**Downsizing: One of Those Big Issues That We All Face As We Age**

By JIM SMITH, Realtor ®

For some of us, our possessions seem to expand along with our waistline as we age. By the time we start collecting Social Security and enjoying the benefits of Medicare — wahoo! — our basements are full and we’re living in a house which is way too big for us.

At least that was true for Rita and me! Seven years ago we downsized into a two-bedroom one-story home, which will suffice for us until we need to consider assisted living. But our basement is still too full!

I’m pleased to say we’re also downsizing our physical bodies through exercise and diet — but that’s not my topic for this month!

As a Realtor, my expertise is in doing what I did for Rita and me — selling your current house and getting you into a smaller, low-maintenance home with main-floor living — but I also find myself helping with the second aspect, which is to downsize possessions.

There are three categories of possessions — stuff you want to take with you to your next home, even if it’s assisted living; stuff you want to sell because it doesn’t fit in your new home; and stuff you want to get rid of either by giving it to a thrift store or taking it to the dump. We’ve helped our clients with all three of these categories.

Perhaps you’ve considered employing an “estate sale” company to sell unwanted furniture and accessories — everything from dishes to sofas. There are several estate sale companies among the service providers on the Golden Real Estate smartphone app, which you can download on the App Store or Google Play. Just keep in mind that estate sale companies charge up to 40% commission on the sale of your possessions. I’m not saying they don’t earn what they charge, but I have been successful more than once in getting the buyer of a home to purchase the unwanted furniture in a separate deal outside of the real estate transaction.

I ask my sellers to list the items (with prices) of everything they want to sell outside of closing and leave that list on their kitchen counter so that prospective buyers can see it. Then, if we get multiple bids by pricing the house right, I can usually get the winning bidder to agree to buy all the furniture at the prices listed. I did that just last month on one of my listings, and I have done it multiple times prior to that. The buyer probably didn’t want the furniture, but agreed to buy it in order to win the bidding war we created by pricing the home to attract multiple offers.

Our free moving truck is useful for the other two categories of stuff that you want to take to a thrift store or dump. Our clients use our trucks for that purpose all the time, and I love that we’re able to provide these trucks at no cost.

Of course, it can be rather time consuming going through your possessions and deciding what to keep and what to throw away. Perhaps you’ve heard of the Netflix series, “Tidying Up with Marie Kondo.” She advises you to look at each item and ask, “Does this give me joy.” If it doesn’t, get rid of it!

Here are some other thoughts shared by co-housing advocate Deb Kneale:

- Remove the things that distract you from the things you love.
- Unburden yourself and your heirs!
- If you lost this item, would you buy it again?
- Allow important things the space they deserve.
- Keep in mind that it feels better to do stuff than to have stuff.

- We wear 20% of our clothes 80% of the time. If you’re not wearing it, why keep it?
- If you’d like to learn more about downsizing or “rightsizing,” there’s a panel discussion with local experts being held on March 10th, 1-3 p.m. at the Arvada Public Library, 7525 W. 57th Ave. It is presented by the Ralston Creek Cohousing community.

For more info, call Tori Baker at 303-704-1268 or visit www.DownsizeAdvice.info.