The ULTIMATE Home-buying and Home-selling Guide

Bill Warrell

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A no-nonsense, unbiased, inside look at the process backed by 20+ years' experience

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Bill was born and raised on Long Island, NY and…...wait, come back! Don't judge him on that alone!

As the son of a New York City firefighter, he was taught to not be shy about putting in a day's work to get the job done.

Right out of high school, Bill became a bank teller, while deciding what to do with life and then...life went on. After working as a bank teller, he quickly advanced through the ranks and acquired the titles of Head Teller, Sales and Service Associate, Assistant Branch Manager and Branch Manager. One of the many highlights was working side-by-side with the Amish in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

In 2015, he and his family moved to the Bradenton, FL area, where he worked in branch management, commercial lending, church lending and residential lending.

After acquiring his real estate license in 2017, he stopped financing real estate and began selling it.

Bill now lives in Palmetto, Florida, with his wife and three kids. They attend 53rd Ave Church of Christ and enjoy regular trips to Disney World.

He is currently a Realtor with Team Pepka and Keller Williams on the Water.

When my wife and I decided to move to Florida, the idea of moving was plain as day, but the process and plan to move wasn't. It was a cold, January morning in our Lancaster home, when I was awoken early to shovel the driveway due to an overwhelming snowfall the previous night.

After getting dressed in many layers, putting on gloves and learning that my wife and kids would be home all day, I was outside to shovel. At that EXACT moment, the idea of moving to a warmer climate was planted in my mind.

What followed was a drawn-out process that included so many things to think about. Employment, kids, schools, neighborhoods, packing, moving, family, crime rates, leaving friends, making new friends, church, money and the list went on.

For some, these reasons alone are enough to change your mind, and there would be nothing wrong with that. With these things in mind, I began the journey of uprooting and moving to Florida.

While my experience can be used to assist anyone looking to move, this guide focuses specifically on the home-buying and home-selling experience.

Enjoy-

One more quick note before we get started…

My experience and journey through banking and real estate has taught me A LOT- some good and some bad.

While much of the industry is regulated by law and overseen by state or federal departments, much of it is not.

For what's not regulated, many real estate companies use discretion in deciding what services to provide to their clients. There is not a lot of consistency across the industry in what services are provided and, more importantly, ***how*** they are provided.

My goal is to provide an outstanding client experience, and as such, some of the things mentioned in this guide are services that I would provide that cannot be easily compared with others. In some cases, what SHOULD be done and what WOULD be done, conflict with each other. I've tried my best to distinguish between the two.

"Do what you do so well that people will want to see it again… and bring their friends."
~ Walt Disney ~

Part One

Home Buying

Chapter 1

Define Your Goals, Research Your Options, Make Your Plans

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."
— Benjamin Franklin

Most rational individuals don't just wake up and move or buy a home. You may have recently or long ago decided to move but didn't just do it without forethought. Most likely, you thought about where you'd like to live, what type of home you want, how many bedrooms, what the commute might look like, along with so many other questions before going all in.

Whether you put your thoughts to paper or not, it's important to think through your end-goal, and the plan to help you get there.

For most people, buying a home represents the single biggest investment you'll ever make. While an investment in real estate generally offers a good return over the long run, any investment comes with a certain level of risk- and not just property value risk. There's the debt that comes along with it, upkeep and a variety of other factors. As such, the home buying process can be one of the most exciting, but sometimes also stressful, experiences you ever go through.

Given that buying a home is such a big step, it’s all the more important for you to educate and prepare yourself as much as possible in advance. This means, clearly determining why you’re buying and what kind of home you’re looking for.

Ask yourself a few questions:

- Are you planning on any major life changes, like changing jobs or starting a family, in the next few years that could impact your financial situation?

- Can you commit to staying in a home for at least five years?

- Are you confident you can handle house repairs, or are you willing to pay a specialist when something breaks?

- Do you have a stable income and job?

- Are you able to put away some money each month into a savings account?

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, chances are you may be in a position to purchase a home!

While the above questions are reflective, “yes” or “no” questions, we’re going to jump into the biggest two questions as you continue on your path to homeownership.

What Do I Want vs. Need?

If you are independently wealthy and have all the money you’ll ever need in life, stop reading this and break out your checkbook. Checks can be made payable to “cash” 😊

If you’re not, chances are you’ll have to make some decisions about your wants versus needs and should probably keep reading.

One method for categorizing your priorities for a home search would be to make a list (similar to the one on the next page) and separate into one of four categories:

- High-priority needs
- High-priority wants
- Low-priority needs
- Low-priority wants

There’s no right or wrong here. This is YOUR home and you know what you need and want. However, it’s best to figure out what you’re willing to negotiate on and what you can’t.

	Very Important	**Would Like**	**Not Important**	**Do Not Want**
Home Type • Detached • Condo • Townhouse				
Square Feet				
No. of Bedrooms				
No. of Bathrooms				
Master Bath				
Dining Room				
Den/Study				
Laundry Room				
Basement				
Attic				
Central Air				
Fireplace				
Skylight				
Fenced Yard				
Pool				

A more detailed Questionnaire can be found at www.warrellhomes.com

How Much Can I Afford?
This is a big one because typically, what someone can spend and what they can afford are two different things. Our way of life is consumed by debt. Aside from the monthly payments, finances hold the power to create hardships among families, while also being the number one cause for divorce.

This is where so many people have gotten hurt, in trouble and in over their heads. The fault lies with the consumer AND the industry.

Here's what happens: you want to buy a home in the $150,000 range. You let your Realtor know that you're looking in the $150,000 range and so your Realtor begins looking at houses in the $200,000 range, promising that they have the skills to negotiate closer to your $150,000 target. Your Realtor won't show you the $200,000 house until you have a pre-approval letter. The mortgage lender says that to "be safe", they'll issue a letter in between $200,000 and $250,000 to account for down-payment or fees.

The bank says you can borrow $250,000, but your budget says $150,000. You now go looking at $200,000 houses with a letter pre-approving you for $250,000 and fall in love with one.

Would you be able to say no?

Many people can't say no and as easy as that, they get "sold" and are in over their heads. There's often a difference in how much you can spend versus how much you can afford.

We'll talk more about determining how much you can afford in the chapter on financing.

Chapter 2

Contact a professional

Given that there are so many factors to consider and no two homes or transactions are alike, buying real estate is a complex matter. However, with all the unique opportunities and potential pitfalls of the current market, it's even more important for you to contact a professional once you've definitely decided to buy. In choosing a professional to guide you through the property search, financing, negotiation and transaction processes, you should consider their local market knowledge, experience and track record.

