5 things I Learned Helping My Parents Transition

By: John Walder



In the summer of 2023, we helped my parents sell their Montco home of over 35 years and transition into a 55+ community. We wanted to share with you a little of what that looked like behind the scenes.

For my mom, the thought of "downsizing" left her feeling anxious about repairs, financing the next place and maybe most of all...her current home being INSPECTED...Dun Dun DUNNN!! For my dad, the move would offer security (he is 10 years older than my mom). Knowing the repairs and maintenance are a thing of the past was also a big plus. My older sister struggled with the thought of letting go of our family home. For my younger sister, this was where she was brought home from the hospital. On top of all this, it had become granparents house to their 6 grandkids. As for me, I was six years old the last time my

parents moved into their home. And now, I was the one with the playbook asking my parents to trust and listen to me on how to sell it:)

You can see it was the full spectrum of emotions for our family. Here are 5 things I learned firsthand that might be a resource for others coming up on similar life situations:

5. Start the conversation early - I pestered my dad for years leading up to the move. "What's your plan, Pops?"" He is not one to open up easily so it took a bit longer. Ask the uncomfortable questions. Working in this industry, we know life happens in a flash. Planning is much easier when decisions get to be made over the course of months and not days.

4. Adult children - Help by getting involved and presenting options. Do they have equity in the house (ie. HELOC, reverse mortgage)? Can they buy the next house before listing their current one? OR..can the current house be outfitted to allow them to stay another 5-10 years? Create a spreadsheet listing the pros/cons of staying put versus transitioning. You may have differing opinions on what is best for mom and dad. And that is normal and OK!

3. Don't know what we don't know - My parents were fortunate to have their home paid off when they decided to list. Because they had the time and the resources, we recommended they consider addressing a few repairs/updates before selling. We studied the comps in the neightborhood and knew the ROI would be well worth it for them. We explained that a home equity line of credit (HELOC) would be perfect fit for the upgrades and would be paid off at time of settlement. They were hesitant at first because they did not understand it and were reluctant to take on more debt. They ultimately agreed and used the credit line to finance the work (roughly $15k in updates). That small investment generated 20 offers over 5 days and it sold for $80k over the listing price. Ohhh.. and without inspections.

2. Quality of life - I will be the first to admit.. I was nervous for my parents! They had become homebodies in recent years and didn't do a lot of socialization outside of church and family get-togethers. The place they were headed is known as an epicenter of adult activity. Weekly trips. Swimming. Groups for just about everything! Dining daily with others. But what happened? They thrived! Meeting new friends and joining activities. They tell us they can't get together because it's dominoes night!

1. It's WAY more then a house - You can not just box up 20, 35 or 50 years worth of memories in an Atlas moving truck. What may look like something ready to meet the dumpster to you, could be so much more to them.

We have been trusted by other very close family and friends transition into 55+ communities. Being a trusted partner during this process is one we do not take lightly as we know what the process entails.

If we can ever help with your family's transition journey please reach out anytime 🏡 🏃‍♂️ 🏃‍♂️



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