estate market OR an ice cold one, you want to be able to justify the highest price possible for your property.

If you want to get your asking price, your house has to dazzle the buyer. It has to be worth it! If you use the tips in this book, your house will be a star even if it is comparable in size and style to all the other houses on the market. Your effort will pay off in your pocketbook. Ask any real estate agent, and they will tell you very few people put this kind of effort into showing their house. I employ my own fixes every time, and it has always worked.

Other agents tell me they love showing my houses because they won't be disappointed.

Every house has flaws, but use these tips and you will create an irresistible feeling surrounding your home. Imperfections become much more forgivable if the buyer enjoys the feeling they get while they are at your house. Even if your house doesn't work for them, they won't forget it, and that will create a positive buzz around your property.



Selling your home is a production.

Think about it like show business:

You are the producer and director.

Your goal is to create a star.

THIS BOOK WILL:

GIVE YOU THE **TOOLS** TO SELL YOUR HOUSE FOR MORE MONEY NO MATTER WHAT.

GIVE YOU THE **CONFIDENCE** TO USE THEM.
IF I CAN DO IT, SO CAN YOU!

TEACH YOU HOW TO MAKE THE PROCESS **FUN**,
LESS STRESSFUL, AND SUCCESSFUL FOR YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY.



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

You must plan and take charge of your own production. You design the sets, set the stage, manage the budget, hire the actors (A.K.A. your real estate agent), rehearse the play, and meet the deadline of opening night. And finally, it's SHOWTIME!

Your home is probably the biggest investment of your life. Why not make the effort to get the most out of it? You can do as much or as little as you want.

If all you do is follow my 7 steps to showtime, you'll be way ahead of the competition. So, let's go for it!

LET'S GET STARTED!

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO KNOW THIS STUFF?

Because my Fast Fixes will translate to more money when you sell your house.

Anybody ever had changes in their lives? Birth, school, graduation, career, marriage, divorce, children, empty nest, retirement, downsized, outsourced, retired, dead! With every rite of passage, there is a real estate play!

LET'S TURN THIS **MILESTONE** INTO MONEY IN THE BANK!



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

USE THESE **49 FIXES** TO TAKE CHARGE AND SELL YOUR HOUSE, NO MATTER WHAT!

We can't control the real estate market or everything that happens to us. Knowledge is power.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

Whether your home is priced at tens of millions of dollars or thousands, the steps to presentation are very much the same. I've done it over and over... every. single. time.

Ladies and gentlemen! Drum roll please... I give you Bubble or Bust: 49 Fast Fixes to Sell Your Home in Any Market. Let the show begin!

01

7 CORNERS TO CLEAN UP



Photo Credit: Matt Snell

Cleaning your home before you put it on the market is as obvious as it is simple, yet it is the hardest task for most people to tackle. I get it: It's overwhelming to even think about what to do with all the stuff you've accumulated over the years and shoved into closets, drawers, boxes, and basements so you don't have to look at it anymore. Then there's the stuff of our lives we don't even see because we live with it day after day, from unopened mail piled on your desk and unread books on your shelves to toy boxes filled with broken junk your kids outgrew five years ago.

You want the buyer to walk into your home and raise the price in her mind so that her opening offer starts high. If you don't take care to remove the clutter from your home before you put it on the market, you are actually helping to sell other homes in your price range that are well-kept. You cannot expect to get top dollar if your house is a mess. Here's the thing: Cleaning up is the best thing you can do for your home and for your peace of mind whether you decide to sell or not. What do you have to lose besides a bunch of junk?

HERE ARE MY 7 FAST FIXES TO MAKE CLEANING EASIER.

FAST FIX #1

CLEAR THE CLUTTER



Go through every room with your phone.

Go through every room with your camera. Stand in the middle of every room, including the front and backyard and patio(s), and take pictures. By using the camera, you'll see your house with new eyes, much like a buyer who has never been there before. Those piles of clutter will stand out like a sore thumb in a photo, so take one last look and kiss the junk goodbye.

See through a new lens! Start here:

- Before you do anything else, devote 30 minutes to taking pictures of every room in your home.
- Grab your phone and start in the kitchen.
- Stand in the middle of each room and take photos of every space as you turn a full 360 degrees around the room. Shoot every single detail.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. Every room, every space, inside and out.
- Go outside and photograph the entire exterior of the house and all landscaping, patios, your garage, and driveway.
- Sit down and look at the pictures on a bigger screen.
- The photos will tell you instantly where the offensive clutter is.
- Use the photos and tackle one space at a time. This will take some time. It is a project and a very important one. So, go!
- The time you invest in taking photos will deliver value. The offensive clutter and deferred maintenance will be glaring. The photos will be your guide.

FAST FIX #2

COMMIT

Decluttering is your job. Just commit. You are working for yourself. That's a good thing.

Think spring cleaning. Clearing the clutter calms down the entire house. It makes it look clean and organized. It instills confidence in the buyer that the house has been cared for and is in good repair.

Be brutal and honest. If you haven't used it in a year, chances are you won't, and neither will your spouse or kids. Toss the stuff and clean what's left.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!
Your kids don't want your stuff!

Brutal, right? Ask them if they want your china, silver, and any "collection" you may have. If they say yes, then give everyone a deadline to pick up the items. If they don't show, let them know it will be given away. Your stuff is occupying too much real estate in your home. Take a hard look, and find it all a new home either with your children or someone else's.





Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

Clear the Countertops:

Kitchen clutter accumulates. Make three piles: keep, give away, trash. And remember, less is more. Clearing the counters creates the feeling of airiness, cleanliness, and space, which is important in all kitchens.

- **Start by clearing the countertops** of everything: blenders, cookie jars, catch-all corners, platters, glasses, toaster, etc.
- A coffee maker, toaster, and one set of knives are OK, but only if you have plenty of room for them. If not, put them all in a **cupboard out of sight**. Kitchen clutter accumulates.
- **Throw out** any incomplete, broken, or unmatched sets of glasses and dishes and then stack and organize everything nicely so it looks clean and uniform.
- **Get rid of large stuff you don't use**, like old pots, pans, and platters.
- Keep only what you **need to function every day**. Throw out old spices, bottles, etc. Roll up all electrical cords, store them neatly in a clear plastic bag, and make sure they are hidden from view.
- The same approach should be used in all your bathrooms. And for the love of money, **please make sure everything is put away!** No buyer wants to see your old soap or toothbrush.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

First offer, best offer. Why? The first buyer is usually the most motivated and competitive. They want your home. Time to take it seriously and negotiate with them. If you are lucky enough to get multiple offers, pick the one with the best price AND terms. Highest price is not always the best deal.

FAST FIX #3

CLEAR A PATH



THE PRIMARY BEDROOM IS THE PLACE TO SET A ROMANTIC TONE FOR A PROSPECTIVE BUYER.

Is your entryway, living room, family room, stairway, or landing dotted with jackets, extra shoes, sports equipment, homework, backpacks, notebooks, or family photos?

- Clear the way for a buyer to experience your home, not your life.
- Clear the way for them to see themselves living there. The best way to do that is to remove your personal photos. Painful, I know. But, necessary.
- Do you still have an exercise ball or a treadmill gathering clothes that never quite made it to the closet? Get everything out of the bedroom that doesn't belong there. The last thing they want to see is a makeshift home gym.
- Remove the junk from the floors throughout.
- Clear the bedside tables. Remove personal items.
- Create romance in the primary bedroom and bath. Replace old bedding, towels, and bath mats.
- Replace mismatched shampoo containers with matching bottles. Make it look like a spa.
- Again, clear the countertops.

FAST FIX #4

CLEAN THE CLOSETS

I know it's tempting to just shove everything out of sight and into closets and drawers. Let's be honest: That's how most of us clean, which is what got us into this mess in the first place. When it's showtime, every inch of your house is on display, including the closets and inside of your drawers. Closets are part of your house, and buyers always look to see how large or small they are. Make them pretty!



- **Pick everything off the floor and hang it up.** Store things like sporting equipment off the floor by hanging on nails or storing on shelves or on racks in the garage.
- **Look at the hanging clothes.** Eliminate half of them and leave space between the hangers.
- **Buy new black velvet-colored hangers.** Mommy dearest was right! Use a nice separate hanger for every article of clothing.
- **Line up shoes in perfect order on a rack and off the floor if possible.**
- **Get rid of shoe boxes!** The colors make your closet look busy, crowded, and small.



- **Lighting is important.** If your closet is dark, do something about it. New LED motion detector lights are inexpensive, easy to install, and cast a wide glow. You will need several for a large walk-in closet.
- **Line your drawers** with white plastic drawer liner. It can be ordered online. Amazon.com has many options. Use white.
- **Measure drawers before you buy.**
- **Organize clothing by size and color.** Give away things you haven't worn in over a year.

FAST FIX #5

CLEAN THE CARPET

Don't sweep it under the rug - or the carpet!