Do you *need* a real estate agent to buy a home? No, not legally, anyway. *Should* you use a real estate agent to buy a home? Yes, and the reasons are numerous.

Here are just three of the reasons:

1. Cost
For starters, it's the seller of a property that usually pays the real estate agent commissions for both sides (not in every case, but the clear majority do) so you're getting the

knowledge and experience of a professional with no out of pocket cost to you.
Way before someone ever lists their home for sale, they've negotiated the commissions they will pay to both the sales/listing agent and the buyer's agent.

That's **BIG**.

2. Lack of Bias
A real estate agent can provide an unbiased view of the home you're looking for. It's one of our goals to get you into a home that you love, but whether you buy the one at 123 Main St or the one at 234 Maple St, doesn't much matter. My goal is just to get you the **best home** for the **best possible price**. It's all about YOU.

3. Fiduciary Responsibility
A real estate agent has a moral AND legal responsibility to act as a fiduciary during your transaction. This means that they are held to a higher standard when it comes to transacting business on your behalf. I'm looking out for your best financial interest—pretty cool, right?.

No cost to you, unbiased advice and making sure that you get the best home for the best possible price.

But, boy, it only takes one bad apple to destroy the whole bunch, doesn't it? Unfortunately, every real estate professional is going to tell you that they're unbiased and that they're out for your best interests.

Yes, there are some dishonest agents out there and no amount of paperwork, signatures or licenses are going to keep them morally upright. The good ones fight that fight every day. 😊

How to Make Sure You Pick a Professional

In my experience, I’ve found a rather surefire way to tell if you’re working with a professional who is working with you in mind. It helps cut through all the marketing noise of them telling you how great they are.

Simply ask them, “I’m not yet pre-approved for financing, but would you show me a home tomorrow?”

Most likely you’ll receive one of two varied responses:

1. You need to be pre-approved or pre-qualified first

2. I can have one of my office associates show you

While neither of these responses is inherently wrong, if left as is, these responses could indicate that you’re speaking with an amateur. If you’re not pre-qualified (which we’ll cover shortly), then you may not be qualified to purchase a home. Some agents view this as a waste of time- they are biased towards themselves.

If, at such an integral part of the relationship, they are pawning you off on an underling associate- they are showing you a lack of care.

It’s my belief, and my standard, that a professional agent should walk you through the ENTIRE process. Start to finish, beginning to end and everything in between. It’s about walking you through what usually is a complex time, with big decisions, big money and big changes ahead. THAT'S what a professional does.

This process is too big and too costly to go at it alone. Your agent should be able to help relieve some of the burden by answering all your questions related to buying a home, NOT just home related things. Picking a storage unit, finding a moving company, choosing a utility company and finding all of the great local restaurants, are just a few of the things that come to mind.

And if you need a professional real estate agent- I know a guy. 😊

Agent and Broker Types
Is your Realtor a Single Agent or Transaction Broker? The terminology is technical, but there's an important distinction. These are the two forms of representation under Florida law.

A Single Agent represents EITHER the Buyer or Seller. One of the duties they owe their client is full disclosure, which would be impossible to have if they represented both parties.

A Transaction Broker offers limited representation to the parties and instead works to the benefit of the transaction, or home sale.

You'll most likely be want to work with an agent who represents *your* best interests, right?

Working with your Realtor
Once you choose a good agent to work with, you can expect that they'll want you sign some paperwork. You'll most likely sign some required disclosures and they may even have you sign a Buyer Brokerage Agreement.

A Buyer Brokerage Agreement is a document that establishes a business agreement between you, the buyer, and the real estate agent's brokerage.
This agreement protects the buyer and the agent by outline each parties' responsibilities, while also providing some reassurance to all involved.

Analyzing what you want
Once you've signed on with an agent, it's time to talk with them about what you're looking for.

Here's a short list of questions for you to think about and talk through:

- What part of town do I want to live in?
- What school districts do I need to be in?
- Do we want new construction or re-sale?
- What type of lifestyle do I want to live?
- How many bedrooms and bathrooms do we need?
- Do we need a garage? Pool?
- What's the minimum square footage that would work?
- What would the commute to work look like?
- What amenities and services are available?

- What size yard would I like?

The list really could be endless, but this covers some of the biggest items. It’s a good idea to be open and honest with your agent so they can help narrow down what you’re looking for.

TIP: Beware of any real estate agents or lenders telling you “we make the home-buying process easy!” It’s a lie. There are so many variables and road-bumps along the way that make this a promise that can’t be kept. Don’t choose a company- choose a trusted partner to walk through the process with you.

Chapter 3

Financing

Borrowing money is sometimes considered a necessary evil. Debt itself seems to be part of our culture and is not inherently bad- if used correctly.

Many money gurus will tell you only to buy things using cash which sounds great. However, the truth is that the majority of us will never know what it's like to buy a home with cash.

Borrowing plays a major role in a home purchase. How much? What rate? How long? What payment? The following information is going to help answer all of these questions.

If knowing the ins and outs of what goes into your financing is of interest to you, read on. If not, jump to the “Choosing a Lender” portion.

Credit Check

There are numerous credit scoring companies each with their own algorithms as to how they determine your score. These algorithms are not meant to be understood by the general public because they tend to change frequently- and usually do not benefit you as the consumer.

The three major credit reporting agencies are Experian, Equifax and TransUnion. They are all very similar. However, there may be creditors that do not update or report to all three, which means there could be inconsistencies.

Before we look at the various aspects of credit, it's important to know and take to heart- YOU ARE NOT YOUR CREDIT.

Lenders, other Realtors, and maybe even your parents, will rate and judge you by your credit. The stories and circumstances are endless. Everyone has a history, and some are cleaner than others. Just know that your worth as an individual is not determined by your score.

Credit Reports

A credit report is a long form representation of the credit accounts of an individual. It reports and maintains credit information for roughly 7 to 10 years, depending upon the type of impact it has. Your credit report consists of the following information:

1. Identifying information - Name (previous names, maiden names), address, previous address, employer, social security number and birthdate).

2. Tradelines - The name and account number of any creditor that has issued credit to you.

3. Type of account - Installment loans, auto loans, mortgage loans, credit lines.

4. Dates - When an account was opened or closed.

5. High credit amount - The highest credit limit granted by the creditor.

6. Current balance - The balance outstanding at the time the report was most recently updated.

7. Late payment history - Indicates a history of on-time payments or payments made 30,60 or 90+ days late.

8. Credit inquiries - This includes inquiries made by a prospective creditor (hard inquiry) in addition to inquiries by you, an existing creditor, or a marketing company (soft inquiry).

