

How to emotionally detach before you sell

If you can't unpack yourself from your property, no amount of pretty pictures and nice furniture will help sell it.

Some of our home staging clients understand the need to think about the most likely type of buyer of their property, then merchandise their property to attract that buyer. They are happy to pack away family photos or change the craft room back into a bedroom so that prospective buyers can see themselves living in the house. But for many, these simple actions are difficult, as they're still emotionally tethered to their home and find it hard to unpack themselves from the property.

Emotionally detaching from your house before you list is the first step to getting it sold. Your next property is your new home. Start to transfer your emotional connection. If you still see your property as your home and not as a product to be packaged, you won't see what needs to be done, or be willing to make the changes necessary. Everything will seem harder until you realise that your house is now a property. Your next property is your home.

Selling your house can be a difficult and emotional time. It is important for us to take care of the house and the owners during that time, whatever their stories. We always know when clients are struggling as they become emotional, procrastinate, get caught in the detail, go into denial or leave everything to the last minute. These self-sabotaging actions move them further away from getting their house sold. Moving on is a simple thing, what it leaves behind is hard.

Tips to ease your exit

If you're about to list your house and are finding it difficult to emotionally detach, these tips will help:

- > Take your time. If you don't have to move quickly, don't. If your agent is pushing you to list by next Friday, that's his or her agenda, not yours. Work to your own plan and only list when you and your house are ready.
- > Get help from family and friends.
- > Get outside help. A home stager is a great place to start. They can provide an objective pair of eyes and practical help and advice. They will keep you on track and support you through the process. They might tell you some 'home truths', but they will do it with love.
- > Accept that moving on doesn't negate the past. Take pictures of your house, rooms and special possessions. Write down your memories of the house too. Put everything in a memory box and pack it away for your next home.
- > Ask yourself "What will the house sale give me or enable me to do?" Hold onto these positive images or feelings. Affirm them regularly.
- > Think and talk in chapters. This property was one chapter. There have been many, and there'll be more. Look forward to the next chapter of your life.

We tell our clients there are 10 principles to preparing a house to sell. Learning how to let go is the first - and most critical. Emotionally detaching from the house is number one. Once this is done, the other principals - your objective, choosing your target audience, organising and purchasing furnishings for staging, and more, will be easier. Without letting go, they'll be impossible.