

Why is my house still for sale...

By Michele Lessirard

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Designed to Sell



One could say houses are in my blood. In the seventies one could find model rows in each sub-division for newly built Arvida and Rutenburg Homes. Back then we lived in Naples and then Orlando, two hot up and coming housing markets. A lot of weekends during my high school and college years you'd find Mom and I out looking at houses- new and old. I am sure this was a factor in me becoming an interior designer and residential contractor. Today I also work with the spiritual aspects of home and self. I know most people have trouble visioning a house, the whole buying, renovating process is scary, and they want things just right. In relationship to home and self this fear can fuel your mindset in a consumer driven world.

I live in South Florida, in April we sold our house in less than a week. We have bought, lived and sold two fixer-uppers we rehabbed. In my home design, the core element is not to spend but to create sanctuary. With our next home purchase we did not want to do that same rehab journey again.

Dear Husband and I looked at the inventory of older homes (we want a land and room) for sale and have yet to walk into a house that has been fixed up- let alone painted for sale, most are tired and dated, cluttered. Am I spoiled? No I just want it done right. The whole process buying is very frustrating and different from the other times we bought ('92, '87, '79).

This is written for those of you who are selling or hope to sell your Florida house in the future. With all the negative media hype, we expected our house be on the market for months, so imagine our surprise when the house (build in 1970, bought in the early 90's) sold in less than a week. We didn't have to sell, we are not upside down. We just want to move out of the South Florida area after 35 years.

Now we are looking at the housing inventory that is there (older homes, not the new homes) from PGA up to Jacksonville in our price range. We don't want a foreclosure – buyer beware these homes come with too much negative energetic baggage.

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Frankly I am horrified at Sellers wanting a lot of \$\$'s for tired dated houses they have put little or no attention into over the years- no updating, no new paint, no neutralizing or clutter busting.

After six years of intense Florida hurricane seasons (and let's not forget Andrew in 92), Mr. Seller has invested little or no money in shutters or impact windows. What are you thinking?

Teenage Johnny's room is still painted that horrible green color he liked in high school and today he's a grown man with children. Your buyers don't want it. Mrs. Seller's kitchen and bathroom wallpaper that looked fresh and bright in the 80's and 90's now is faded, boring and dated, but you won't take the time to do something about it and then expect to make top dollar? I don't think so.

Designed for Re-Sale:

Our current home was a fixer upper (it was a short sale) and we lived here 15 years; all of the renovations had the home re-sale in mind.

Look at Designing for Re-sale as a layering process, take the kitchen. We installed simple maple shaker kitchen cabinets (a brand new style of cabinets) in 1996 but couldn't afford a great countertop. In 2004 we installed Silestone (I love Silestone!!) over the boring laminate. While the budget allowed for Silestone we couldn't afford 1x1 glass tile on the backsplash (\$2,300 without labor), so I found a 12x12 tile at Home Depot's Expo that looks like glass tile (3 boxes of tile installed for under \$500). In February I bought black saddle stools (ditched the county look); installed new knobs, crown molding and new paint (removed my old dated wall covering).



One can personalize things, but core items- fixtures and finishes in kitchen and bath need to be updated with resale in mind. No blue toilets! No wacky counter tops finishes or cabinet designs. Now looking at what's available on the market, I see how the upgrades/updates to our house helped make the sale.

When the decision was made to sell I rented a POD and put items not needed into the pod unit for storage (cleared clutter). We spent \$\$ to repaint the house (neutralized it), installed recessed lighting and crown molding. I painted over my lovely bright yellow walls and red accent color in the foyer. We took down the red drapes. We repaired things that needed attention.

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So today I don't have much sympathy for those homeowners who treated the house like a bank account...people who pulled cash out of their house to buy cars, boats and televisions. Your deferred maintenance is long neglected and your house is begging for some attention, and now you want to sell...

If you can afford it, get your home "Designed to sell". Hire a staging company to come through and make suggestions. If you can't afford to hire someone then watch every HGTV show¹ you can, and take notes, soak the information in. Read real estate blogs in your area. Even though I don't live in Saint Paul; Bonnie Erickson's Real Estate Snippets helped me understand the process from a realtor's point of view-
http://www.realestatesnippets.com/real_estate_snippets

Check out the forums on Zillow.com and City-Data.com for insights about what people are saying about your area.

Ask a friend to come in and tell you honestly about the house...what turns her off, what does your friend like about your home. Listen deeply to what the feedback is telling you. Don't be attached, let go. Spend a couple hundred dollars for paint and sprucing up. Do some work; spend a little to get some back.

On an energetic level our homes hold energy. Ever walked through a home where a couple's getting a divorce? Who then would want to buy a foreclosure? I don't know about you but I can feel the energy of the space. Denise Linn's book talks about Home as sacred space. Sometimes to sell a house you have to tweak the energy. In Feng Shui that means moving items around with intention. It's addressing the inner you on a spiritual level, and your home reflects that spiritual you.

Have you said good-bye to your house? Your past is connected to the relationship with your home? Does the home welcome your new potential owners? Many times family members are afraid of change and don't want to leave (they don't know where they are going). Yesterday we toured a home for sale where the little girl strategically placed her beanie babies on her bed to 'guard it'. No one has to tell me she doesn't want to move. Maybe it's time for a family meeting.

Deal with the emotions

Emotions? Track your energy; especially how fear come up during a sale. With all the negative media, it's hard not to drop into that same negative mind-set. I started becoming aware when I went into fear, and dealt with the emotions. Dear husband and I talked about it all. I visioned what we wanted and shared that vision (law of

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attraction), I repeatedly said to self, husband and contractor "we only need one family to love our home". Bingo that right family showed up two days after it was listed.

Competition: Check it out. There are eight houses in our small Broward subdivision for sale, I have been told 10-15 houses are going into foreclosure. We looked at all 8 listed houses (only one is updated) and priced our house fairly; we got \$75,000 more than any of the other houses sold in the last year. In essence our home sale raised the bar in the neighborhood, our realtor is very happy.

Is your home a trophy of your success? Sadly that never feeds the Spirit. In this time of chaos and change, it would be better served to nurture the spirit, and offer up sanctuary to your family. From this perspective if I don't like to cook, why then would I need a Wolfe stove. Be smart. We need to stop being spoiled and stupid with our homes- rich and poor. When I share with people we sold the house- they say 'oh you are so lucky.' I think silently no we did our 'home work'.



If you have any questions, please feel free to email me michele@sharedjourneys.org and check out my websites <http://www.sharedjourneys.org> and <http://www.newmoonjournal.com>.

Fondly,

Handwritten signature of Michele Lessirard.

Rev. Michele Lessirard, C.Ht. Artist and designer by nature, I have been a healing arts practitioner since 1993 weaving the rich and diverse training I received over the years into my workshops, groups and healing practice. With degrees in transpersonal psychology and interior design (Florida licensed interior designer FL ID4753 and certified residential contractor) I share the

metaphysics soul and home from a Christian Mystical Tradition.

Online there's the blog at The New Moon Journal® and I am busy writing a book about shamanic astrology. Visit these websites- Shared Journeys at <http://www.sharedjourneys.org> and The New Moon Journal® at <http://www.newmoonjournal.com> to learn more about my work.

ⁱ Designed to Sell Top 35 Selling Secrets is a great compilation of all the design tricks to create a sale. Find it here:

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<http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/ah_real_estate_selling/article/0,1801,HGTV_3165_5544249,00.html>