

## *I can't fathom living anywhere else but my home of 63 years (Part 2)*

In my first article on the struggle of leaving a long time home, I talked about how difficult it can be to leave a house that is so comfortable and familiar. I discussed how fear of the unknown can hold us back from living a full life.

Another statement I've heard a lot from my clients is *"I can't leave this house because all my memories are here"*. The sentiment is honest, and yes, we know that in reality all their memories will move with them when the day comes. Instead of taking that statement literally, consider the possibility that it's another perspective on the same idea of fear of the unknown.

It's reasonable to have the feeling that you're leaving all those special memories behind, especially when a lot of those memories were made within your home. Family gatherings, children growing up, living and growing as a family, all happened in that special place called home. Even after the children have moved on, simply sitting at the dining room table can bring back the sights and sounds of some lively family meals. Or while relaxing in the living room your mind wanders to the holiday gatherings filled with good food, lively conversation and an abundance of love.

Leaving your home of many years may not be easy, but with the right process can actually be validating. Think about it. Instead of just pondering the memories, reflect upon all of the effort you put into raising that family. Or consider the special connection with your spouse —made possible only through sharing a lifetime of experiences together. There were likely good times and bad, all wrapped up in a lot of love and caring for one another. It

feels like you are leaving all those wonderful memories behind because you haven't taken the appropriate time to process your thoughts and honor all those memories.

Honoring your memories can take many forms.

- In a quiet moment think about each room in your home and what stories come to mind of family and friends who have spent time there.
- Consider how those people and those events have impacted your life.
- Write a few sentences or more about your memories, and if possible, make note of how it makes you feel as you reflect upon those wonderful times in your life. That will add a whole new depth to your memories, and if you share your writing with family, it will give them a deeper understanding of you and your stories.
- As you begin your reflections, your mind will likely wander to moments you haven't thought of in many years, which is one of the many gifts in this process. Go with those moments, and allow yourself the luxury of remembering the stories that aren't necessarily the ones that are discussed at every family gathering. It's the little things, the quieter moments that get more easily lost...this is your time to bring them back.
- If you're not inclined to write down your memories, invite a family member or dear friend who has earned your confidence to listen to your reflections. By saying them out loud, and having someone ask questions or comment on your words, your experience will be enriched.

The process of saying things out loud, or writing  
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them down, tends to make them more real and more lasting.

Your home has been a meaningful part of your life...almost like a friend. By honoring it and the stories created within it, you'll find that you are better prepared to own them and bring them on the rest of your journey. It will also enable you to move forward in life to make more stories with those you love.

*This article is a reprint of a blog posted  
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