



Where Do I Start?

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Not me and not this article, but that is THE question I get more than any other.

Think it'd be a piece of cake for you to uproot yourself? What about your exquisite collection of Widgets? Or all of the things stored in the basement that you never unpacked from your last move? What about the deferred maintenance or septic system you haven't updated? Come on, be honest.

Even under the best of circumstances, moving is far from a joy. While you may look anxiously forward to gallivanting about in your new home, it's not likely you're calm and clear about the process that will ultimately get you there.

According to the US Census Bureau: "it is estimated that a person in the United States can expect to move 11.7 times in their lifetime ...at age 18, a person can expect to move another 9.1 times in their remaining lifetime, but by age 45, the expected number of moves is only 2.7".

Hey, you think the Real Estate landscape has changed a wee bit since that last move? Had Al Gore even invented the Internet yet? Seriously, even if you bought/sold a home in the last 3 years the audience of prospective buyers is substantially different.

So it's at least conceivable that you haven't moved in quite some time, therefore perhaps it's a good time for a refresher on what you can do to reduce the impact and stress on yourselves.

First and foremost, remember that YOU are in charge! The Listing Agent is working FOR you and owes you their FULL attention. It is of the utmost importance that whomever you hire values and internalizes the relationship.

Consider using an SRES® (Seniors Real Estate Specialist) Realtor®. There's no guarantee that you'll be a perfect match with any Realtor®, but SRES® designees are more likely to be attuned to working at your pace. You can find local SRES® Agents on their website: www.SRES.org but be aware only 6% of all Realtors® even have the SRES® designation.

Establish a common language with your Realtor®. I can't stress this enough! Parsing out your concerns and exploring expectations from both perspectives is key to making the relationship work and seeing the transaction through to its successful end.

If you have any concerns about the public entering your home, request NO open houses. Public Open Houses are a dirty little secret designed to placate the homeowner! They portend to help "advertise" your property but in truth, pretty much only helps the Listing Agent meet potential buyer clients that have not chosen an Agent need representation for OTHER properties. In the past, Open Houses played a valuable role before the Internet and perhaps you even decided on your current home as result of one.

Require your Listing Agent to attend ALL showings and not use a lockbox. If the Agent is charged with *selling* your home, shouldn't they be PRESENT at the showing? Who's going to tell the story of your home? Think of your house as the "showroom"... doesn't it make sense to have a salesperson available to answer questions or at least to gauge buyer feedback?



Do not agree to dual agency. In Massachusetts, it is perfectly legal for a Realtor® to represent BOTH the seller AND the buyer as long as each party agrees in writing. Would you want to negotiate against yourself? I didn't think so. This is a potential minefield and is likely not in YOUR best interest. Beware of "Bovine Scatology", as the late Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf used to say.

Consider using a team approach. A good Realtor® understands the value of time, not only yours but theirs as well and will have a robust database of professional, reliable specialists ready to assist. For instance, utilizing the skills of a Senior Move Manager is an excellent way to prevent overload when coordinating, sorting, packing and eventually settling you in your new home. How about a reliable auction company to help whittle down the volume of your stuff?

DO NOT be talked into spending for erroneous improvements prior to listing your home unless there's an acceptable Return On Investment or if there's a measurable downside to not tackling the project. Yes, granite countertops are fabulous and updated bathrooms desirable but at best you only have a 50/50 chance that the new buyer will agree with your taste! Furthermore, it is generally unwise to make improvements in a "vacuum." In other words, they should reflect the character of the house taken as a whole.

Have a plan "B". What if your home languishes beyond your projected move out date? But what will you do if you get a cash offer right away and the buyer needs you to be out in 2 weeks? Are you prepared to put your things in storage, essentially moving twice? Currently, many Zip Codes have a sizable SHORTAGE of reasonably priced properties and bidding wars are becoming more common. Fear of loss is terrific motivator!

Know when to ask for help. No matter how proud and independent you are, selling the family home is NEVER easy. Emotions can be as overwhelming as dealing with quantity and scope of your belongings.

Approach your next move with the assistance of a Realtor® with the heart of a TEACHER rather than a salesperson and you will be doing yourself a huge favor. They will have access to tools and techniques to insulate you from the vagaries of the process and act as a Sherpa guiding you confidently through the transaction.

Adam is the Broker-Owner of Milestones Realty in Hingham, which services Plymouth, Norfolk, Suffolk, Middlesex and Bristol Counties. As you will have guessed, Adam is an SRES® Realtor®. He can be reached at 781-264-6526.