9. Public records, collections, bankruptcy, repossessions, and foreclosures.

Credit Scores

A credit score is a numerical representation of your credit report. Scores range from 350 to 850, with the higher number being better. Since different creditors report to different credit bureaus, most lenders will compile what they call a "tri-merge" and pull reports from all three creditors. They will either use an average or the middle number. In general, most lenders will look at your credit score and place you in a certain category:

720 or higher: Excellent
660 - 719: Average
620 - 659: Poor
620 or lower: Bad

Your credit score is weighted and calculated based on the following:

35% - Payment history: This is a calculation of how timely payments are made.

30% - Capacity: The difference between what you owe and your high credit limit. For example, a credit card limit of $5,000 with an outstanding balance of $0 would indicate a larger capacity and thus a greater positive impact on your score.

15% - Length of credit: How long you've had active trade-lines. The longer the accounts have been open, the better the impact on your score.

10% - Accumulation of debt: How much debt you've accumulated in the past year.

10% - Mix of credit: How much unsecured debt versus secured debt you have.

Why does this matter?
Your credit history feeds into your credit score. Your credit score is used by lenders to determine what they call a 'risk rating', which helps them determine your risk level and your probability of repayment. A lower score would mean a higher probability of default (the inability to make payments), whereas a higher score would indicate there is smaller risk.

This matters because lenders will assign a higher interest rate to lower score borrowers. They may not even extend credit at all. Higher rates equal higher payments which only benefit one party.

Can you guess who?

Credit Score	30-year rate	Monthly payment
760 – 850	4.56%	$1,531
700 – 759	4.78%	$1,571
680 – 699	4.96%	$1,603
660 – 679	5.17%	$1,642
640 – 659	5.60%	$1,723
620 – 639	6.15%	$1,827

Based on a loan amount of $300,000

In this example, the difference in credit scores equates to paying an extra $106,560 over the course of a 30-year loan. $106,560! That's $106,560 for the same dollar amount and the same house. It literally pays to be up-to-date on your credit report and score.

TIP #1: Visit AnnualCreditReport.com to get a free copy of your credit report from all three bureaus. You are entitled to one free report, per bureau, per year. This is the ONLY site to get a free report that doesn't require a credit card or for you to purchase credit monitoring.

TIP #2: Check CreditKarma for your free credit score.

Double check your report! It is not uncommon for there to be incorrect information on it. Be sure to follow up and dispute any incorrect information. Details for how to file a dispute are located within the report

How much do I need?
One of the biggest shocks of buying a home is finding out that you need way more cash to close on a house than you may initially realize.

Let's look at how much cash it takes to actually purchase a home.

The down payment
This is the cash outlay in the home-buying process that's obvious to most people. It is usually expressed as a percentage of the purchase price of the property. For example, if the purchase price is $200,000, and you're required to make a 10 percent down payment, you'll have to pay $20,000.

With most lenders, if you want to avoid paying additional private mortgage insurance (PMI), you're looking at a 20 percent down payment.

Closing costs
Closing costs are the costs associated with closing your loan and may run up to two to three percent of your loan amount. They can also vary based on different rates charged for appraisals, attorneys, and title insurance.

There are actually two alternatives that can either reduce or completely eliminate closing costs:

- Negotiate for the seller to pay your closing costs.
- Negotiate premium pricing with your lender. This is where you pay a higher interest rate on your mortgage in exchange for the lender paying the closing costs.

Prepaid items
When it comes to mortgage loans, there are several different types of prepaid items:

- Homeowners insurance premium
- Real estate property taxes
- Mortgage interest that accrues between the closing date and month-end

Fortunately, you can have some or all of the prepaid expenses paid for you, by either the seller or by premium pricing paid to the lender.

Utility adjustments
Utility adjustments can include a large number of charges. They basically represent utility costs paid by property seller in advance.

For example, if a seller fills the propane tank just before the closing, you'll be required to reimburse the seller for the unused propane. This will happen at closing. Similar charges can be incurred if the seller has prepaid other utilities, such as water, sewer, or trash removal.

Some of the closing cost items are "fixed", like property taxes or title insurance. While some items can be shopped for, like homeowner's insurance.

How much cash you really need to buy a $200k home

Down payment	10% of $200,000	$20,000
Closing costs	2.5% of $180,000	$4,500
Prepaid expenses	2% of $180,000	$3,600
Utility Adjustments	Estimated	$500
Cash reserves	$1200 mortgage payment x2	$2,400
Total cash required		$31,000

(Estimate based on averages)

That's why it's important to include the additional cash requirements in your home buying plans.

While this example gives an idea as to the most common costs involved with a loan, it is NOT an example of the numerous types of loan products that your lender may offer. Always speak with your lender about what ***<u>YOUR</u>*** best options are.

So…How much can I borrow?

Sometimes, how much you need and how much you can borrow will vary. Here are a few of the item's lenders will look at to determine your financial eligibility to borrow:

Mortgage lenders use something called 'qualification ratios' to determine how much they will lend to a borrower. Although each lender uses slightly different ratios, most are within the same range.

<u>Your maximum mortgage payment</u>: The golden rule in determining how much home you can afford is: your

monthly mortgage payment should not exceed 28 percent of your gross monthly income (your income before taxes are taken out).

<u>Your maximum total housing payment:</u> The next rule stipulates that your total housing payments (including the mortgage, homeowner's insurance, and private mortgage insurance [PMI], association fees, and property taxes) should not exceed 32 percent of your gross monthly income.

<u>Your maximum monthly debt payments:</u> Finally, your total debt payments, including your housing payment, your auto loan or student loan payments, and minimum credit card payments should not exceed 40 percent of your gross monthly income. This rule means that if you have a big car payment or a lot of credit card debt, you won't be able to afford as much in mortgage payments. In many cases, banks won't approve a mortgage until you reduce or eliminate some or all other debt.

If you're interested in seeing your ratio's, use the calculators at www.warrellhomes.com

Pre-qual vs. Pre-approval

Note: Pre-approval and pre-qualified are **NOT** the same thing. A pre-approval is based on verification of credit and income which is much stronger. A prequalification is based on information you have told the lender and has not been verified.

Generally, it is recommended that you get pre-qualified for a loan before you start viewing homes with the serious intention of buying. The preapproval process involves meeting with a lender and authorizing them to examine your current financial situation and credit history. On the basis of this examination, the lender will provide you with a document that details how much you can borrow to buy a home.

