



## Big Mistakes That Cost Sellers Money - What Not To Say To Buyers!

The doorbell rings, you grasp the knob, and throw one last glance around. As your daughter quickly puts the vacuum cleaner away, you open the door with a big smile. There stands an agent, with buyers.

"Hi! ... How are you?... Come In."

Those are probably the last three unsolicited comments that should pass your lips for the remainder of the visit unless you were to say "We are leaving now. Please feel free to open any closet or kitchen doors and make yourselves at home. The real estate field is littered with stories of potential sales that were killed by sellers who inadvertently uttered the wrong thing.

Before continuing, you should understand that the types of 'better left unsaid' things discussed here have nothing to do with the "Seller's Disclosure Addendum," or hiding anything material from a potential buyer. Disclosure is morally and, moreover, legally required. To the contrary, all of the suggested "DON'T SAY IT!" topics presented here are based on personal preference. Being human, sellers often find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep from offering opinions or information that they think makes them and their home appear "credible" to the buyer. But, without knowing the life's experiences and characteristics of each buyer, Sellers often open their mouth and insert their foot into it.

Please do not talk about:

1. How many kids are or are not in the area. (Even if the buyer has children, you have no way of knowing whether or not they want gangs of them banging down their door on Halloween.)
2. The huge stone birdbath in the backyard that is visited by hundreds of birds each year. (How could you know the spouse is deathly afraid of birds?)
3. How great your church is. (They might be of different faith)
4. How quiet the neighborhood is. They may want a more social atmosphere, and look forward to making new friends.
5. The 'newness' of items in the home. (New is most definitely a relatively term! What you consider 'new', may be old to others. For example, an item that is two years-old may be 'new' to someone who has lived in the house for 15 years, but may be old to a buyer who thinks of new as anything in place for less than 1 month. Also be careful about that new 5 year old roof. Sometimes events seem like yesterday, but a new 5 year old roof or new 2 year old appliances that are actually 10 years and 5 years could mean a civil action for breach of contract or fraudulent representation of fact. As well there is a big difference between a new roof and a roof that only had the shingles replaced. Litigation is on the rise.

So be quiet and unless you have not left your home during a viewing and are asked a question. Then answer only that question exactly as required or better yet, get your Realtor to respond.)

**6.** Information on existing warranties (They may expire before the new owners close on the house, or they may not be transferable.)

**7.** How many 'showings' you've had. (Buyers could interpret this as "No one else wanted the home, why do I? or "I wonder what is wrong with this house?"")

Please do not offer the following statements as the reason you are selling:

**1.** The death of a family member. This is an awkward one, since a death in the home must be disclosed if it was in the home, but it is better to let the agents deal with those emotions on the Disclosure Statement. If directly asked, you need answer, but you could just say you have some personal reasons. People do understand the right to privacy.

**2.** How you have outgrown the house. If buyers have the same number in their family, they may have second thoughts about their need for such a large home.

**3.** How the home is too small for you. Your comment may give them the push to look for a more expensive (bigger) home.

**4.** Your recent divorce. Potential buyers may be having marital problems of their own and do not want to bring any bad karma on themselves. You may think such a thing is preposterous, but it can actually be true.

**5.** That you bought another home. If a buyer knows there is urgency, this can be used against you in negotiating.

If you get the distinctive impression that everything you say to a potential buyer could get you into trouble down the road - then you have correctly interpreted this article. Since you are under contract with a real estate agency, the best course is to make yourself scarce after the greeting. If you simply cannot leave during the viewing, a good course of action might be to say:

"Please take your time viewing my home. And if I do not see you before you leave, thank you for coming. Excuse me, but: (important phone call, helping kids with project, deadline at work, etc. )"

This extricates you from a potential "foot-in-mouth" encounter later, and does not make you appear to be avoiding the buyers' questions.