I can't even begin to tell you how important clean, neutral carpets are when it comes to selling your home. This is one instance when I suggest sellers spend money to get a guaranteed return on investment. Are your carpets stained? Worn? Dirty? Stinky from pet odors? Get them professionally cleaned or, better yet, replace them. Engineered wood or wood look-alike vinyl plank flooring is an even better choice. If you choose to replace your flooring, be prepared to move out furniture. Plank flooring installation is fast and clean and delivers a big return on your investment. Just pay close attention to your budget as you choose.

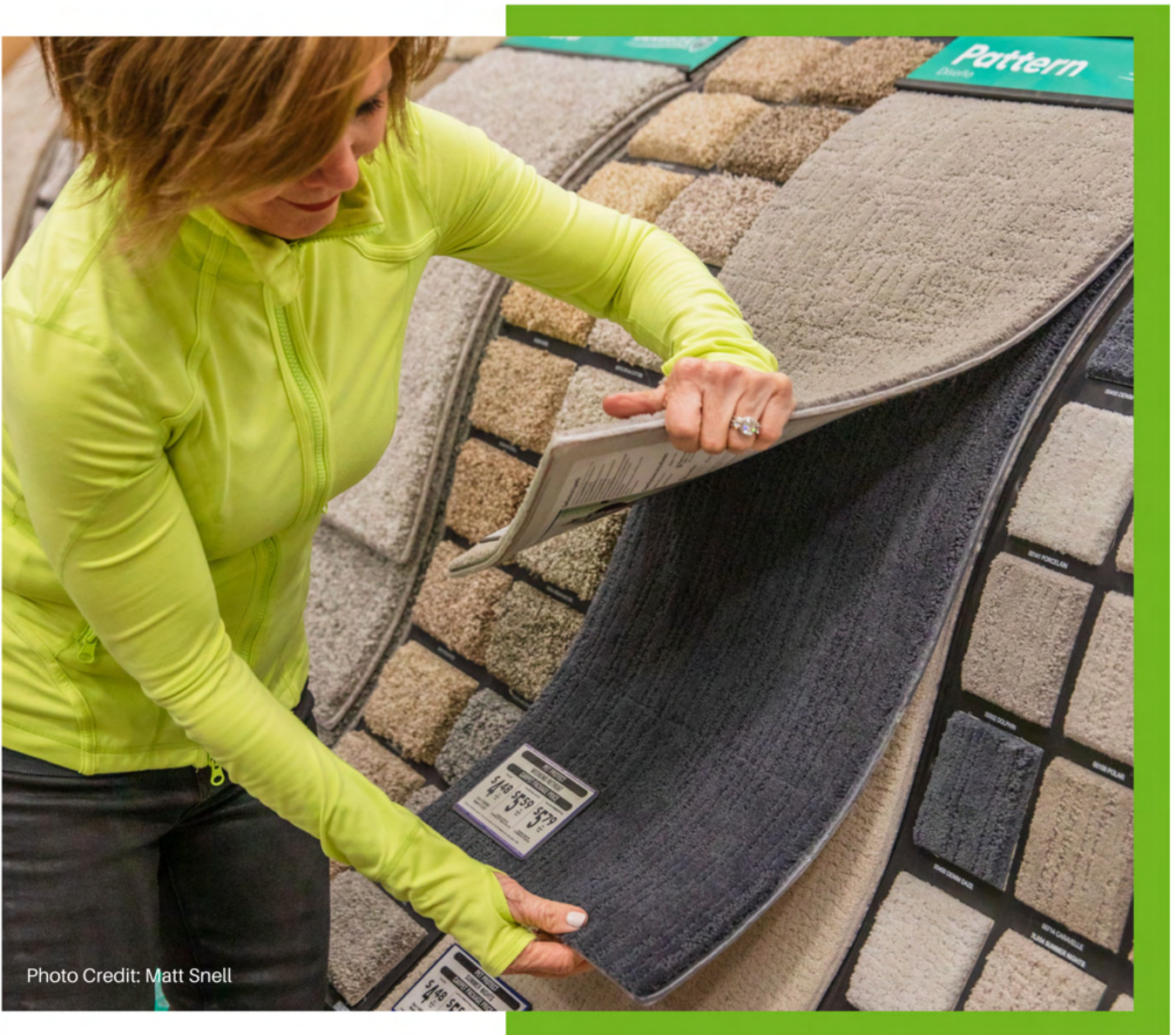


Photo Credit: Matt Snell



Bring your room measurements with you and be prepared to buy on the spot. Let the sales people know you are serious.

- **Make it your mission to find the best deal!** Shop around at your local carpet warehouse stores.
- **Choose ONE carpet for the entire house.** Neutral colors are best; preferably a low, flat, wheat color that goes with everything. You can negotiate a better price per yard if you use one style and color and buy in large quantities.
- **Look for the largest rolls in the warehouse.** Is it a neutral color? Ask the salesperson if they have any “overages” or mistake orders that they would like to get rid of. Sometimes you can get a better-quality carpet for the price of an average one just by asking that very question.
- **Bring your room measurements with you and be prepared to buy on the spot.** Let the sales people know you are serious.
- **Always work with the most senior person in the place.** Ask for the sales manager when you arrive. They have the authority to cut prices even more than what is marked. Don't be afraid to negotiate!
- **Make sure your price includes installation** and a pad, especially if your old pad is rotten, damaged, or smelly.

FAST FIX #6

CRITTER AND COBWEB CLEANUP

You would think it would be obvious to rid your house of damage or smell from your animals, but let's just say I have seen enough to know it's not. Look around your house for animal damage and make a list of things to clean up.



*Examine all doors
for dog scratches inside and out.*



- **Replace kitty-torn draperies or remove them altogether.**
- **Examine all doors for dog scratches inside and out.** Touch up or repaint if necessary.
- **Does the house smell like gerbils?** If so, consider professional carpet cleaning and repainting the walls.
- **Is the fish tank green?** By the way, where is the fish tank? Bird cage? Snake cage? All and any animal cages must be moved out of the living spaces and housed in a utility room or garage. They all run the risk of turning off potential buyers.
- **What damage have dogs done to the backyard?** Fencing? Screens? Repair all pet damage and assign a designated area for your pets to live. This space is also where pets can be placed while your house is being shown.
- **Walk around your house with a long-handle duster or broom and look up!** Make sure you clean all the high corners, light fixtures, ceiling beams, and anything above you.

FAST FIX #7

CREATE CURB APPEAL: KICK IT TO THE CURB

Know the old saying, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression”? That should be your mantra for preparing your house to sell. First impressions are critical, and they start at the CURB!

Survey the house and garage. Take everything out of the garage and give it the once over. Get rid of all the junk.

If you have stored a lot of stuff and leaned it against the house, move it.

Clean out the old plants; hose down sidewalks, your garage, and entryway; and do your best to get rid of any evidence of what was there. If you must keep it, find a storage place in the garage. Clear out the cobwebs!

**YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO
MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION.**



Photo Credit: Dave Salgado

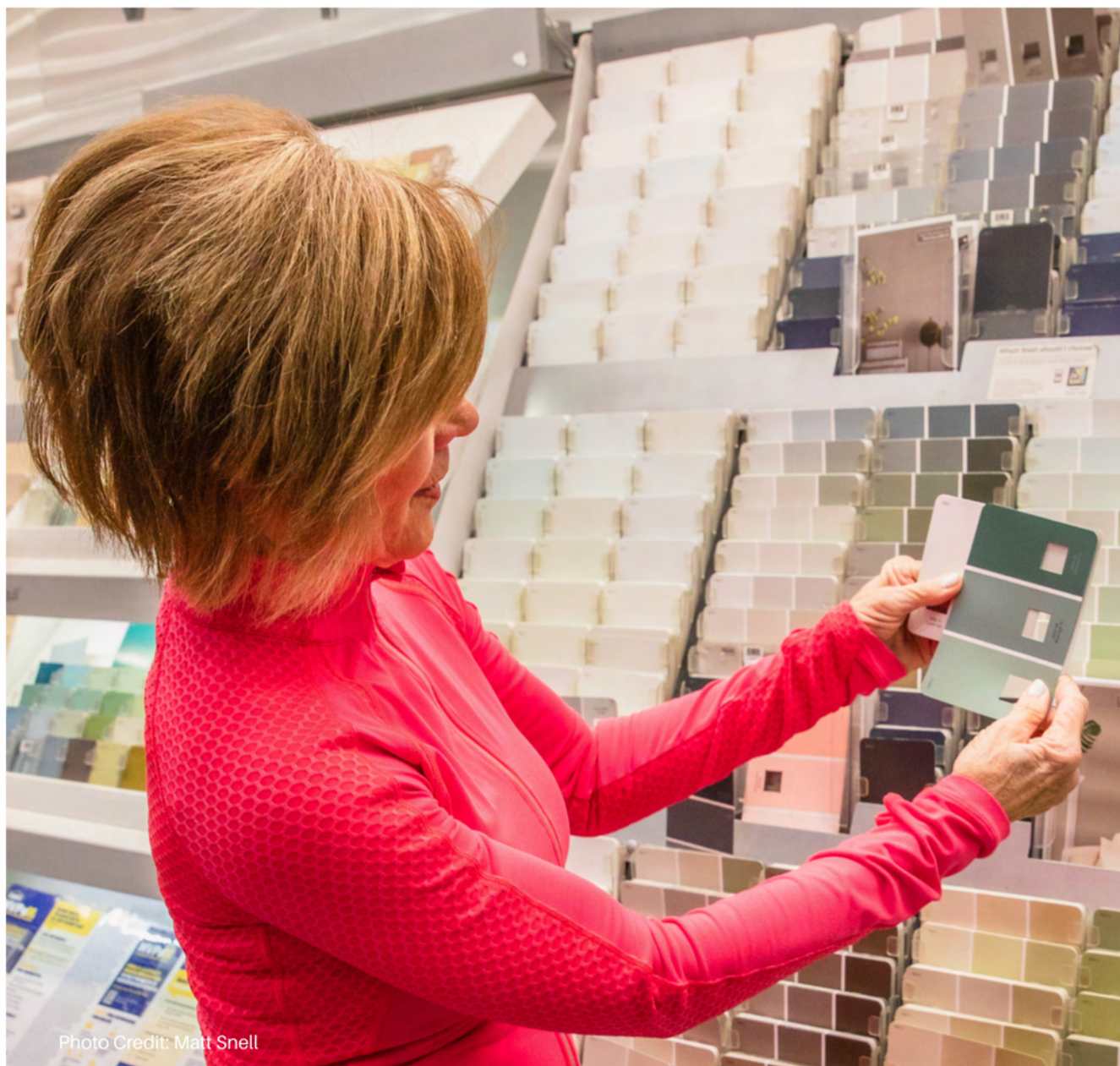


Photo Credit: Matt Snell

- **Roll up all your garden hoses** and hide them as well as you can.
- **Go out to your curb and look at your house.** Again, a camera can be useful here.
- **Clean the outdoor furniture,** even in the winter. Buyers look at everything!
- **Are the trees and shrubs overgrown?** Can you see the front door? Is old landscaping blocking sunlight from coming into your house? Clean up the landscape.
- **Get rid of weeds** and tired old plants and clean all flowerbeds. Trim everything.
- **Does the house need a coat of paint?** Are the shutters broken or damaged?

EXTERIOR FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- **Inspect the gutters and clean them out.**
- **Wash the windows and screens. Hire a professional if you can.**
- **Get rid of hanging plants that you have to walk around or through to get to your front door.**
- **If you have collected a lot of small plants in small pots on your front (or back) porch, get rid of all of the small pots. Buy 2 large pots for your entry and plant with new plants. The look is cleaner and more effective. Use one color of plants that you can maintain or replace over time.**
- **If you can only paint one thing, paint the front door.** First impressions are everything!
- **Make sure that your garbage cans are out of sight and your garage door is closed for all showings.**
- **You don't have to spend a lot of money on outdoor plants and flowers,** but do make sure the lawn is mowed and edged and the driveway, sidewalk, entryway, and patio are swept or hosed off before you show it.



”

You don't have to spend a lot of money on outdoor plants and flowers...

FAST FIXES

BEFORE



AFTER



CHAPTER 1

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

- Clear the clutter with your camera**
- Commit**
- Clear the countertops**
- Clear a path**
- Clean the closets**
- Critter and cobweb cleanup**
- Create curb appeal**

**NOW THAT WE COVERED A FEW FAST
FIXES, IT'S SHOWTIME!**

FAST FIXES

BEFORE



AFTER



02

7 SECRETS FOR SETTING THE STAGE



Just like the dress rehearsal before a big show, it's critical to set the stage before putting your home on the market. These 7 Fast Fixes will make the process easy and will make your home shine like the star you want your buyer to see!

First, you'll want to focus on the two most important rooms in the house: the kitchen and primary suite. Kitchens are critical. They are command central. Not only are they the hub of the house for most families, but they are also its heart and soul. It's the gathering spot for friends and family activities. Life gets planned, discussed, argued, and nourished in the kitchen. With this in mind, it is critical that you make the most of the way your kitchen looks and feels. If the kitchen is clean, well organized, and fun, buyers will forgive other not-so-perfect areas of your home. And you can maximize its look and function whether your budget is large or small.

The primary suite is your sanctuary and should read that way to the buyer. It should be a calm and tranquil retreat for hard-working adults. The primary bath, no matter how large or small, should be as squeaky clean and as romantic as you can make it. Large or small, it should draw you in. You should be able to close the door and leave the world behind.

FAST FIX #1

COLOR COUNTS!


The most transformational fix you can make and the least expensive is paint. Paint changes the feeling and impression of any room instantly.

PAINT IS A FAST, INEXPENSIVE CHANGE AND CREATES A PERFECT BACKGROUND FOR YOUR NEW AND IMPROVED SPACE.

Be sure to paint a large sample and look at the color at different times of the day to see how the light changes it. Soft, cool colors are most tranquil and work best in the master bedroom. Stick with something current and neutral that will appeal to everyone.



Photo Credit: Matt Snell



My neutral go-to colors for interiors are currently:

Wall color: Sherwin-Williams: Repose Gray

Trim color: Sherwin Williams: Snowbound White

Exterior Body Colors:

Benjamin Moore: Wrought Iron

Sherwin-Williams: Iron Ore

Sherwin-Williams: Grizzley Grey

FAST FIXES

BEFORE



AFTER



FAST FIX #2

REVAMP THE KITCHEN

I know it sounds drastic. Why renovate right before moving, right? Remember, this is for your future buyer, and our goal is to get the best possible price for your house. Take a critical look at your kitchen. Are your cabinets and countertops dated? Do they need to be replaced? New countertops are going to make a huge difference in your kitchen. And while it does require an investment, there are ways to update your countertops without breaking the bank.

REMEMBER, THIS IS FOR YOUR FUTURE BUYER, AND OUR GOAL IS TO GET THE BEST POSSIBLE PRICE FOR YOUR HOUSE.



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo



*Be creative and flexible. And be willing
to price shop.*

- **Be creative and flexible.** And be willing to price shop. Ask stone and tile suppliers to recommend great installers. They work with them daily and know who is reputable.
- **Discount stores now stock a variety of countertops.** Source from local stores, and go directly to fabricators and search for overages. Measure your countertops and get a quote for installation from a local installer. You may be surprised to find large pieces of Caesarstone® or Silestone® quartz left over from another person's job.
- **Use tiles to create a beautiful countertop on a budget.** Butcher block counters are now stocked at [Home Depot](#) and [Lowe's](#), and many local tile companies have clearance sales on tile. If you can, get 24" tiles (I've even used floor tiles that look like soapstone). They can be laid with very tight joints and have a smooth appearance like granite. You can find tile that is affordable if you shop for overages or closeouts. If you find something you like and it's on sale, buy in large quantities for use in other areas for flooring as well.
- **Sometimes only one part of your kitchen needs to be replaced.** If you have an island, butcher block surfaces are a great counterpoint to tile and stone. They are available in many price ranges and are easy to get.



- Check Ikea, Lowe's, and Home Depot for stock butcher block as well as metal, luxury laminates, and synthetic stone countertops.
- **AVOID black countertops.** They will need daily cleaning. They show every drop of water, toothpaste, and soap spills. They look great but may drive you crazy.

TIP: HOW TO UPDATE YOUR COUNTERTOPS ON A BUDGET

Visit the blog post "[Painting Our Countertops to Look Like Marble with a Giani DIY Paint Kit](#)" by Jennifer Laura for my favorite tips to update your countertops on a budget!

HERE ARE A FEW **INEXPENSIVE** OPTIONS FOR **REFRESHING YOUR CABINETS:**

- **Spruce up your kitchen cabinets.** Painting, refacing, or replacing cabinets makes a huge difference and will guarantee a return on investment in your sale price.
- **Reface cabinets for a quick overhaul.** Stock sizes can be ordered online. Be sure to color-match the box color paint to the new door faces.
- **Replace the old door and drawer pulls with new ones. There are endless options for new drawer and door pulls online.** Big-box stores stock many modern pulls. Update by using a new color finish. Buy one or two as samples before you commit. In coastal areas, do not use gold-toned, brass, or nickel pulls. Salt air will pit them within a year. Chrome is the best option, or steel that has been sealed.