The benefits of pre-qualification include:

- You'll have information about what you can afford and be able to plan accordingly.
- As a qualified, motivated buyer you'll be taken more seriously when you make an offer on a home.
- Lenders can tell you whether you qualify for any special programs that will enable you to afford a better home (particularly if you're a first-time buyer).

Don't get preapproved by too many lenders.
Preapproval includes a full review of your financial background, including your credit history. As a result, that inquiry is noted in your credit report and can negatively impact your credit score if you have too many recent checks into your credit history.

Neither guarantees a rate lock
The interest rate on your mortgage may be a deciding factor in whether you can afford a certain house. But, your ability to secure a desirable interest rate through a rate lock, which guarantees your rate will not increase over a set time period – typically between 30 and 90 days – often

only happens when you’ve found the house you want to buy.

Choosing a Lender
In my opinion (backed by my twenty-plus years of lending experience), choosing the right lender is extremely important and the most beneficial part of this book is this-

Most mortgage products are all the same. Most mortgage companies are all the same. They all want to lend with as little risk as possible and all want to be paid back. When shopping for a lender, shop for the loan officer first!

Some shoot straight. Some are deceptive. Some are responsive. Some you never hear from. Some surprise you. Some give you the information you need up front. Choosing a loan officer that you know, like and trust, is the biggest key.

Ask a friend or ask ME!

Loan Types
Oh, it’s so easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer amount of loan types and terminology! This is why (see above) it’s important to work with a knowledgeable professional who can help guide and explain the many options that may be available to you. Here are just a few of the types of mortgage loans:

Conventional -	A conventional mortgage is a home loan that’s not insured by the federal government. These loans usually have fixed rates for the entire term.

Adjustable Rate -	An Adjustable Rate Mortgage, or ARM, is a loan where the rate is not fixed and can fluctuate over the loan term.
FHA -	FHA (Federal Housing Administration) backs loans to help make homeownership possible for borrowers who don’t have a large down-payment saved up and/or don’t have great credit.
VA -	VA (Veterans Administration) loans provide flexible, low rate mortgages to members (active and retired) of the U.S. military.
USDA -	USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) loans help borrowers buy homes in rural areas.
Jumbo -	Jumbo mortgages are loans that are too big for the Federal Government to purchase or guarantee.

It’s important to note here that each loan program has its own specific set of criteria used for determination. Each has its own credit score requirements, down-payment requirements and/or property eligibility requirements.

Applying
When you’re ready to apply, you can be assured that the lender will ask very specific questions about your identity, your employment, your credit, your assets, and your liabilities. You can get a good idea of what a standard mortgage application looks like by searching online for a “1004 mortgage application.” For the most part, applications are pretty standard between lenders.

After applying, you can typically expect a response within 24-48 hours, depending upon the lender. The most common response will either be “denied” (declined, turned-down or some other variation) or “conditionally approved.”

A Conditional Approval means that based on your credit report and the information you’ve provided, the lender feels comfortable moving forward with your loan request. Prepare yourself in advance because the conditions will include you providing a detailed list of financial paperwork. You thought they would just take your word for it? Wouldn’t that be nice?

Here is a list of the paperwork that a lender will most typically request:

- Multiple years tax returns
- W2’s, paystubs or other proof of income
- Bank statements
- Gift letters if money is being gifted to you

If conditionally approved, the lender is required to provide you with a Loan Estimate as part of the Truth in Lending Act. The Loan Estimate includes a breakdown of the mortgage payments due and the charges associated with the loan. The form is standard between lenders and can be used to compare the costs of a loan between lenders in order to shop around for the best deal.

The loan estimate details provided will include:

- Loan amount
- Term length
- Total closing costs
- Interest rate
- Tax and insurance costs
- List any repayment penalties
- Origination charges

A loan estimate from a lender is typically accurate and many of the fees are estimated on the high side because if it is not, it could end up costing the lender money. Many of the fees, especially the ones levied by the lender, will generally be correct. Revised estimates often occur as a result of changes requested by the borrower.

TIP: Yes, they require a lot of paperwork, but most lenders are all the same when it comes to this. Not providing the needed paperwork to approve your loan is the #1 hang-up when it comes to purchasing your home. Do yourself a favor and go along for the ride!

Chapter 4

Viewing Homes and Selecting THE ONE

With a pre-approval letter in hand, you're ready to begin your search!

Your real estate agent should already be sending you homes to look at that meet your criteria. You can continue to narrow down and refine the homes you see. If you've chosen to go with new construction, you should be receiving information about the new home communities that match what you're looking for. (If you're not getting what you're looking for, don't be afraid to ask!)

Even though so many pictures of homes can be found online, you'll most likely want to see the homes in person. While their property details may seem similar online, homes can actually be vastly different in terms of layout, design, workmanship, and other aspects.

And we've all seen times when the pictures can be deceiving!

This is where the experience of your real estate professional will really make a difference. While you might be looking at a home and picturing the kitchen or mancave, your agent will help you picture those things but, more importantly, be looking beneath the surface to make sure the property is in order. You can feel good about picturing yourself in your new home from an emotional standpoint, while your agent views it from a financial standpoint.

A great agent will notice things you might miss, provide expert analysis, and act as an impartial sounding board.

Make sure to give your agent feedback on the homes. Their fragile egos can handle it. Don’t feel bad for bringing them to look at a home that just wasn’t “the one.”

You won’t hurt their feelings, and many times they can learn more about what you’re looking for based on what you don’t like.

You may fall in love with the first home you see, or it may take quite a few visits to quite a few homes to find one you really want.

Tip: The things you should first consider are things you cannot change—location, floor plan, lot size, etc. Then consider what you can change— appliances, carpet, paint, cabinets, and all other cosmetic items.

Chapter 5

Making an Offer

Now that you've found the home you'd like to buy, it's time to make an offer.

Work with your agent to determine an offer price and any other items you'd like to negotiate such as move-in date, closing timeline, or financial concessions.

Your Realtor should have the latest market information to let you know the average listing price versus sold price for homes in your area. This can help you understand how much sellers are getting for their homes in relation to how much they're asking. It's good information to have when formulating an offer.

Within the offer, you'll want to decide how much of an earnest money deposit to include. An earnest deposit is not the same thing as a down-payment and is considered "skin-in-the-game", which shows the buyer that you're serious about moving forward. It's usually about 2% of the offer price and you may be asked to increase that amount as the offer is negotiated.

In addition to drawing up the contract, your agent will be happy to address all your questions about the offer process.

Once your agent has written the offer, they will present it to the seller and/or the seller's representative along with a copy of your pre-approval letter. Generally, the seller can accept your offer, reject it, or counter it to initiate the negotiation process. It is most common for the seller to counteroffer.

