



September 10 is a great day to become closer to the people who live in your neighborhood. Why? It's National Good Neighbor Day. We get so caught up in our own lives that we often forget to show courtesy to those who live around us. So, what can you do to go the extra mile and begin to forge a good relationship with your neighbors?

Keep Your Property Looking Good

John Fitzgerald, co-founder of [Realty Connect USA](#), recommends keeping your property well-maintained. "Keep the outside appearance of your home looking neat. Remember your property reflects those of your neighbors as well. Maintaining good curb appeal is an easy way to make a good impression on your neighbors."

Psychotherapist/relationship coach [Toni Coleman](#) agrees. "Keep your property in good repair/condition. This includes everything from not leaving trash or old junk around, to keeping the lawn mowed and landscaping in good repair, to raking the leaves before they go to everyone else's lawn, to maintaining general house upkeep in order to not negatively affect the property values."

Deal with Conflicts Maturely and Head-On

Unfortunately, disagreements will happen. April Masini of [AskApril.com](#) reminds us, though, that it doesn't have to end poorly. "Don't go around your neighbor by calling the cops or the HOA or the county administrators. This is only going to fuel the fire, and frankly, if you're selling, you want friendly neighbors for all sorts of reasons. Go to the neighbor directly with your concerns." Before you do that, though, make sure to check your attitude in advance. "You've probably been raging in your head and with your spouse about the problem you're about to address with a neighbor. Newsflash: Your neighbor wasn't a party to your inner thoughts or spousal conversations and may be completely ready and willing to do what you'd like. Attempt grace and civility, and even friendliness."

Always remember, it's a two-way street. "Ask your neighbor if there's anything that you can do to make their lives easier when it comes to your own neighborly dynamics," Masini suggests. "This disarms any combative feelings and creates a working relationship that you may not have had before."

Make a Welcoming Gesture

"I found a way to connect our neighbors about 10 years ago," says Susan Bissonette of Haven Publishing. "Essentially we delivered flamingos to everyone up and down our street. We told people they could put the flamingo out on their mailbox and show people it's a good time to gather. People are told ahead of time to bring a beverage. The host just supplies chairs on their driveway, patio or fire pit. Over the past 10 years we've gotten to know our neighbors and connected in a casual fun way to exchange news and just have a little fun." Creating a fun and informal way to get together can bring a whole street a little closer.

Be Helpful and Keep in Touch

Harrine Freeman, CEO/owner of [H.E. Freeman Enterprises](#), reminds us that being helpful in small ways can leave a lasting impact. "Offer to carpool, cut grass, baby-sit or shovel snow for neighbors that need help, are sick or are out of town. Offer to receive packages, pick up their mail or walk their dog when out of town. Inform them of any suspicious activity or persons around their home. Also, call or visit your neighbors at least once every two weeks, especially if they live alone, to check on them to see how they are doing."

Be Mindful of Pedestrians

Since your neighbors will spend time going by your property, make sure you're making it as easy as possible for them to walk by. "At a minimum, make sure the sidewalk is clear and unobstructed," suggests John Z. Wetmore, producer of "[Perils For Pedestrians](#)" Television. "Don't park your car where it blocks the sidewalk. Keep your shrubbery trimmed back well away from the edge of the sidewalk. Shovel snow off the sidewalk in winter. Edge the grass when it needs it, and sweep up accumulated dirt and debris when it needs it. Keep litter picked up out along the street and sidewalk in front of your house."

If you're feeling ambitious, Wetmore says you may want to turn your attention to landscaping. "Plant shade trees in the tree panel between the sidewalk and the street. On hot days, both pedestrians and drivers will benefit. Plant flowers where they can be seen from the sidewalk (but not so close that tall flowers might stick over and block the sidewalk). Or, consider putting a garden bench next to the sidewalk where elderly neighbors can stop to rest when they go for a walk in the neighborhood."

Be Courteous and Respectful of Boundaries

Coleman reminds us that while we may get along with our neighbors, we shouldn't take advantage of that relationship. "Keep respectful boundaries. Unless they have given a clear green light to do so, don't invite yourself into their house or yard. Anything that crosses the line of minding your own business and giving them privacy can be considered an unspoken boundary."

On that same note, be mindful of your own activity. "Be mindful of your impact on the neighbors," Coleman says, "especially if you like to host late or loud parties, have frequent guests, or have young kids that stray. Consideration in the form of letting them know ahead of time — and just being considerate about your impact on them — goes a long way."

Last updated by [Briana Fabbri](#) at September 9, 2014.

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