Photo Credit: Matt Snell



- **If you need to replace your cabinets altogether, or your entire kitchen, compare pricing for cabinetry online.** BOXI by Semihandmade© has quick delivery and will design to your measurements. CliqStudios© does the same. I have used CliqStudios© and found the kitchen planning easy to use. Check availability first from all suppliers. Wait times can be ridiculous. Be sure to look for the “Fast Ship” or “In stock” boxes and check them first on your search. Lowe’s and Home Depot now have a basic line and have made a huge effort to supply available stock. You can use basic cabinets and change the look by removing upper cabinets and replacing them with wood-toned open shelving, an island painted a different color than the cabinets, and certainly with countertop choices. Lowe’s, Ikea, BOXI, and CliqStudios© also have design resources available. You can design your kitchen online and get an install price. Check the lead time first. Cabinets come finished, so you don’t have to hire a painter. And the best part is, if you damage a cabinet door, you can just order another. The cabinets are easy to install and maintain.

FAST FIX #3

REPLACE OLD PLUMBING FIXTURES



Photo Credit: Matt Snell

If you are replacing your countertops, you should also replace the sinks and add new fixtures. You can buy them very reasonably priced at big-box stores like [Lowe's](#), [Home Depot](#), and [Ikea](#). For a higher-end look, go to a local plumbing supply store and buy floor samples or whatever is on sale that works for your look. Polished chrome is always the least expensive. Stick with well-known brands so you won't drive your plumber crazy trying to install them.

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

- **Replacing fixtures is easy and fast.**
- **Check the hardware** on your shower, toilet, and doors.
- **If you are replacing sink fixtures only**, match the other hardware in the room.
- **If you choose to replace all of your fixtures**, take care to order the same hardware finish for each item.
- **If you live in a beach community**, beware of anything but chrome or stainless steel. Almost all other metals will "pit" with salt air.

FAST FIX #4

IMPROVE YOUR FLOORING

If your floors are wood and scratched and worn, sometimes it is cheaper to replace them than to refinish them. If the wood is not in good shape, consider replacing the floor altogether. Refinishing wood causes a lot of dust. Do it first if you have to do it at all. All these materials are available at discount home improvement stores and local flooring companies.



Photo Credit: Matt Snell

IF YOUR FLOORS ARE WOOD AND SCRATCHED AND WORN, SOMETIMES IT IS CHEAPER TO REPLACE THEM THAN TO REFINISH THEM.

Hardwood floors are beautiful, but they require meticulous care during installation and regular maintenance. They can be a bit too precious in a home with lots of activity in and out. Just be aware that raw wood floors have to season in the space for several weeks to acclimate. If you don't allow time for seasoning, you run the risk that your floors might buckle, cup, crack, or warp.

- **It's true wood floors add major value, but you must consider your local climate.** If you live in a very humid or very dry climate with significant seasonal temperature changes, it can affect your floor's shelf life.
- **If you live in a very dry climate like I do in Colorado, the risk of shrinking, cracking, cupping, and warping cannot be exaggerated.**
- **Beware of major dust and disruption during installation, and always plan in advance!**
- **New wood laminates and luxury vinyl planks have come a long way in terms of design and are far more durable and predictable than wood.** Water doesn't affect them, and they are fast and easy to install. Remember to negotiate. Again, look for overages in stock materials.
- **Large-scale tile is great for hot weather climates, such as desert areas like Arizona and Palm Desert.** It is always easy to find a good-looking and economical tile. Just be sure that it isn't so thick that it will necessitate removing and replacing baseboards after it is laid. Look for a color and texture you like in a very large-scale tile. Just be sure your installers are very meticulous in laying it.

FAST FIX #5

THE BUSINESS OF BATHROOMS

I love bathrooms because there is so much you can do without having to make major changes or spend too much money.



HERE ARE A FEW **EASY WAYS** TO GIVE YOUR BATHROOM A REFRESH.

- **If your shower enclosure is a curtain, replace it and the liner with a fresh white one.** It will make a huge difference.
- **Clean out all the old bottles, soap, shower caddy, and anything else that is covered in soap scum.**
- **Replace your towels with a neutral color like white, cream, or grey.** Make sure they all match, and take the time to search for the best deal. You can always find towels that are on sale.
- **Clean off countertops and place only hand towels, NEW soaps, and a nice candle on the counter.**
- **Check out your vanity.** Does it need a facelift? If you are ordering new kitchen cabinets, order a sink base at the same time. There are also many vanities available online, such as [Signature Hardware](#) and [Build.com](#).
- **Search Pinterest boards** for the look you want. A carpenter can easily convert a piece to accept a sink, which creates a unique, custom look. I have used new pieces from [Pottery Barn](#) (even a dining room buffet), antique pine pieces, and plain old tables. After the conversion, there is no need for a finisher. You get more style for your money, and it is much faster than a custom cabinet. Be sure to measure the depth and the height of the piece. Bathroom countertops can be as high as 36 inches. That opens a variety of design opportunities for something beautiful, like an antique chest.
- **Buy an inexpensive mirror to add warmth and style.** You can find attractive mirrors at [Target](#), [Pottery Barn](#), and even [Lowe's](#), [Overstock.com](#), [Wayfair.com](#), or wherever you can get the best deal.
- **Paint the walls a new color.** Select a stock color from reputable brands like [Sherwin-Williams](#), [Benjamin Moore](#), [Ralph Lauren](#), and [Farrow and Ball](#). Take advantage of the millions of dollars these companies have spent on consumer research. You can't go wrong if you stick with what is newly available from major paint brands.

- **If you need to retile a shower, white subway/brick-shaped tile is inexpensive, available everywhere, and always looks good. It is usually in stock at big-box stores.** There are dozens of in-stock choices for bathroom tile. No need to order! You are fixing your home to sell, not for you to live in.
- **Caesarstone and Silestone countertops will take some time to fabricate.** If you can plan ahead, they are a clean and beautiful solution and come in numerous colors and styles.
- **Add a frameless glass shower enclosure.**
- **Avoid trendy tile applications. Mosaics may drive you crazy in a couple of years.**



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

FAST FIX #6

LIGHTING

Talk to any interior designer and they will tell you lighting is one of the most important components of good design, but it's also the most commonly overlooked. Changing out your lighting will shine a new light on your space, so to speak. Light fixtures always show.



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

- **Remove old, dated hanging fixtures and hang new ones.** Online stores such as [Overstock](#), [Wayfair](#), [Joss & Main](#), [Urban Electric](#), and [Build.com](#) now have a fast ship option. Light fixtures are like jewelry. They add sizzle and punch to a space.
- **Replace inexpensive builder chandeliers and sconces with more interesting pieces.**
- **Add low-volt halogen track lighting where no lighting exists.**
- **Add a small wireless lamp** to countertops, desks, or chests, provided there is ample room. Lamps give a sense of warmth and coziness. There are many options for sleek wireless lamps available online.

FAST FIX #7

STAGE YOUR OWN HOUSE

You must define every space in your home for the buyer. Go through your house and look at each room. What are you supposed to do there? If your living room has become a hobby shop or home office, turn it back into a living room. Edit each room with an eye for design.

**IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN EYE FOR DESIGN,
SEARCH ON INSTAGRAM OR PINTEREST AND
SEARCH FOR DESIGN BY ROOM.**

Visit the accounts for major design magazines (Architectural Digest, Dwell, Elle Décor), and copy what you like with your own furniture. Get rid of worn furniture. Remember, less is more. Do not push sofas against a wall. Rearrange your rooms for easy conversations and traffic flow. It is not always a good idea to put the sofa against one wall and chairs against another! For the time it takes to peruse the internet, you'll have the benefit of highly paid interior designers!



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

FACT: "STAGING A HOME ON THE MARKET INCREASES THE SALE PRICE OF THE HOME ON AVERAGE ANYWHERE FROM 1-10%, ACCORDING TO 50% OF HOME REAL ESTATE AGENTS." ACCORDING TO "THE ZEBRA" (2023)

FAST FIXES

BEFORE



Photo credit: Mountain Home Photo

AFTER



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

CHAPTER 2

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

- Color counts!**
- Kitchen correction**
- Clear the countertops**
- Cabinet update**
- Plumbing fixture punch-up**
- Bathroom business**
- Let there be light**



03

7 STEPS TO SHOWTIME!



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

THIS. IS. IT.

IT'S THE MOMENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.

YOU HAVE A SHOWING, AND A REAL BUYER IS COMING TO LOOK AT YOUR HOUSE.

MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THESE 7 STEPS BEFORE YOU OPEN THE DOOR.

FAST FIX #1

ALWAYS SAY YES TO A SHOWING

No matter what. The power of **YES** will bring realtors to your door with their clients. You have to make it easy for them. Your house needs to be on top of their list, and it will be if you are cooperative and available. You can always juggle the times of showings.

JUST SAY YES!

You will make it work if your intention is to make your house stand out in the crowd. Make sure everyone you live with is well prepared long before this stage to keep your house “showtime ready” at all times.



Your house needs to be on top of their list, and it will be if you are cooperative and available.

FAST FIX #2

FOLLOW MY 5-MINUTE RULE

Make your house showtime ready at a moment's notice. You will get the call from your broker who says, **"I am with a client and we are getting coffee. I told them about your house, and they really want to see it.**

I know it's short notice, but could we possibly come by now?"