It would be impossible to list all of the possibilities that could occur next. Be sure to work closely with your agent to determine what YOUR next best step would be.

If the offer is accepted as-is, you'll have 3 days to provide the earnest deposit. The deposit is usually held by the attorney who will be overseeing the finalized transaction. In the event that you default on your contract obligations, the earnest money deposit could be forfeited.

If the offer is rejected, without a counter-offer, then your next move would be to move on to the next property you wish to purchase.

The seller may counter-offer based on the condition of: price, closing date or some other contingency.

While the seller wants to get the best possible price for their home, and you want to pay the best possible price, the negotiation process works best when all parties think in terms of WIN-WIN. Negotiation is a give and take where both parties must be willing to give up something for the sake of a deal. That said, sometimes deals just don’t work out.

In my experience, I have seen that much of the negotiation comes down to motivation. The seller may need a certain price to account for payoffs or proceeds. On the flip-side, they may just want out of the home. Their motivation for selling will determine how to move forward.

Chapter 6

The Journey to Closing

The time from signed contract to closing typically spans 30 to 60 days. During this time, there is a specific timeline, including deadlines that must be met to stay on track.

Contingencies must happen within certain timeframes to ensure that you uphold your end of the sales agreement. There are three areas of contingencies that must be removed in order to get to closing and we'll cover them here.

<u>Inspection-related contingencies</u>

Professional home inspections: Usually within 15 days of a signed contract, you'll want to order a home inspection (hint: a great Realtor will set this up for you). The inspector will tour the property, looking for any current or potential defects. The inspector is working on your behalf and is completely on your side of the transaction.
These surveys are used for major items such as roof, structural integrity, heating, cooling, electrical and plumbing systems.

Try to schedule them so you can tag along. If a serious condition is noted then you can decide, along with your agent, if you'd like to move forward with the sale or negotiate to have the problem addressed.

TIP: *It is not the inspector's job to advise you for or against buying a property. They are simply describing the current condition of the property for you to use in deciding whether or not to move forward.*

Other home inspections: There are a host of other inspections to consider such as testing for radon gas, septic system, pool, pest and termite/wood destroying pests.

Survey: A survey of the property will be inspected to ensure property lines and boundaries.

Mortgage-related contingencies

Final Underwriting: Once you have a pending agreement, it's time to bring a copy to your lender and finalize your mortgage details. This means finalizing your down payment, interest rate, payment schedule and any other financial conditions associated with the closing.

Appraisal: Your mortgage company will order an appraisal of the property to determine its value. This cost is usually paid up front by the buyer and runs from about $400 to $500. Should the appraisal come back showing a higher value than the sales price, then you just got a great deal! If it comes back lower, the seller would either have to lower the sales price or you could be eligible to get your earnest deposit back.

Loan commitment: Your lender will finalize the underwriting and issue a full loan commitment stating their commitment to fund the mortgage.

Title-related contingencies

Title search: The title company will complete a search of the property's title to ensure that the seller has ownership and legal authority to sell it.

Title commitment: The title company will complete the search and issue a commitment guaranteeing a "clean title" which means that the seller does have authority to sell.

Once all of these contingencies are met, the earnest money deposit becomes non-refundable.

Homeowners Insurance

Contact your insurance agent to establish a homeowner's policy to go into effect the day of closing. If you don't have a trusted insurance agent, your real estate agent will be happy to provide you with a list of insurance agents that they trust. A homeowner's insurance policy covers a number of risks that may affect your home, your belongings and your family and may help cover:

- The physical structure of your home
- Detached structures, such as your shed or garage
- The belongings inside your home
- Liability claims against you or your family

Your lender will also require this information.

Pre-closing
Confirm with your agent if a closing date has been set. Make sure you know where the closing will be held — and how to get there.

At least 3 days prior to closing, by law, you will receive an official closing disclosure which shows line by line each and every expense, as well as who is to pay what amount. Compare it to the loan estimate you received previously. If there's a discrepancy, talk to your lender right away.

Once you've confirmed just how much money you'll need at closing, find out how those funds need to be paid (cashier's check, certified check, wire transfer, etc.).

The Final Walkthrough – you'll be given the chance to look at the home to make sure it's in the same condition as when you signed the sale agreement.

The contract contains specific timelines and deadlines when responding and negotiating with the seller and the seller's agent. Failure to meet these deadlines could result in the deal falling through or losing earnest money.

Chapter 7

Closing

So just what is a real estate closing? And what exactly happens at closing?

Sometimes referred to as a settlement, your closing is the final step of your real estate transaction. The closing is handled by a neutral third-party closing agent such as a title company or a real estate attorney. At a closing, major events include:

- A home’s title is transferred from seller to buyer.
- The proceeds of the sale are distributed to the seller.
- If the home is financed, the buyers sign the mortgage note.
- The buyer and/or seller pay other fees such as real estate commissions, title insurance, and pro-rated property taxes.

Closings involve piles of paperwork, including the deed, which grants legal rights and is signed by the seller and given to the buyer. The deed will then be registered with the city or county in order to protect the ownership rights of the new owner.

Once paperwork is signed and money changes hands- you’ll get the keys to your new home!

Although buyers, sellers, and even real estate professionals may get nervous about real estate closings, they’re just part of the process of transferring real estate. Knowledge and preparation are all you need to make your closing go as smoothly as possible!

Part Two

Home-Selling

Chapter 1

Preparation

Unfortunately, selling your home in real life isn't like an episode of House Hunters. Chip and Joanna are most likely not going to show up and renovate while you stay in a cushy hotel. HGTV is just….TV. Ugh.

So, with the Property Brothers out of the picture – the choice is yours! In my experience, I've yet to meet someone who held pure excitement over the sale of a home. There's usually a mix of excitement, fear, happiness, and anxiety all in tow.

Spend some time exploring your reasons for selling. The process can be grueling and expensive, so make sure you're certain you want to sell before you get too far into it.

As I always say, "If someone tries to guarantee you a painless process- run the other way. The process has some unfortunate pain built into it and the best you can hope for is a partner who will help guide you and be there with you along the way."

Of course, people sell their homes for a number of reasons- sometimes they have a choice and sometimes they don't. Either way, it's important to plan out the steps from beginning to end.

Are you ready to put in the work to get your house ready for potential buyers?

Are you committed to keeping it ready to show for weeks or months?

Are you ready to hear the reasons why potential buyers believe your home is not perfect?

Are you ready for honest—and sometimes hardball—negotiations over what buyers are willing to pay for your home?

Are you really ready to move out and leave the place where your family has made memories?

