

Emotions Aside, How to Choose the Right Home

When buying a home, it is easy to get caught up in emotions. You fall in love with the new kitchen or giant yard, but the largest purchase for most people requires some objective consideration. The best way to determine if a house has the potential to be your dream home is to visually apply your daily life to it.

Just another day

Picture yourself living in the home on a typical day in your life.

Everyday living: Where do you prepare and eat meals? Is there space for everyone to gather together? How about apart? Do you need an area for a hobby or for large holiday gatherings? Where do you pay your bills and file important documents? If you have school age children, where will they do their homework?

Entertainment: If you entertain, do you typically invite a large group or prefer more intimate gatherings? Where will you set up your television, sound system and computer? Is special wiring required? Do you have a hobby that requires separate space? Do one or more family members take a daily run or use exercise equipment indoors? If so, where would these things take place?

Maintenance: What will require additional time or money for maintenance? Can you clean the house on your own or will you need to employ a cleaning service? Are there carpets that will need regular cleaning? What about the heating and/or cooling systems? Will you have to paint the exterior or does it have siding? Is there a pool? Does the yard require lawn maintenance?

Outside: If you like to spend time outdoors is there space for eating, entertaining or just relaxing? Is there a patio? What is the sun exposure? Are there trees to shade the house in the summer? Are they well maintained to allow light and air to circulate? What will autumn raking entail? How about winter shoveling? How much maintenance will be required?

Household tasks & local activities

Once you determine a house is ideal for your family's way of living, think about where you need to go when you pull out of the driveway.

Are there a grocery and hardware store, library, farmers' market, or other retailers and service providers you and your family use regularly near this home? If your children are currently enrolled in sports and activities, can they continue or will you have to find new ones? Are there families nearby to carpool with? Will children have to change schools?

Making your decision

Create a check list of things that matter to you and rate each home you're considering by these criteria. It will be easier to keep your emotions in check using this type of unbiased tool.

Finally, the object of your desire may look different after you step away. Take these tips into consideration and be sure to sleep on it before making a commitment.