

## “CRUMPLED DOLLAR BILL CONCEPT OF VALUE”

Let's get your house ready to put on the market.

**Here are two dollar bills.** Which one would you rather have? Okay, Here's my point: Both of these bills are worth One Dollar. But most people, if asked, would like the crisp clean bill over the crumpled one. It's the same with houses that are for sale. If all other things about the house are equal—buyers will, for the same price—choose the more attractive one.

Whether it's you or someone you know who respects your opinion, someone will want to move in the coming year— Or they're thinking about making the move right now.

At any stage in the process, or even if you don't move, here are things you can do right now to enjoy your home more than you are presently.

Every seller wants their home to sell fast and bring top dollar. Well, it's not luck that makes that happen. It's careful planning and knowing how to spruce up your home—and keep it that way—that will make it irresistible to buyers! And you can do them in less than two weeks—Here's how:

### 1) How's Your Curb Appeal.

- If buyers won't get out of their agent's car because they don't like the exterior of your home, you'll never get them inside.
- Trim your bushes.
- Keep the sidewalks cleared.
- Mow the lawn.
- Paint faded window trim.
- Plant yellow flowers or group flower pots together. Yellow evokes a buying emotion for many people. Make sure visitors can clearly read your house number.



### 2) Stand back from Your Home.

- Make the mental decision to "let go" of your emotions and focus on the fact that soon this house will no longer be yours.
- Picture yourself handing over the keys and envelopes containing appliance warranties to the new owners!
- Say goodbye to every room.
- Look toward the future.

### 3) De-Personalize. De-Personalize.

Pack up those personal photographs and family heirlooms. Buyers can't see past personal artifacts, and you don't want them to be distracted. You want buyers to imagine their own photos on the walls, and they can't do that if yours are there! You don't want to make any buyer ask, "I wonder what kind of people live in this home?" You want buyers to say, "I can see myself living here."



#### **4) Get rid of de Clutter! De-Clutter!**

People collect an amazing quantity of junk. Consider this: if you haven't used it in over a year, you probably don't need it.

If you don't need it, why not donate it or throw it away?

Remove all books from bookcases.

Pack up those knickknacks.

Clean off everything on kitchen counters.

Put essential items used daily in a small box that can be stored in a closet when not in use. Think of this process as a head-start on the packing you will eventually need to do anyway.

#### **5) Rearrange Bedroom Closets and Kitchen Cabinets.**

Buyers love to snoop and will open closet and cabinet doors. Think of the message it sends if items fall out! Now imagine what a buyer believes about you if she sees everything organized. It says you probably take good care of the rest of the house as well. This means:

Organize spice jars. Neatly stack dishes.

Turn coffee cup handles facing the same way.

Hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction.

Line up shoes.



#### **6) Reduce the amount of Furniture and books you have.**

Almost every home shows better with less furniture. So rent a storage unit.

Remove pieces of furniture that are too large or are in the way of traffic flow--Put them in storage,

Give them to relatives who can use them, or

Sell them on Craigslist.

Post things you don't need to sell, or that you think won't sell on Ithaca [Freecycle.org](http://Freecycle.org),

Give them to Significant Elements or Ithaca ReUse.

Give books that you no longer want to a "Friends of the Library" Sale.

Sell them on Amazon

Your bookcases can now hold pieces of art or items that enhance the rooms.

Remove extra leaves from your dining room table to make the room appear larger.

Leave just enough furniture in each room to showcase the room's purpose with plenty of room to move around.

You don't want buyers scratching their heads and saying, "What is this room used for?"

### **7) Remove/Replace Favorite Items.**

If you want to take window coverings, built-in appliances or fixtures with you, remove them now. Anything attached to the walls with two or more screws are generally assumed to be part of the purchase contract. If the chandelier in the dining room once belonged to your great grandmother, take it down. If buyers never sees items, they won't want them. Once you tell buyers they can't have items you can blow the deal. Pack those items and replace them, if necessary.



### **8) Make Minor Repairs. Some people go so far as to have a pre-Market Home Inspection**

Replace cracked floor or counter tiles.

Patch holes in walls.

Make repairs to minor drywall cracks, if you had a leak in an upstairs bathroom three years ago and it was completely repaired, check and make sure there are no telltale marks on the ceiling—Paint the entire ceiling if necessary. Nothing scares off a buyer quicker than ancient wet spots on ceilings and walls.—don't try to cover up anything that has been an ongoing problem—which must be disclosed-- just those items that are fully repaired.

Fix leaky faucets.

Fix doors that don't close properly and kitchen drawers that jam.

Consider painting your walls neutral colors, especially if you have grown accustomed to purple or pink walls of your kids. (Don't give buyers any reason to remember your home as "the house with the orange bathroom.")

Replace burned-out light bulbs.

If you've considered replacing a worn bedspread, do so now!

### **9) Make the House Sparkle!**

Wash windows inside and out.

Rent a pressure washer and spray down sidewalks and exterior.

Clean out cobwebs.

Re-caulk tubs, showers and sinks.

Polish chrome faucets and mirrors.

Clean out the refrigerator.

Vacuum daily.

Wax floors.

Dust furniture, ceiling fan blades and light fixtures.

Replace worn rugs.

Hang up fresh towels, Bathroom towels look great fastened with ribbon and bows.  
Clean and air out any musty smelling areas. Odors are a no-no.

**10) Scrutinize. Scrutinize. Scrutinize.**

Go outside and open your front door. Stand there. Do you want to go inside? Does the house welcome you? Linger in the doorway of every single room and imagine how your house will look to a buyer. Examine carefully how furniture is arranged and move pieces around until it makes sense. Make sure window coverings hang level.

Tune in to the room's statement and its emotional pull. Does it have impact and pizzazz?



**Some people advise a pre-sale Bank Appraisal.**—though I don't recommend it. Your assessment, though lower than you may be willing to accept for your house might be a better number to go by. A colleague's client recently offered her home as an "Exclusive Listing" at a very high pre-market price— She provided a formal appraisal as justification for her price at \$970,000. The house eventually sold for \$799,000, but after more than two years on the market.