Now don't misunderstand my intent! I'm not trying to talk you out of selling, but once you start down that road…it can be an all-in process.

Address finances

Many times, we only think: "Can I afford to buy a home?" But, the same question goes for selling. Selling your home – for top dollar – isn't necessarily a free process. There are certain fees that must be paid when selling a home along with the logistics of moving trucks, boxes and where you'll go next.

Here's an *estimate* of what these costs could look like for a home with a $200,000 selling price:

Home sale price	$200,000	
Cost item	**Cost amount**	**% of sales price**
Home preparation		
Staging costs	$2,000	1%
Home repairs & renovations	$10,000	5%
Negotiating the sale		
Real estate agent commissions	$12,000	6%
Seller concessions	$3,000	1.50%
Finalizing the deal		
Closing costs *	$2,000	1%
Relocation		
Transition and overlap costs	$2,000	1%
Moving costs	$2,000	1%
Total costs	$33,000	16.50%
Estimated proceeds	$167,000	
*Includes estimated cost of title, escrow, notary, and the transfer tax		

Your first step toward understanding how much equity you'll have when you sell, is as easy as calling your current loan servicer to discuss your remaining mortgage balance. Knowing this figure can help you budget for improvements you'll need to make before listing and help you plan for your future home purchase.

Make a list of non-negotiables

Write down your must-haves and deal breakers. What's your timeframe to move? What's your budget for pre-listing home improvements? What's the minimum sale price you will accept? Knowing these things before starting the process is a great mental exercise.

Determine where you'll be living after selling
This may seem obvious but, make sure you know where you’re going next!

Will you be buying a new home, downsizing, renting, combining homes with a new spouse, moving to an assisted living facility or moving to a larger home?

First, determining where you’ll live after closing will also help as you address your financial situation.

Chapter 2

Contact a professional

Similar to home-buying, you don't legally need a professional real estate agent to sell your home. Most agents, industry wide, use the same forms, contracts and paperwork which have been approved for their industry but are not necessary if you are not licensed and choose to sell your home by yourself.

It may sound like a great idea to have your friend help or a cousin's friends' brother-in-law who just got their real estate license. However, there's no replacement for an experienced professional who can help sell your home for the most money in the shortest amount of time.

That said, there are quite a few compelling reasons to find a real estate professional that can help you sell your home.

1. **Money**

By far this is the number one reason people choose to sell their own home FSBO (For Sale By Owner). Standard real estate commissions, which are traditionally paid by the seller of the transaction, are about 6.00%; that's 3.00% to the buyer's agent and 3.00% to the selling agent. If you plan to sell your home by yourself - to someone you already know – then you may be able to save yourself 6.00%. If you plan to sell your home by yourself and the buyer is represented by another real estate agent, you will still most likely pay the 3.00% commission to the buyer's agent.

If a Real Estate Agent were showing homes to a potential buyer and on one they could earn 3%, but on your FSBO they would earn 0%- which one do you think they'll most likely show their buyer?

Selling your home FSBO could save you anywhere from 3.00%-6.00% which could be a significant savings, *HOWEVER*, research has shown that FSBO listings sell for 18% LESS than agent-assisted listings!

Penny wise, pound foolish.

2. Worth

Some think that a real estate agent is just a money-hungry middleman standing between you and your money.

Selling a home, even your own, takes a lot of time. You have to place ads, answer phone calls, show your home to prospective buyers, allow an appraiser to view the home, allow an inspector to inspect the home and other tasks. Then there is physical work required, such as putting up signs and setting up an open house. You must ask yourself how much money is your time and effort worth.

Are you exhausted just thinking about it?

3. Tools

A real estate agent has the ability to market your home in a comprehensive fashion, and expose it to fellow agents and by cooperating with other brokerages. The agent also has the benefit of posting the home on the Multiple Listing Service, paired with an extensive use of the latest technologies.

4. Lack of Bias

Selling your home may be an emotional experience for you. Whether it be your first home, the place where you watched your children grow up, memories of a divorce, having to move to an assisted living facility, loss of job or other life experience, homes inevitably hold a bundle of memories.

The home could have been a fixer-upper, something you recently put a lot of work into or one in which you watched a loved one pass away.

Those memories and emotional experiences often sway a person's decision when attempting to sell their home. In essence, the home holds a lot of value to them which gets added to a potential selling price or muddies the negotiation process.

While a good real estate agent should not squash these feelings, they can provide an un-biased view of your home, without these emotional experiences being taken into consideration.

Your home, in regards to selling, becomes a property with real market values attached.

5. This is what they do

Real estate agents do this work day in and day out. They're aware of the paperwork, the market conditions and the marketing needed to sell a home. They are continually fine tuning their skills.

What to look for when choosing a professional

There's more to finding a professional agent than just a quick internet search. Even though that would lead you to an extensive list of agents, ready and willing to help, there are some things you want to look out for:

1. Communication

Even with today's technology like handheld smartphones, social media, texts and instant messaging, communication is still lacking! (I know, it's almost unbelievable). A great real estate agent will clearly set expectations, field questions, take calls when you need their help, provide feedback and give suggestions to help you get the most money from your home sale.

2. Local market knowledge

A good agent will know what sells in your area and will know how to highlight your home's best features to get top dollar. They'll also be aware of seasonal trends in your market and can help you determine the best time of year to sell for more money and in less time.

3. Strong marketing strategy

Ask your agent for an overview of their marketing strategy for your home. How do they plan to push your home to the top of a buyer's list? Why is it better than any other agents?

Print marketing

Not all print marketing is dead. In fact, there is still a place for postcard mailings and printed descriptions of the home for potential buyers who are physically viewing the property.

Professional photography

I cannot begin to explain the amount of homes that are listed for sale where the "professional" photos were taken by the owner's smartphone. It's overwhelming.

A staggering 93% of homebuyers begin their home search online and the pictures are the FIRST impression when attempting to sell your home. Good agents include the services of a professional photographer in their commission fee, and sellers recognize the value in this offering.

Social media marketing

Top agents have a strong social media presence and are eager to post your home on various social media outlets. 71% of sellers said social media marketing was an important thing for their agent to handle.

Willing to host open houses
80% of sellers say hosting open houses or private tours is a valuable service. Will your Realtor be holding an Open House for potential buyers to tour?

Video
I recently spoke with another agent that felt a video of the home consisted of still photos set to music. That is not a video! Your agent should be compiling a walk-through video of your home to use for marketing it to the masses.

Don’t forget- hiring the WRONG professional could cost you more than the RIGHT one!

