

Buying from the Builder? Don't Forget Your REALTOR®!

Wait – What happened? Where am I?

It's an undeniably heady experience. You're standing on the actual dirt, or even more exhilarating, inside the builder's "Dream Design Center and Hall of Endless Possibilities". You are discussing your fantasy home with the building team and are overcome with euphoria as all that you've envisioned seems to actually materialize right before your enraptured eyes.

Everything is possible. The builder just informed you that you can save \$5,000.00 if you choose the lot that backs onto the expressway. Why wouldn't you grab that discount? It's not even a busy expressway; you've driven it at least three or four times at 5:00 AM and there's hardly any traffic. Plus, you can put that \$5,000.00 savings towards the \$10,000.00 you're spending on the gleaming gold bathroom fixtures that will rival the Kardashian's mansion. You will be the outright envy of all your neighbors as they live with their linoleum and Arborite ensuites! Even more enticing, the builder has confirmed that you can change the bonus room over the garage into a custom axe-throwing gallery. Everyone will want to visit your new house!

Now, before you are swept away entirely on the tide of all-things-possible, you need to hear a sober second voice. And that's not an angel on your shoulder, although you can be forgiven for making that mistake, it's me – your REALTOR®!

An unimaginably interesting Note to Reader: The word "realtor" is not just an unassuming dictionary entry. It was coined in 1916 and collectively trademarked in 1950 to indicate a member of the National Association of Realtors®. Therefore, to justly honor my proud profession, herein it shall always be printed thusly: REALTOR®!

Many people mistakenly assume that they needn't involve a REALTOR® when dealing directly with a builder. As in our example above, this misconception can lead to costly decisions down the line. I have the experience and expertise to help guide you towards the best version of your builder-direct dream home. Even if you intend for this to be your "forever" retreat, it's important to exercise sound judgement to ensure that you are maximizing the value of your newly built house.

Hmmm... Maybe location IS everything!

While a builder discount on the price of the lot can seem attractive, I can make sure that your lot selection doesn't cost you two, three or four times the amount of the discount in lost value when you attempt to resell your home. Buyers tend to favor south or west facing yards and lots located in close proximity to public transportation. However, you can see a significant reduction in the value of your home if you back onto an expressway or are located directly across from a school. A decrease in potential resale value and the daily mental stress of traffic noise and congestion? Perhaps that discounted lot isn't as attractive as it first appeared.

"Because I want it!" isn't always the best approach...

Similarly, builder upgrades are exciting to contemplate as you plan your new home. But upgrade decisions must be tempered if you want to maximize your return on these enhancements. If the upgrades are reflective of other homes in the area, you will likely see a commensurate increase in value. However, if your additions far exceed anything seen in the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods, you won't enjoy any lift in the resale price. A basement finished to the neighborhood standard or vinyl flooring upgraded to hardwood are generally sound improvements. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon in your backyard or an interior resplendent with custom marble tile in a community of \$500,000 houses won't net a smile-inducing return on your upgrade investment! As in many other areas of life, it's not always wise to "pay for pretty".

Why wouldn't I combine the master bedroom and ensuite into one open room?

Alterations to the floorplan also require a keen eye and steady hand. When it comes to marketing your home on the resale market, there is a difference between 1,900 square feet and 2,000 square feet far beyond the extra 100 square feet! And while the three-lane bowling alley stokes your all-consuming passion for the game, it isn't likely to be perceived as a value-added amenity on the resale market. Again, the industry and market knowledge of your faithful and trustworthy REALTOR® (me!) can help steer you in the right direction when altering the floorplans and layout of your new home.

So many benefits from one big heart!

These are just some small examples of the big contributions I can provide towards your builder purchase. I'm here to make sure that your new-home dollars are spent wisely with the greatest possible return. While current market conditions play a role in the builder's home price (although I will always negotiate this on your behalf), I can ensure that the builder's spec and your upgrades are reasonably priced and worth your consideration.

Moreover, I can also provide a service that you will immediately agree is absolutely priceless: I can be the referee who fearlessly clears the logjams of disagreement between husbands and wives! I can be your tiebreaker in housing-related disagreements (emphasis on "housing-related") who will clear the path to purchasing your new home and maintaining harmony in your blessed union. And if one spouse is frustrated when I break a tie, they are free to blame me. I've got big shoulders to go along with my big heart and I can take it. *(You need to understand that I am employing the term "big shoulders" metaphorically to indicate that I can bear up under adverse or trying circumstances. My shoulders, in the physical sense, are well toned and in perfect proportion to the rest of me. My heart, on the other hand, is absurdly large.)*

But wait, it gets even better – my sagacious counsel and assistance doesn't cost you anything! Most builders have agreements in place with the local real estate board stipulating that the builder will pay our commissions. You get to enjoy the myriad benefits of my involvement without spending an extra penny. That truly is an offer too good to refuse!

WARNING: A POTENTIALLY LIFE-ALTERING DISCLAIMER!

The only caveat is that I have to be the one to introduce you to the builder. If I am not the first point of contact, I can't offer you my incredible services or assist you in the process. That means I will have to accompany you on your Saturday forays into the realm of showhomes and dreams. But that isn't really a caveat. It's more of an added benefit... I'm really good company!