

THE **INFORMED** Home Buyer/Seller™

Helpful Advice for Making the Right Move

Understanding The Psychology of *Clutter*

Read any Top 10 list of things to do to prepare your house for sale and “Get rid of the clutter” is sure to be on it.

But how important is cleaning up really? Does your home have to look immaculate, like it's been torn from the page of a decorating magazine? Can't the average buyer look past a little clutter and see the value of your home for what it really is?

The answer lies in psychology.

Clutter - a disorganized garage, an overstuffed closet, a disheveled basement - can make people feel uneasy and even edgy. In a study published in the *Journal of Family Psychology*, clutter was even linked to depression.

In addition, clutter can create a feeling of hesitancy, even inertia. “At the sight of clutter people shut down,” says organization expert Cathy Philips. “They don't want to do anything”. But you *want* a home buyer to do something - make you an offer!

Clutter can also draw attention to the wrong things. Instead of a big double garage, for instance, a buyer's attention may be focused instead on boxes, lawn equipment and bikes piled in the corner. Clutter can instantly turn a great selling point into a turnoff.

And if all that isn't enough, clutter has the knack for making everything seem smaller. A big spacious closet can look downright claustrophobic when stuffed to the ceiling with shoes, clothes and boxes.

So don't underestimate the psychology of clutter. According to research by HomeGain, getting rid of clutter ranks as one of the best investments you can make in preparing your home for sale, averaging a 594% return on your investment.

Looking for more ways to sell your home faster and for more money? Call today.

Where to Put Your **Stuff?**

Experts suggest that you put 30% of your things in storage when preparing your home for sale. This is unpractical for most people. But it does pay to make your home look spacious and as uncluttered as possible. So where to put the stuff? Here are a few tips:

Store it. A friend's basement or garage is your cheapest alternative. There may be public storage facilities located nearby as well.

Sell it. Have a moving sale? You can place an ad in the local paper, or stick a few notices around the neighborhood. Garage sales work very well, too.

Give it away. Many non-profit organizations accept used items such as furniture and clothes. Some will even pick them up for you.

Dump it. Sometimes the best place for an item is your local garbage dump or recycling depot.

Think, Act... Live!

Hanging onto things that are not really important to you prevents you from enjoying the things that are.

Source: Sharon Crosby, *Mind Over Clutter* (2001)

The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials.

Lin Yutang

None of us owns a single, solitary thing permanently. Each of our things flows through our fingers temporarily, on its way to somewhere else.

Cindy Glovinsky

Author, *Making Peace With The Things In Your Life*