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD ALWAYS BE YES!

The best way to make this work is to be in very close communication with your realtor. They need to know when your child is ill, or if there is some reason a showing would be too disruptive. I've been in the middle of a party or meeting in my home when I got a call requesting a showing. I said YES and explained to the group what was going on. The realtor also warned the client that I was having a party and that they would get to see the house in action! It's actually a great idea to show your house when it is full of life and energy. The buyer gets to see how you make it work. They can always come back for a closer, more private showing.

THE KEY IS CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR AGENT AND THE POWER OF YES!

**YES,
YES,
YES!**



FAST FIX #3

CREATE A ROMANTIC, FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE. ASSAULT THE SENSES!

I don't mean decorate the house with balloons, streamers, and loud music. I would advise not to turn on music—some buyers think you are trying to cover up some offensive neighborhood noise. Rather, prepare your house as you would if you were having guests over for dinner. Do all the things you would do for your guests.

AFTER ALL, THE PROSPECTIVE BUYER IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT GUESTS YOU'LL EVER ENTERTAIN!

- Clean the powder room. **Put out fresh guest towels or attractive paper ones.**
- Make sure you have **new, small hand soaps available** to put in the clean soap dish.
- Turn on and **adjust all the lights for the time of day.** If you are showing your house in the evening, be sure to set an evening mood.
- Don't forget **outdoor lights** for an evening showing.
- **Fluorescent lights are harsh.** Turn them off.
- **Use all lamp lighting as well as dimmers** if you have them.
- **Consider your bedding.** If it is tired, replace it with a new comforter and pillow shams. Solid colors work best, and crisp white always looks great and is the most romantic.

FAST FIX #4

FIREPLACES AND CANDLES



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

Candles are good in the powder room, primary bedroom, and bath. Just make sure that they are mildly scented. Strong, fruity candles are as bad as a woman with too much perfume. It is better not to use them than to be offensive.

Fireplaces are wonderful except when it is 105 degrees outside. Use common sense. I have turned on my fireplace, opened doors, and had the air conditioning running at the same time. This is effective on a gray, overcast day. The idea is to create a romantic, peaceful atmosphere.

**THE IDEA IS TO CREATE A ROMANTIC,
PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE.**

FAST FIX #5

SERVE FOOD AND DRINKS

Always have a little refreshment out for the showing. Make it look special. And serve it in the room in which you'd like the buyer to linger. It can be as simple as a nice pitcher of ice water with floating lemon wedges. Use your nice crystal pitcher and glasses atop a pretty, large linen napkin. Add a small cluster of flowers or herbs from your garden and you've got it. It is about the gesture and thoughtfulness, not the specific food. It just makes people feel welcome. You can do a lot or a little, but make sure you do it.

IT MATTERS TO REALTORS.

Shopping for houses can be a frustrating and exhausting process. Your home will stand out if it is the one that provides a refreshing break. Of course, be sure to serve food and drinks that are appropriate to the time of day.



Photo Credit: Dave Salgado

I always serve drinks and a little something to eat for every showing. I try to allow enough time to bake frozen sweet rolls or cookie dough prior to the showing. It's an old trick, but the smell of something baking in the oven works every time and is better than any candle. When I don't have as much lead time, I always have cookies in the freezer and serve them. Everyone likes them, and they lay out pretty on a platter.

Another must is water, and until 4:00 p.m, I serve a fresh pot of coffee from a thermos carafe. I like to cluster the carafe, water pitcher, glasses, milk, and sugar on a silver tray or a colorful, large ceramic platter. I place all of it on a large linen napkin with a small bud vase or small bouquet of something fresh from my garden. I never purchase flowers. I use what is in my garden that I can pick at a moment's notice. Rosemary, autumn leaves, fruit from trees, holly leaves and berries, or clusters of decorative shrubbery with or without color all work.

REMEMBER, IT'S THE HOSPITALITY THAT COUNTS. IT PIQUES THE SENSES AND EMOTION AND ALWAYS ADDS VALUE TO YOUR HOUSE.



FAST FIX #6

CORRAL THE CRITTERS



Be sure to include your pets in the planning process before showing your house. As much as you love them and they are a part of your family, they should be out of the way for this important business meeting (i.e. showing) at your house.

Plan a place for your pets to be safely confined during a showing. There is nothing worse for a buyer terrified of dogs to be met at the front sidewalk by a charging great dane or a yappy little dog.

ELIMINATE THE RISK OF TURNING OFF THE BUYER AND PROTECT YOUR PET FROM THE CONFUSION OF ALL THE NEW ACTIVITY.

Dogs, cats, gerbils, birds, fish, turtles, snakes, and any other pets need a temporary retreat, whether it is in the laundry room, garage, or outside. I was looking at a house recently and was shocked at what I found. The owner had stashed her cat in the master bathroom shower! Locked behind a glass shower enclosure in the most important bathroom in the house lurked the unhappy cat, with litter box and all. Although I really liked the property and had driven several miles to see it, I just couldn't get that image out of my head. All I could see in my mind when I thought of the master bath was that smelly, noisy cat. NEXT! It killed any interest I had.

FAST FIX #7

PUT THE LIDS DOWN ON ALL THE TOILET SEATS



That's right—all of them. You must make the rounds to every bathroom in your house. It only takes a couple of minutes, but it is important. Just do it. You would be surprised by how few sellers do this one simple thing. Who wants to see the inside of a toilet?

THAT IS WHY TOILET SEATS HAVE LIDS. THEY ARE MEANT TO BE CLOSED.

Nothing could be simpler to do. And nothing can be as offensive to a buyer. Don't run the risk of turning them off (like the cat in the shower) when it is so easy to avoid. Buyers won't notice it if they are down, but they will if they are left up. It is so simple, and it does add value!



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

No music for showings. It distracts buyers and may cause them to feel like you are covering up neighborhood noise. Besides, they may not like your taste in music.

FAST FIXES

BEFORE



AFTER



CHAPTER 3

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

- 5-minute rule: Be prepared for last-minute showings**
- Say "Yes"!**
- Cabinet update**
- Create romance**
- Corral the critters**
- Toilet patrol**

BONUS TIP:

LEAVE YOUR HOME FOR EVERY SHOWING.

If you are thinking you will stay in your home to “help” your broker answer questions for a showing, stop. I know you want to help, but it just doesn’t. The buyers will feel the need to be polite and engage with you. That costs precious time, is a major distraction, and, more importantly, costs you money.

Buyers need to be able to focus on your home, not you. Do not hang around. Go. Every time. The broker will give you the "all clear" when the showing is over and get answers to any questions that come up. Leave the showing to a professional. Or, if you don’t have confidence, hire another broker.



*Leave your home for
every showing.*



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

Always leave your home for a showing. Always. Your presence makes buyers uncomfortable. They need to have their own reactions and thoughts.

04

7 REASONS TO RALLY THE TROOPS



Selling your home and moving can be an emotional experience for everyone involved, especially if there are other major life changes happening simultaneously (*i.e. death, marriage, divorce, new job, etc.*).

TRUST ME WHEN I TELL YOU THIS: NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN OF SELLING A HOUSE.

Even for investors with no emotional attachments, the process can be stressful. The best way to mitigate this is to have a plan. Just like we pack away our things, it's a good idea to pack away your emotions, or at least anticipate them and have a plan of action in place.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

Driving down to a house is not optimal. It is a psychological barrier to buyers. Driving up a drive always feels better.

FAST FIX #1

CREATE TEAMWORK AND KEEP EVERYONE HAPPY

Teamwork makes the dream work! That's why I tell all my clients to have a family meeting. Clarify your goals. This is especially useful for children who are more at ease when they know what's coming next.

Make everyone a part of the process: even young kids can be given small tasks so they feel in control. Finally, build a consensus. If you can get everyone on the same page, trust me: Things will go a lot more smoothly.

**"TEAMWORK
MAKES
THE DREAM
WORK."**

-One of Compass
Founder Robert
Reffkin's favorite
quotes

FAST FIX #2

CREATE A TO-DO LIST FOR EACH MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

In case you haven't already figured it out, I am a list person. There is something so satisfying about crossing items off a list that is very motivational, and it keeps you focused. One way to rally the troops is to give everyone their own list, no matter how small.

- **The 5-Minute Rule:** Make preparing your home for showings part of your morning routine. Sit down with your family and assign each person their own checklist. Make it fun. Check the list every morning. When your broker calls for a last-minute showing, you'll be ready to say **YES**.
- Give rewards to every member of your household at the end of the week for sticking to it. Give them something fun and unexpected to keep the momentum going.



FAST FIX #3

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

”

*I'm not saying to bribe your kids, but...
bribe your kids.*

All humans, no matter how big or small, how young or how old, need incentives. It's important to give every member a reason to care. What's in it for them? A better backyard? Bigger bedroom? A new trampoline, pool, or swing set? I'm not saying to bribe your kids, but... bribe your kids!



