Senior Advice: Finding the right words for last rites

by Doug_Mayberry

Q: My best buddy died, and I have been asked to speak at his memorial. Should I fib a little and say he was the greatest guy in the world, or tell it like he was? We had been friends since grade school. Also, how long should I speak?

A: Remember, you will only be a part of the ceremony and to keep your comments short, no more than three to five minutes. Write your eulogy down and practice it with a tape recorder. Frequently family and friends break down emotionally while speaking. Share the little things you experienced together. Was he always late, did he invariably order french fries, or on one occasion forgot to bring the fish bait?

Remember, the service is not about you. You may cry, but direct your memories and experiences toward the family. They are focusing on their own emotional relationships. The most important thing you can say is how sharing time with him made such a difference in your life.

Q: Several months ago we enthusiastically signed up for a new home in a being-built retirement community. We need to sell our home to pay cash. Homes in our neighborhood are now selling for 15 percent less than when we signed up. If we cancel out, we will lose our deposit plus the cost of the upgrades we ordered. What are our options?

A: Many near-retirement couples have gotten caught off guard by dropping prices. Professionals and mortgage companies use prices of homes recently sold in the neighborhood to appraise home values. Today, for multiple reasons, there are more sellers than buyers.

Weigh the risk of losing your desired new home against possibly taking a small mortgage on your new home. In the long run, how comfortable would you feel about this option?

There are no guarantees. Developers are carefully monitoring price movements, and many are offering incentives. Talk with your developer to determine if he is willing to lower your purchase price.

To sell, are you willing to also offer incentives to buyers such as paying their closing costs, paying their mortgage for three months or other considerations?

Incentives based on a given time period encourage buyers. Internet buyers search by listing price. Bracketing your selling price at the low end of a range, such as $327,000 in the $325,000-to-$350,000 range, could

produce results. Currently, interest rates are going lower. Show a willingness to negotiate.

There are bargain hunters buying because they believe prices will go up. There are also investors looking for a steal - researching Internet availabilities, calling owners, and offering over-the-phone, low-ball prices in the hopes of catching a desperate seller. If possible, renting your current home and waiting for prices to increase might be an option. Some owners who are losing their home in foreclosure are becoming renters. You probably bought your home at a favorable price and made an excellent investment. Having the option to move to the environment where you want to be may prove to be the right decision for you.

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