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4 Truths to Remember During Your Home Search

By Mallory Carra (/blog/author/mallorycarra/) | March 9, 2015



Home is where the heart is, but you have to remember to keep those emotions in check when going through the house-hunting process.

Keep these mantras in mind during your hunt for the perfect abode.

Everyone said it was going to be tough, even grueling, and that defeat was definitely possible — but I wasn't going to let that stop me.

Last fall, I was dead set on finding the apartment of my dreams. Armed with a notebook, pen, and a list of exactly what I wanted, I took off into the concrete jungle of Los Angeles (http://www.trulia.com/for_rent/Los_Angeles,CA/) real estate.

And I'll admit it was a struggle (I cried once or twice), but I kept thinking and repeating to myself, "Don't settle for less," and "It'll be worth the wait and effort."

"House hunting isn't just a financial expedition," says lifestyle expert April Masini of AskApril (<http://www.AskApril.com>). "It's a relationship journey. Many emotional decisions are made, and they have to do with the relationship you have with your own past, your current spouse or partner, and family."

Ultimately, I found a home that I absolutely adore — and if I can do it, you can too. Because just like my mantras, there are certain truths we have to keep in mind when shopping for that ideal home to buy (<http://www.trulia.com/buy/>) or rent (<http://www.trulia.com/rent/>).

1. Don't settle for what you don't want

I had a clear vision of what kind of living space I wanted: a one-bedroom (not a studio) with a dishwasher, a parking spot, and a refrigerator (not commonly included in L.A.). After seeing a bunch of apartments, I realized that was going to be a hard combination to hunt for, but I knew I wouldn't be happy unless I had it.

And real estate experts agree — a checklist is key.

"Make a list of your needs and stick to them," suggests Monica Fry of the Minneapolis/St. Paul (http://www.trulia.com/for_sale/Minneapolis,MN)-based Fry Group (<http://www.thefrygroup.com>). "For example, if you need three bedrooms, do not look at two-bedroom homes. You do not want to get emotionally attached to something that does not meet your needs."

Dallas (http://www.trulia.com/for_sale/Dallas,TX)-based real estate agent Clayton Collins (<http://www.richertimes.com>) advises to categorize your list using the three N's: "Need to have, nice to have, and nope."

2. Location, location, location

Yep, it's true, even if it has turned into a shopworn cliché. Christopher Rither (<http://www.onemeandream.com>) owned a home inspection company for 12 years in scenic Hawaii (<http://www.trulia.com/sitemap/Hawaii-real-estate/>) and worked with many folks moving to the islands, who then departed about a year or two later.

"After some time my employees and I came up with this saying: 'Paradise is only paradise to those visiting paradise,'" he says. "Make sure the house you buy is in a place you want to live in for quite some time into the future. The location of a home is just as important as the home itself."

3. It's strictly business

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After all, at the end of the day, it's all one big business transaction, says Washington, DC (http://www.trulia.com/for_sale/Washington,DC)-based real estate agent Craig McCullough (<http://www.craigdcreator.com/>).

"There are many things that can go wrong and change during a home search, but keeping a business mindset has helped many of my clients work through the stresses," he says. "For example, in an urban market like Washington, DC, many properties are escalating over ask price. I remind all of my clients to keep a focus on what price the property is *worth*, not what price will this property escalate to."

4. It ain't over 'til it's over

For Tracy Bobbitt, editor of [thehollywoodmomblog.com](http://hollywoodmomblog.com) (<http://hollywoodmomblog.com/>), and her family, their third offer was a charm as they searched for a house in the Atlanta (http://www.trulia.com/for_sale/Atlanta,GA) area last fall.

The first offer fell through because the property turned out to be the former residence of a well-known celebrity/murderer — yikes! The second house had a lovely view of the water, but it was falling apart, to the point that the home inspector strongly warned the Bobbitts against buying it.

"Needless to say," says Tracy, "we're still anxious about this third home because — as another saying goes — 'It ain't over 'til it's over.'"



Mallory Carra (/blog/author/mallorycarra/)

Mallory Carra has been a professional writer for more than 10 years. Mallory currently writes for WhoSay and Bustle. Her work has also appeared in the New York Daily News, Columbia Journalism Review,

(/blog/author/mallorycarra/) BuzzFeed, The Huffington Post, and more.