



SCHWARTZ *Report*

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REAL ESTATE PSYCHOTHERAPY

I have a broker friend who once made what I thought was an interesting observation. He said “you know Charlie, in this business, we are all amateur psychotherapists, we just use real estate as the medium.” That got me to thinking about how many times I’ve had to talk some buyer, seller, cooperating agent, home inspector, attorney, mortgage person, or you name him or her down off of the proverbial ledge. They say that moving is not far behind the stress level of death of a loved one or divorce so it makes sense that anxiety runs high amongst all of the participants in a real estate transaction. Highly educated and/or extremely competent individuals in their respective fields say and do the strangest things under the pressure of relocating. Here is how Joe Sesso, a national speaker for Homes.com, described the emotional quagmire in a recent RISME-DIA posting: “Human emotions play a significant role in the home-buying and selling process. Sellers may feel excited to be moving into a new home; however, at the same time, they may feel remorse and sadness for leaving family memories behind. Homebuyers may be overwhelmed with wonder and glee to start a new life, but worried and cautious about the responsibilities of owning a home (especially if they are first time home buyers).”



they wish to achieve. Isn’t it better to say that what the market is telling us and what you are willing to spend will most likely not get us there than to declare “you are not being realistic.” Or, as is happening more frequently nowadays, how about the buyers who have just lost a

bidding war for their dream home? Two of my favorite bromides for that one are: “This wasn’t meant to be,” or “Things happen for a reason.” There you are basically saying that houses are like trains if you miss one there’ll be another coming down the tracks pretty soon but in a much kinder and gentler way. In fact, more times than not, there is something better out there and they end up getting it and will admit it too.

Despite my flippancy, there is rarely a lack of emotion with even the most mundane of transactions and one of our many important acquired skills is to learn how to properly channel or defuse that emotion when necessary. Here’s how a seller put it in a recently received buyer/seller questionnaire when describing her Patterson-Schwartz agent: “Greg has invaluable personal skills that cannot be learned. He listened to my concerns when I had them and asked the right questions so that I could make reasoned decisions. His patience was invaluable and I appreciate all he did...”

You might say that real estate is social work by a different name. It is a relationship business where the agent is placed in a role of extreme trust. As professionals, we must be able to get ourselves to where the client is, or thinks he is. We are often called upon to reorient people’s thinking. This is what psychologists call “cognitive reframing” especially where there is a gap between what the marketplace is telling them and what

Just as there are psychologically impacted buyers and sellers there is a whole category of real estate known as psychologically impacted or “stigmatized” properties. A property could be considered psychologically affected when it has been the scene of a murder or a suicide, it could also be considered similarly affected by a natural death, diseased death, the proximity to an ancient burial ground, cemetery, battlefield, or previous use as

a funeral home. Common sense would seem to indicate that a potential buyer ought to be made aware of such situations affecting a property in which they might want to live. However, common sense is not so common when it comes to this emotional issue.

Seller disclosure laws in most states require the seller to disclose the physical but not psychological defects of the property they are selling. The reasoning behind this is spelled out in a 2012 Pennsylvania Superior Court ruling (Miliken). President Emeritus Kate Ford Elliot wrote in the opinion: "This sort of psychological damage to a house will obviously decrease over time as memory of the murder recedes from public knowl-

edge. The passage of time has no similar curative effect on structural damage, legal impairment or hazardous materials. ...Indeed, one could identify numerous psychological problems with any house." She framed her argument with an observation about the information age we live in: "...The internet and social media allow information about a house to be uncovered easily with a simple search. To consider possible psychological defects starts a descent down a very slippery slope. ...It requires the seller to warn not only of physically quantifiable but also of utterly subjective defects." So what's a body to do? More to come on this subject around Halloween.

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11 Critical Home Inspection Traps to be Aware of Weeks Before Listing Your Home for Sale

DE, MD, PA – According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

To order a **FREE Special Report**, visit www.charlieschwartz.com and select **Seller Tips** from the side bar menu, or to hear a brief recorded message about how to order your **FREE copy of this report** call toll-free 1-888-322-5252 and enter 1003. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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