Chapter 3

Pricing your home to sell

You didn't think I'd be giving ALL of my secrets away in a FREE book, did you? 😋

Here are a few things to consider in regard to pricing your home:

The market value of your home is NOT based on what you need out of it. Just because you need $200,000 to pay off your mortgage balance doesn't necessarily mean that your home will sell for that much.

Your market value is NOT what you heard your neighbor's home sold for. Just because your neighbor's property sold for a specific amount does not mean that your home will.

Your market value is NOT what the tax assessor's office says it's worth. The taxable value of your home is not the same as the market value.

Your market value is NOT the same as the amount your home is insured for.

Last, and certainly not least, your market value is not determined by an online calculator or a website—starts with a ‘Z, rhymes with “Willow.” In fact, that’s not even what the “Willow” site is/was designed for. That site is meant to capture your information and data- and sell it back to Realtors. It’s an information capture – not a real estate assistance tool.

The market value of your home is affected by:

- Economic conditions
- Your home’s condition
- Supply and demand
- Selling prices of competing homes
- Buyer’s perception of your home

Your best bet in obtaining an ACTUAL competitive market analysis (CMA) for your home is to invite an experienced Real Estate Agent to tour your home and for them to compare your home with local market data and comparable properties.

Truth is, a properly priced home *should* sell within 30 days. The longer a home sits on the market, the staler it becomes. As a home continually sits on the market, there is a growing perception that (1) something’s wrong with it and/or (2) it’s over-priced.

As the days roll by and the number keeps increasing, buyers are less likely to want to view the home and agents are less likely to want to show it.

Chapter 4

Get your home ready

It’s prep time! Your home needs to be “show ready” which should begin BEFORE listing it and engaging potential buyers. Since most home searches are done online now, high quality pictures will most likely be “selling” your home first, so you want to make sure it’s in tip-top shape! Here are a few things to consider:

Complete home improvements
Buyers will be looking to make sure that the property has been maintained to certain standards. Doors that don’t open or shut, burned out light bulbs and holes in the wall are a few examples of things of things that should be fixed.

After all, you want buyers to fall in love with your home, like you did when you first bought it. Spend some time getting your home move-in ready, in a way that will appeal to the broadest range of potential buyers.

Opt for a pre-inspection
While it’s likely that your buyer will do an inspection as part of the purchasing process, sellers often opt to do their own

pre-inspection. Why? A pre-inspection can help you avoid surprises down the road and gives you a chance to fix the items that an inspector would flag for a buyer.

Avoid improvements by selling as-is

While you will likely pocket less money in the end, selling a home as-is, without completing any major improvements, is a way to speed up your overall sale process and limit upfront out-of-pocket costs.

Declutter and clean

- Start with a full housecleaning from top to bottom
- Air out/ clear out any odors
- Be sure walls are clean from dirt and fingerprints
- Wash all windows and sills
- Curtains and drapes should be freshly cleaned
- Clean all light fixtures and ceiling fans
- Have carpets cleaned
- Discard any dying houseplants
- Clear any extra appliances from countertops
- Consider renting a storage unit to move the items off-site

Stage your home

When showing your home to prospective buyers, you want to make everything look spacious, organized, bright and warm. Arrange furniture in such a way to provide as much space as possible.

Statistics from The National Association of Realtors (NAR) have shown that, on average, a professionally staged home spends 73% less time on the market and sells for 6% more than non-staged homes.

Spruce up the yard

It’s estimated that more than half of all houses are sold before buyers even get out of their cars. Stand across the street from your home and review its curb appeal.

- Keep sidewalks and patios hosed off. Hose down house siding to remove cobwebs and dirt.
- Mow, trim, pull and discard weeds, and water lawns and gardens. Add a fresh layer of mulch, if needed
- Make sure the doorbell and porch lights are in working order.
- Remove trash and debris from the yard and around the house.
- Repair any fences or gates.
- Remove holiday lights and decor that may still be hanging.
- Paint exterior window sashes, trim and shutters if needed.
- Buy a welcome mat.
- Place potted flowers around front door.

Chapter 5

List and show!

So, you’ve decided to move, you’ve selected the BEST Realtor (me), we’ve priced your home to sell and you have it ready to show. Let’s chuck a sign in the ground and get it listed!

Once the home hits the local MLS, you can expect some showing requests to start rolling in. We’ll be contacted by other agents and individuals who want to get a closer look at your home.

There’s an art to home showings and you’ll want to sell your home without being there. That’s right, you’re NOT supposed to be home while potential buyers are visiting. There is still a way to help sell the home while not being there- set the scene.

Our senses play such a large role in emotional processing, which means that when buyers walk into your home, you want them to feel something they just can’t describe.

I don’t hide the fact that I’m a big Disney nerd. One of the things I love most about Disney is how they strive to touch on every emotion.

Imagine walking down Main Street U.S.A. in Disney World. *(If you’ve never been, let me set the mood for you…)*

There’s joyful music playing. You can catch a glimpse of the beaming castle. In the heat of the day, you can catch a stream of the freezing AC as you walk past the shops and you can almost taste the fresh baked goods, as their addicting scents emanate from the bakery.

They set a scene that plays on your senses…and tries to make you forget how much you just paid to get in! 😊
In all seriousness, you can set a stage similar to that in your home.

- Turn on all the lights to highlight the beauty of your home.

- Set a comfortable temperature (in Florida where it’s 100 degrees every day, we like walking into a nicely air-conditioned place).

- Create a mood (use the fireplace, turn on soft music).

- Ensure a fresh fragrance (try to avoid sensitive or allergy inducing sprays).

Separating yourself from the place you’ve called home can be hard. But, if you want to make a deal, you’ve got to give buyers time and space to fall in love with your home. Be flexible about scheduling showings! The more people can view it, the faster it's going to sell. The faster it sells, the less time you'll have to keep leaving the house for people to see it!

Chapter 6

Negotiate the contract and close

Once a buyer falls in love with your home, they will make a formal, written offer.

When that happens, the first thing that's looked at is the offer price. Although, it is still important to view the offer as a whole. Here are a few things to look for:

Buyer pre-approval
An offer should come with a pre-approval letter (or proof of funds if the buyer is paying cash). These documents are strong indicators that your buyer can obtain financing for their mortgage and will be able to close on the home.

Closing costs
Buyers may ask for closing assistance, which is a specific dollar amount at closing to assist with closing fees.

Seller concessions
Seller concessions are additional financial incentives sellers provide to buyers. Seller concessions can include additional money to cover things like inspection fees, title

insurance, origination fees, or homeowner association fees for the first year.

Cash vs. financing
In a multiple-offer scenario, an all-cash offer is more competitive because the buyer doesn't need bank financing. Without the bank involved, closing can happen in a matter of days.