FAST FIX #4

SHOW YOUR HOME ON CARAVAN DAY

Most markets have a weekly broker's home tour, also known as a "caravan" or "brokers' open house day." That is the day brokers explore new listings that have just come on the MLS. It's important your broker submits your home to be included on caravan day. As soon as your home is actively listed, make sure it's ready and available for brokers to see it. If you have kids, this means toys can be picked up and put away on the fly. Make it a game. Time them and give them a small prize for being able to do this quickly.

WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET YOUR FAMILY ON BOARD WITH BEING ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SHOWINGS ON SHORT NOTICE, DO IT.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

Never buy a house with a room so large you won't go in, sit down, and read a book alone.

FAST FIX #5

ASK YOUR AGENT TO SHOW YOUR HOME ANYWAY

Even if your home isn't quite ready, let your broker know that people can come by anyway. The idea is to get your home exposed as soon as possible. Once you have it ready, it will be easier to keep it that way. This will also help family members get adjusted to having strangers in the home.



THE MORE YOU COOPERATE WITH YOUR BROKER, THE MORE ACTIVITY WILL BE GENERATED. THE MORE TRAFFIC, THE BETTER.

The sooner they get used to it, the better it is for everyone. If your agent is hosting a caravan event (inviting other agents to tour the homes they have listed for sale), offer to make your house available as well. An assistant can hold your house open if the broker is at another new listing. The more you cooperate with your broker, the more activity will be generated. The more traffic, the better.

FAST FIX #6

CREATE A NEW HOME SHOPPING LIST



The best way to help your household move on is to get them focused on what's next. One good way to do this is to come up with a list of wants and needs for the new house. Making plans for the new space can be especially effective for young children to help get them on board and excited for a big move.

EVERY MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD SHOULD CREATE A WISH LIST FOR THE NEW HOUSE.

10 wants and needs:

- Sit down for a family meeting. Assign the family with the task of creating their own lists of 10 "wants" and a separate list of 10 "needs."
- Go around the room and listen to everyone.
- Then, ask each person to choose the top 5 priorities on each list.
- Go around the room again and listen to everyone.
- Next, narrow it to 2 things that are absolute wants and needs.
- Repeat until the group agrees on a group list of 10 things! Be sure everyone participates and you build consensus.

10-point scale:

- Create a shopping list and rate each item from 1-10 in terms of priority. That way you won't feel pressure to complete the list all at once and expectations can be managed more effectively.

FAST FIX #7

CELEBRATE!

Who doesn't love a good party? Whether it's a going away party or a housewarming party, it's always a good idea to celebrate your move with friends and family. It sets a positive tone for what can be a stressful change and gives the members of your household the opportunity to gather with people who can offer support.



BONUS TIP:

LOOK FOR A PROPERTY THAT HAS AT LEAST ONE REDEEMING QUALITY

There are no perfect homes. Look for a property that has at least one redeeming quality, such as:

- A great location
- Walkability
- Waterfront access
- Views
- Low maintenance
- Historical significance
- Charm
- Distinctive architecture



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

There are three things you cannot overcome: a bad location, bad floorplan, and low ceilings.

THE THREE THINGS YOU CANNOT OVERCOME:

- 1. Bad location:** You cannot pick up the house and move it. Walk away.
- 2. Bad floorplan:** Be sure the floorplan is workable. Is there one good room? If you love it and it happens to be in front of a busy street, industrial complex, or a hoarder neighbor, walk away. A bad location costs money when you try to resell.
- 3. Low ceilings:** On rare occasions, with a lot of work and money, you are able to raise the ceilings on a one-story home. If you have other options, take them. Raising ceilings costs significant time and money.

CHAPTER 4

FAST FIX CHECKLIST!

Teamwork makes the dream work

Create family "to do" lists

Create "What's in it for ME?" incentives

Be ready on caravan day

Create a new home shopping list

Celebrate "sold!"



Photo Credit: Matt Snell

05

7 MEANINGFUL MOMENTS WITH YOUR AGENT



FAST FIX #1

TREAT YOUR AGENT AS YOUR PARTNER

When you select a real estate agent, you are entering into a business partnership. It's important to understand this is a relationship and a two-way street. If you see your broker as someone you work with instead of someone who works for you, I promise you will achieve much better results. You are both invested in the same goal: to sell your home for the best possible price. The more you work with your broker and do your part to make sure the process goes smoothly, the more successful you will be in achieving your goals.

- **Communicate often:** The more open you are, the better. Don't be afraid to let your broker know if you have a sick family member, a spouse who is going through a hard time, or a large dog that likes to jump and drool on people. Together you can work to mitigate the challenges of everyday life and still come out ahead.
- **Be honest:** Keep an open dialogue, and if something is bothering you or of concern, speak up! Problem solving begins with identifying the problem. Your broker can't read your mind.

FAST FIX #2

HIRE THE BEST AGENT FOR YOUR HOUSE, NOT YOUR BEST FRIEND WHO IS AN AGENT!

Let's face it: We all know someone who is a real estate broker, and sometimes those people are friends, family members, or close friends of the family. Trust me on this: Your sister/best friend from college/old roommate is a great person, and she might even be a solid broker, but that does not mean she is the best broker for you. Here are a few ways to avoid the friend trap.

LET'S FACE IT: WE ALL KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS A REAL ESTATE BROKER...

- **Get a referral from someone who has recently sold a property in your area.**
- **Just say no.** It might be a little awkward, but believe me, it's a lot better than how unpleasant it can get if a deal goes bad. That's a friendship killer.

FAST FIX #3

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

It always amazes me when people underestimate how important the broker/client relationship is. They say brokers are a dime a dozen, and it's true. That's also good news! It means you get a lot of brokers to choose from. On the other hand:

IT'S IMPORTANT TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK. AND JUST LIKE ANY JOB INTERVIEW, ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO MAKE SURE YOU HIRE THE BEST ONE.

- **What's their track record?**
- **How many listings do they have? Too few? Too many? You want to be sure you will get their full attention.**
- **What kind of marketing do they do?** A good broker will show you their marketing plan.
- **Is this their full-time job?** You don't want a broker who sells real estate "on the side."
- **What is your commission?** It is definitely important to know this up front. And, commissions are negotiable.



FAST FIX #4

PRICING IS EVERYTHING

While markets fluctuate, the method for determining the right price remains the same and is relatively simple. This is the hardest thing to explain to many sellers, who have their own ideas about what their home is worth.

- **Price it right from the beginning:** Listen to me because this is very simple, yet everyone wants to make it complicated. If you want to sell your house, it has to be priced right. Period. An experienced broker knows how to do a proper market analysis to determine the magic number.
- **Sellers who don't listen to their broker's advice end up having their home on the market longer and will eventually have to settle for a price reduction.** Well, guess what? A price reduction costs you time and money. Listen to your broker!
- **Analyze the selling prices of homes in your area that are comparable to your own.** Researching the "comps" (comparable homes and list prices that have sold in your area) is standard practice, and your agent will be able to walk you through it. It's typically based on two statistics: the average price per square foot and the median price per square foot.
- **Are you a true seller?** If you are not willing to listen to your agent's advice, we can only assume selling your house is not a priority.
- **Price accordingly:** If the price is right, your house will sell in any market.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

If your home hasn't had showings in 30 days or offers in 90 days, and all else is perfect about your house, it is overpriced. If you are a seller, agree to reduce the price. Make one big move down, not a small one. This tells the market you are a serious seller.

FAST FIX #5

MAKE SURE YOUR AGENT IS A TEAM PLAYER

Real estate is a very competitive business, and a good agent understands the client relationship requires personal time and attention.

A good broker:

- Returns calls within a reasonable amount of time.
- Is respected by other agents. Do your homework before agreeing to work with an agent. Ask around.
- Will work closely with you and respect your schedule and family time.

A GOOD AGENT UNDERSTANDS THE CLIENT RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES PERSONAL TIME AND ATTENTION.

FAST FIX #6

FIND AN AGENT WHO BRINGS “EXTRAS” TO THE TABLE

Again, with so many agents to choose from, you want to make sure the person you choose has a stellar track record and an arsenal of tools at their disposal to help you sell your house.

Make sure your agent:

- Works for a **reputable company**.
- Will be **present** for showings.
- **Returns calls** and texts and is respected by other agents.
- Is active in the **community**.
- Knows current **marketing technology**.

FAST FIX #7

MAKE SURE YOUR AGENT HAS TIME FOR YOUR LISTING

On the flip side, you don't want an agent who is too busy, either. A broker who is in demand might not have time for your listing or might not make it a priority.

One way to avoid this pitfall is to consider the following:

- **Does this agent have several expensive listings?** You can bet that's where they're going to put their time and energy.
- **Will your agent be in town and show your property personally?** Or, will an assistant do all the showings? This is important to know in advance. Showing homes is an art, not a science. You need to be sure you are comfortable with an assistant showing the home. If they are unlicensed, they will not be able to offer any advice at all or perform any agent duties. They will just be able to open the door and offer marketing materials.



