



**OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DESK OF
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Need a referral? Please give me a call.



Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.

William Arthur Ward

What is your home worth — not as much as you think

When a home stays on the market for months and months, chances are it is overpriced. We've been reading about inventory shortage and improvements in the economy, so how does that translate to home prices? Chances are your home is worth about 5% more than a year ago. Many well maintained homes priced at market value sell within days or a few weeks, but buyers will not offer on an overpriced home.



The top features in demand for new homes



Energy efficient features including

Low-e windows

Energy star rated appliances

Programmable thermostat

Walk-in closet in master bedroom

Laundry room

Guest room

9' ceiling on 1st floor

Two or more car garage

Granite countertops

Costly mistakes new-home buyers make

Over budget, over stressed?

- **Don't overbuild.** Consider what makes sense for your family. More translates to additional purchase costs + more real estate taxes long term.
- **What about resale value?** Build your dream home, but don't make it a nightmare for someone else.
- **Weigh the upgrades.** What makes sense during building and what can be added later.
- **Monitor the progress.** Are your expectations being met. Don't wait till you get to the closing table to mention disparities.



Top Motivators for Buying Now

1. "I'm tired of my house." Confidence in the market is returning.
2. Interest rates are attractive.
3. Home prices are favorable.
4. "I've got more money to spend."
5. A change in family circumstances. Family is growing or shrinking.

Time to respond to your motivator?

Florida's real estate market rebound is the strongest in the nation.

Why do homeowners sell?

The home itself

Lack of storage, too much maintenance, too small, needs updating, insects, usable space, parking, small yard, HOA

Neighbors

Noisy, too close, messy yard, unfriendly, pets, nosy, kids, home not maintained

Neighborhood

Traffic, houses too close, no shopping, crime, no peers, no parks, too many teenagers, commute too far, highway access, no amenities

Hmm . . . Food for thought whether you're considering selling or buying.



New, free savings plan acts like Roth

My RA no-risk savings plan is official. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew explains "To have a secure retirement, the earlier you start, the better off you're going to be, and we know that there are some challenges in getting people started. It has to be safe, and it has to be affordable."

The starter accounts cost nothing to open, have no fees, and savers can contribute as little as \$1. A my RA is a Roth IRA, with all the same rules regarding withdrawals, contributions and income thresholds; but it is simpler. Monies are invested only in a US Treasury security created for the program guaranteed to never fall in value. Visit my RA.gov for more information.

Fresh Paint Helps Sell Homes

The wrong paint can be a big turn off, so keep some rules in mind:

- Too many colors. It's important to make the rooms feel connected. However, avoid making the palette too bland.
- Too much matching. Do not match walls to a color in one of your fabrics. It will be too strong.
- Ceiling paint is best a cream shade.
- Use neutrals to balance color.



Solar power in Florida

Good news!

Power by clean energy, especially solar, is gaining strength and popularity in a state where there is an abundance of sunshine. A planned "solar-powered" city is set to break ground at Babcock Ranch in Charlotte County. Cape Coral is looking into becoming its own electric utility and wants solar as a power source — at least for streetlights.