Buyer's contingency
This is a clause in a home sale contract that states the buyer can only buy the house after the sale of their current property. These types of contingencies are understandable, and fairly common, because someone may need to sell their other home first. It can also lead to a problem if their home doesn't sell.

Timeline
Some buyers may want an extended closing date — perhaps they're moving for a job, or juggling school schedules, or their offer is contingent on the sale of their home.

Chapter 7

Waiting to close

As a seller, this part is pretty easy- especially if you've already moved out. If you're still living in the home, you'll be contacted about letting the appraiser in and allowing the home inspector to access the property…and that's about it!

Chapter 8

Closing

This is it- the day you've been waiting for is finally here!

The culmination of preparing the home, showing the home, negotiating on price, all leads down to this.

By this point in the process you'll have already spoken to your agent and the title company about finalizing the details of transferring the property.

At the closing, or settlement, you'll sign off on the title transfer and the settlement agent will go over the final figures including any payoffs that need to be made and any proceeds that you'll receive.

You'll then hand over the keys and begin celebrating!

Glossary

When buying a home, it's important to understand some of the key concepts and terms. Throughout the purchase process, your REALTOR® will be available to explain any unfamiliar terms you encounter. That said, here is a short list of terms you'll want to know:

Abstract Of Title	A complete historical summary of the public records relating to the legal ownership of a particular property from the time of the first transfer to the present.
Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM)	Also known as a variable-rate loan, an ARM is one in which the interest rate changes over time, relative to an index like the Treasure index.
Agreement of Sale	Also known as contract of purchase, purchase agreement, or sales agreement according to location or jurisdiction. A contract in which a seller and buyer agree to transact under certain terms spelled out in writing and signed by both parties.
Amortization	The process of reducing the principal debt through a schedule of fixed payments at regular intervals of time, with an interest rate specified in a loan document.
Appraisal	A professional appraiser's estimate of the market value of a property based on local market data and the recent sale prices of similar properties.
Assessed Value	The value placed on a home by municipal assessors for the purposes of determining property taxes.

Closing	The final steps in the transfer of property ownership. On the Closing Date, as specified by the sales agreement, the buyer inspects and signs all the documents relating to the transaction and the final disbursements are paid. Also referred to as the Settlement.
Closing Costs	The costs to complete a real estate transaction in addition to the price of the home, may include: points, taxes, title insurance, appraisal fees and legal fees.
Contingency	A clause in the purchase contract that describes certain conditions that must be met and agreed upon by both buyer and seller before the contract is binding.
Counter-offer	An offer, made in response to a previous offer, that rejects all or part of it while enabling negotiations to continue towards a mutually-acceptable sales contract.
Conventional Mortgage	One that is not insured or guaranteed by the federal government.
Debt-to-Income Ratio	A ratio that measures total debt burden. It is calculated by dividing gross monthly debt repayments, including mortgages, by gross monthly income.
Down Payment	The money paid by the buyer to the lender at the time of the closing. The amount is the difference between the sales price and the mortgage loan. Requirements vary by loan type. Smaller down payments, less than 20%, usually requires mortgage insurance.
Earnest Money	A deposit given by the buyer to bind a purchase

	offer and which is held in escrow. If the property sale is closed, the deposit is applied to the purchase price. If the buyer does not fulfill all contract obligations, the deposit may be forfeited.
Equity	The value of the property, less the loan balance and any outstanding liens or other debts against the property.
Easements	Legal right of access to use of a property by individuals or groups for specific purposes. Easements may affect property values and are sometimes part of the deed.
Escrow	Funds held by a neutral third party (the escrow agent) until certain conditions of a contract are met and the funds can be paid out. Escrow accounts are also used by loan servicers to pay property taxes and homeowner's insurance.
Fixed-Rate Mortgage	A type of mortgage loan in which the interest rate does not change during the entire term of the loan.
Home Inspection	Professional inspection of a home, paid for by the buyer, to evaluate the quality and safety of its plumbing, heating, wiring, appliances, roof, foundation, etc.
Homeowner's Insurance	A policy that protects you and the lender from fire or flood, a liability such as visitor injury, or damage to your personal property.
Lien	A claim or charge on property for payment of a debt. With a mortgage, the lender has the right to take the title to your property if you don't make the mortgage payments.

Market Value	The amount a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for a home. An appraised value is an estimate of the current fair market value.
Mortgage Insurance	Purchased by the buyer to protect the lender in the event of default (typically for loans with less than 20% down).
Possession Date	The date, as specified by the sales agreement, that the buyer can move into the property. Generally, it occurs within a couple days of the Closing Date.
Pre-Approval Letter	A letter from a mortgage lender indicating that a buyer qualifies for a mortgage of a specific amount. It also shows a home seller that you’re a serious buyer.
Principal	The amount of money borrowed from a lender to buy a home, or the amount of the loan that has not yet been repaid. Does not include the interest paid to borrow.
Purchase Offer	A detailed, written document which makes an offer to purchase a property, and which may be amended several times in the process of negotiations. When signed by all parties involved in the sale, the purchase offer becomes a legally-binding sales agreement.
Title	The right to, and the ownership of, property. A Title or Deed is sometimes used as proof of ownership of land. Clear title refers to a title that has no legal defects.

Title Insurance	Insurance policy that guarantees the accuracy of the title search and protects lenders and homeowners against legal problems with the title.
Truth-In-Lending Act (TILA)	Federal law that requires disclosure of a truth-in-lending statement for consumer loans. The statement includes a summary of the total cost of credit.
Title Search	A historical review of all legal documents relating to ownership of a property to determine if there have been any flaws in prior transfers of ownership or if there are any claims or encumbrances on the title to the property.

I hope you enjoyed the guide and got some useful information out of it!

Since the beginning of my career I've been guided by the following quote from Walt Disney:

-- Do what you do so well that people will want to see it again, and bring their friends.—

It is truly my goal to help people- and help them so well that they can't help but share it will others who may also need my services.

I'm always available to help how I can as you move forward in your real estate journey!

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Team Pepka has been a real estate powerhouse all along Florida's gulf coast for over 20 years, with Ron and Cathy Pepka having successfully assisted over 2,000 families since 1996.
While selling real estate helps pay the bills, it's the friendships built along the way that have really made a lasting impact.
The family-based team takes a "what can our family do for your family?" approach and excels in giving clients an experience like no other.

Honesty. Integrity. Unparalleled Service.

Bill Warrell is a Specialist with Team Pepka and Keller Williams on the Water in beautiful Bradenton, FL.

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