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

CHAPTER 5

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

- Treat your agent like your business partner**
- Communicate often with your agent**
- Hire the best agent for your house, not your best friend who is an agent**
- Ask the right questions and do your homework when choosing a realtor**
- Choose a team player who has enthusiasm for your home**



06

7 TERMS TO COME TO TERMS

ANN'S STORY —————

Coming to terms, a meeting of the minds, an agreement or contract... that is the goal when selling your house. Until you have "come to terms" with a buyer, your house is still, well, your house! Selling your house should be a negotiation that satisfies both you and your buyer, a win/win. And you are in charge. There are infinite reasons why people want to sell and why people want to buy. Sometimes coming to terms is fast, fun, and delightful, and other times it is not. It all depends on the circumstances and motivation of both the buyer and seller.

I love the process of selling a house. The negotiation is always challenging and unpredictable. One of the more memorable transactions I've had was the sale of a house in west Los Angeles.



Photo Credit: Michele Cardamone Photography

One afternoon I opened my front door and there was an envelope on the step. Inside was a contract with a very decent offer for the house. My house was not on the market at the time, but it had just been redone and was in a very good neighborhood with a top-notch school nearby. A real estate agent who knew the neighborhood and my house brought the offer. The price was very close to what I would have asked if it had been on the market. The escrow period, short and sweet. Hmm... something to consider.

After a few days of investigating the buyer and consulting with some real estate agents, a second offer came to me through another real estate agent. She had heard the story, knew my house, and was pitching hard for me to sell to her client. Two offers in a week was just too tempting, so I decided to counter to both. Within a day both offers came back. The second offer was for \$20,000 or so more than my counter!

Normally, I wouldn't think twice about taking the higher offer as long as I knew the buyers were qualified, which both of these seemed to be. But, that isn't what happened. The story of the first buyer was just too compelling.

The first offer was made by a woman who had terminal cancer. She was a wife and the mother of 2 teenage sons. She knew she didn't have much more time to live and wanted to create a nest for her husband and children to live in after she was gone. She wanted them to have a new beginning and future in my house. She loved it and felt that it was "right" for them. Needless to say, I sold to them. No contest.

But it doesn't end there. The family moved in, and unfortunately, the lady died. Her husband and children continued living there for many years. In the process of getting to know the neighborhood, the widowed husband met a lady down the street and started seeing her. They had a lot in common, since the man's late wife had actually worked with the neighbor. The lovely neighbor lady had enormous respect for the man's wife. She knew how concerned her friend was about leaving her husband and two boys. The two of them began a serious relationship. So serious that they got married!

ANN'S STORY

See the ripple effect of one little decision in your life? It isn't always about the money. That lady had great vision and strength. I admired her ability to take charge of her family's fate. She set the wheels in motion for a happy ending for her family. I have always been thrilled by that story and the outcome. Remember when I said every right of passage leads to a real estate deal? I just love real estate and what it means in people's lives. And all of this was set into motion because two people came to terms... had a meeting of the minds, a contract.



*A house is made
with walls and
beams; a home is
built with love and
dreams. — Ralph
Waldo Emerson*

Home is where the heart is. — Unknown

“The magic thing about home is that it feels good to leave, and it feels even better to come back.” — Unknown

“Home is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence... where expressions of tenderness gush out without any sensation of awkwardness and without any dread of ridicule.” — Frederick William Robertson

Here are a few terms that you need to know when you are trying to come to terms. I hope by understanding them, you set something wonderful in motion!

TERM #1

LISTING AGREEMENT:

The listing agreement in real estate is also commonly referred to as the "listing contract." This is a legal agreement between a seller and a real estate agent or broker that outlines the terms and conditions of the sale, including the listing price, the agent's commission, and the duration of the agreement. The listing agreement also specifies the responsibilities and obligations of both the seller and the agent, such as the agent's duties to market the property, show it to potential buyers, and provide feedback to the seller. The listing agreement is a binding contract and typically gives the agent or broker the exclusive right to market and sell the property during the listing period, although there are different types of listing agreements with different terms and conditions.

TERM #2

COMPARABLE:

Comparable properties, also known as "comps," are recently sold or currently listed properties that share similar characteristics with a subject property being appraised or evaluated in the real estate market. These characteristics may include location, size, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, lot size, age, style, and condition of the property. Comparable properties are used by real estate agents, appraisers, and buyers to determine the fair market value of a property based on the prices of similar properties in the area. By analyzing the sale prices of comparable properties, real estate professionals can gain insights into the current market conditions and make informed decisions about buying or selling a property.

TERM #3

OFFER:

The name may vary from state to state. In Colorado where I live, the **Contract to Buy and Sell Real Estate** is a legally binding document that outlines the terms and conditions of a real estate transaction between a buyer and a seller. The contract includes details such as the purchase price, earnest money deposit, financing terms, closing date, and any contingencies or conditions that must be met before the sale can be completed. The Colorado Contract to Buy and Sell Real Estate also includes provisions for property inspections, title and survey review, and any required disclosures or notices. The contract is typically prepared by a real estate agent or attorney and is signed by both the buyer and seller. Once the contract is signed and all contingencies have been met, the sale can proceed to closing, at which point the property ownership is transferred to the buyer. The Colorado Contract to Buy and Sell Real Estate is a critical document in the real estate transaction process and should be reviewed carefully by all parties involved.

TERM #4

COUNTEROFFER:

A response to an offer made by a potential buyer that proposes different terms or conditions, such as a higher sale price or a longer closing period.



"ANN-ISM" TIP!

Ask your broker to piggyback showings if possible. It makes your prep time more efficient. Also, it is not horrible for buyers to overlap a bit. Their competitive nature comes out. We like competitive buyers!

TERM #5

SELLER'S PROPERTY DISCLOSURE:

A legal document that a home seller is required to provide to potential buyers which outlines any known defects, issues, or other material facts related to the property that could affect its value or desirability. The disclosure typically includes information about the condition of the property's structure, appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, electrical systems, roofing, and any environmental hazards or zoning issues that could impact the property's use or value. The seller is legally obligated to disclose any known defects or issues, and failure to do so could result in legal liability for the seller.

TERM #6

HOME INSPECTION:

A thorough examination of a property's condition by a licensed home inspector to identify any potential issues or defects.

TERM #7

DUE DILIGENCE PERIOD:

A specified period of time during which a buyer has the right to investigate and evaluate a property prior to the sale being finalized. The due diligence period typically begins after the seller accepts the buyer's offer and ends on a date specified in the purchase contract. During this period, the buyer has the opportunity to conduct inspections, review property disclosures and records, and verify any information related to the property. This may include obtaining financing, researching zoning and land use regulations, and investigating any environmental or legal issues that may impact the property. The due diligence period is critical for the buyer to ensure that the property meets their needs and is in the expected condition before completing the purchase. If the buyer discovers any issues during the due diligence period, they may have the option to renegotiate the terms of the sale or terminate the contract.

BONUS TERM

CLOSING! YOU ARE DONE. SOLD!

Closing, in the context of real estate, refers to the final stage of the transaction, where the property ownership is officially transferred from the seller to the buyer. During the closing, the buyer and seller typically meet with a closing agent or attorney to sign all necessary documents and complete the financial aspects of the transaction, including the transfer of funds from the buyer to the seller. The closing typically takes place at a title company or attorney's office and may involve various parties, such as the real estate agents, lender, and other professionals involved in the transaction. The closing agent or attorney is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the transaction are completed properly, including the recording of the deed and mortgage documents with the appropriate government office. Once the closing is completed, the buyer receives the keys to the property and becomes the new legal owner of the property.



Photo Credit: Michele Cardamone Photography

CHAPTER 6

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

- The listing agreement in real estate is also commonly referred to as the "listing contract."**

- Research and be aware of comparable properties.**

- There are different terms for "offer" depending on the state.
Ask your broker to clarify all terms.**

- Be diligent in understanding the seller's property disclosure.**

- Understand the due diligence period and work with your potential buyer to provide information.**

07

7 TIPS FOR MOVING OUT AND MOVING ON



FAST FIX #1

AVOID CONCURRENT CLOSINGS

I once moved out of my home on the day of closing just to be nice and to accommodate the new buyers only to find out the deal did not go through. Lesson learned. Under no circumstances should you move out before closing. Instead, negotiate a Post-Closing Occupancy Agreement with the buyer, even if it's only for a couple of days, to make sure you aren't contractually obligated to move out on closing day.

Another reason not to move out on closing day is because if the deal doesn't go through and you've already moved all your furniture, it's more difficult to sell an empty home than a furnished one. If you ever end up in this predicament, your only option is to either rent staging furniture or move back in. Yes, this also happened to me, so I know from experience this is a horrible situation that should and can be avoided.

**DO NOT MOVE OUT OF YOUR OLD HOUSE
UNTIL THE MONEY IS IN THE BANK.**

FAST FIX #2

MAKE PACKING EASY TO UNPACK

I know it's a pain, but the more organized you are as you pack, the happier you will be when you unpack. This means labeling every single box and organizing them by room so when they arrive at your new house, you will know where everything goes.

- **Attach labels** to sides of boxes.
- **Label boxes** by room destination.
- **Include contents** on the label.

FAST FIX #3

PREP YOUR NEW HOME BEFORE THE MOVERS ARRIVE

This took me a long time to learn, so let me spare you the agony of arriving at your new home without making sure everything is in order in advance. Here are a few things that often get overlooked, but with a little advanced planning, will make your move go much more smoothly.

- Order all utilities to make sure the accounts are set up and service is ready to go **the day you move in**. This includes things like electric, cable TV, phone, and internet.
- Is the washer/dryer in the new house gas or electric? Will you need a converter?
- Will you need carpet or hardwood floor installation? Make sure to take care of this **before the boxes arrive**.
- Line all drawers using white plastic lining **before you move in**.

FAST FIX #4

MAKE SURE UTILITIES ARE LEFT ON IN YOUR NEW HOUSE

This is so simple, but you wouldn't believe how often it gets overlooked. No one wants to be in the dark, so to speak, when they move into their new house!

- **Request a change of accounts for all utilities.**
- **Turn off and turn on is unnecessary.** Simply have the accounts changed into your name.
- **Nothing is worse than no water or power on moving day.** Ask me how I know!



Photo Credit: Mountain Home Photo

FAST FIX #5

HIRE A QUALIFIED MOVING COMPANY

The old saying “you get what you pay for” has never been truer than when it comes to hiring a qualified moving company. You should know by now I’m all for finding a deal and negotiating the best price. But, when it comes to moving, you want to put your life (as in all of your personal belongings) in the right hands.

- **To avoid moving madness, hire the best mover, not the cheapest.**
Trust me when I say you get what you pay for. Hire people to help you pack or give yourself enough time to do it right. Make sure every single box is clearly labeled in a way that is visible from all sides.

DO NOT HIRE A MOVING COMPANY WITHOUT CHECKING THEIR REFERENCES FIRST.

- **Make sure the estimated time for the arrival of your belongings to the new house is guaranteed.**
- **Is the company insured and bonded?**
- **Does the company use professional equipment?**
- **Are you getting one truck full or is it shared?** Many moving companies will load your belongings with another household in order to fill up the truck! This can lead to a longer wait time on delivery, not to mention lost or mixed-up items. Be sure to request a smaller truck that is exclusively yours.
- **What does the signed estimate include?**
- **Are they able to navigate steep driveways? Tight turns?**
- **Will you need a shuttle?**
- **How many days will it take?**
- **How much does the company charge for overtime?**
- **Will the movers take the boxes and trash away?**

FAST FIX #6

SET SMALL GOALS FOR UNPACKING

Now that moving out is over, it's time to tackle the second half: moving in.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO MAKE THE PROCESS EASIER. AS ALWAYS, TRY TO TACKLE ONE THING AT A TIME—SMALL GOALS.

- Unpack one room at a time.
- Pick a day to hang all pictures, mirrors, etc.
- Prepare for the worst case scenario, such as a moving van that never shows or is delayed for several days. This is yet another reason to negotiate for a Post-Closing Occupancy Agreement to make sure you have a few days to account for the challenges of moving.
- Keep sleeping bags, flashlights, and toiletries **with you**.



FAST FIX #7

A thick green L-shaped graphic element that starts below the 'FAST FIX #7' text, extends horizontally to the right, then turns 90 degrees down to extend vertically to the left of the 'CELEBRATE!' text.

CELEBRATE!

A thick green L-shaped graphic element that starts to the right of the 'CELEBRATE!' text, extends vertically down, then turns 90 degrees left to extend horizontally to the right.

CHAPTER 7

QUICK FIX CHECKLIST!

Never move out of your current house before the money is in the bank.

Make unpacking easier in the future by labeling every single box and organizing them by room so that when they arrive at your new house, you will know where everything goes.

Order all utilities in your new space to make sure the accounts are set up and service is ready to go the day you move in.

Hire a qualified moving company with good reviews.

Celebrate!



Photo Credit: Michele Cardamone Photography

APPENDIX

ANN'S RESOURCES

Start here to create your own Fast Fixes!

These are places I frequent when prepping my homes or anyone else's for sale.

RETAILERS

[LOWES.COM](https://www.lowes.com)

[HOMEDEPOT.COM](https://www.homedepot.com)

VANITY AND LIGHTING

[SIGNATUREHARDWARE.COM](https://www.signaturehardware.com)

[BUILD.COM](https://www.build.com)

[BATHMARKETPLACE.COM](https://www.bathmarketplace.com)

[LIGHTING.COM](https://www.lighting.com)

PAINT

[SHERWIN-WILLIAMS.COM](https://www.sherwin-williams.com)

[BENJAMINMOORE.COM](https://www.benjaminmoore.com)

[BEHR.COM](https://www.behr.com)

[VALSPAR.COM](https://www.valspar.com)

[PPG PAINTS.COM](https://www.ppgpaints.com)

ACCESSORIES, SHELVING, AND LIGHTING FIXTURES

[ETSY.COM](https://www.etsy.com)

[BUILD.COM](https://www.build.com)

[IKEA.COM](https://www.ikea.com)

SALE ITEMS

[POTTERYBARN.COM](https://www.potterybarn.com)

[HOMEGOODS.COM](https://www.homegoods.com)

[GILT.COM](https://www.gilt.com)

[OVERSTOCK.COM](https://www.overstock.com)

[WAYFAIR.COM](https://www.wayfair.com)

[JOSSANDMAIN.COM](https://www.jossandmain.com)

[GRANDDADDY OF ALL: AMAZON.COM](https://www.amazon.com)



MEET THE AUTHOR

ANN ABERNETHY

After a television career in New York and California, Ann began investing and renovating undervalued homes. Her trained eye for finding the right home at the right price is a benefit to anyone trying to add value to their real estate portfolio. Ann's experience on both sides of numerous personal transactions and her keen eye for design and investment provide experienced guidance through the buying and selling experience.

The journey through a transaction can be overwhelming, emotional, and uncertain. So, why go it alone? As an investor in both residential and commercial real estate, Ann has been in the trenches and has experienced those feelings too many times to count. She is ready to guide you through the process with a calm and steady hand.

As a connector of people and cheerleader for Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley, Ann uses her television experience to connect the community with live events and video features focusing on the outstanding influencers who make Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley an exceptional place to live.

Telling the story of your home is the goal. Sharing it with the world as a founding member of the prestigious and invitation-only REALM.Global network delivers powerful reach for presenting your home to a global market.

When you are ready to make your move, Ann is ready to help you find your way home inside Aspen and beyond.

TESTIMONIALS

Ann Abernethy was hands down the best realtor we have ever worked with. She was knowledgeable, patient, kind, and kick-ass. Having a realtor who not only knows the market but is well respected in the community and knows how to negotiate is a GAME CHANGER. Do not sleep on the opportunity to work with her. She will remain our Aspen valley realtor for life. - **Anna Moore**

Selling a "home" is much different than selling a house. Selling a family home can stir up just about every emotion known to man. That is why I was very careful to choose a broker who understood me and the importance of offering support both personally and professionally. Not a day went by without some hand holding and guidance from the beginning to the end of the sale process. Ann took care of every detail, all the way down to fresh food and goodies in the refrigerator to have on hand during the packing process. I blame her for a few extra pounds, but they were worth it! And so is Ann! - **Catherine Rohrstaff**

Having been involved in multiple real estate transactions over the last 40+ years, I can attest to the fact that Ann is - without a doubt - the most knowledgeable and efficient agent I've ever worked with. Ann is adept at the negotiation process, every detail during escrow (including inspections), title work, and closing, and she is always available, which is rare. An added bonus is that Ann is simply a wonderful, positive, fun, and fascinating individual. Bottom line, you won't regret engaging her to handle all your real estate needs. - **Mark Johnson**

TESTIMONIALS

Ann is a wizard of sorts. She has the uncanny ability to take plain, weird, or even disastrous properties and turn them into hip, beautiful, functional spaces that would make even Pinterest cry. She has a particular talent for color and tone as it relates to emotion. This creates an air of calm in your space. Not to mention her brain for function. Each inch is thought through with practical everyday living in mind. The most amazing part is that she does this with a budget in mind. She is able to find unique and wonderful things that do not have to break the bank. I would simply be lost without her. Her properties are fantastic, and the photos tell it all! I love my home, mostly because of Ann's incredible eye and generous spirit. She is always willing to help and a joy to work with! You are nuts if you don't call this amazing and kind lady right now!!! - **Nancy Kaney**

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Follow me on
Instagram & share
this book with your
pals!

If you are looking for
more Fast Fixes, visit
my website.



Photo Credit: Michele Cardamone Photography

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