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There are many ways in which to prove your mettle — chopping wood, changing a tire, or opening a really stubborn jar ... just to name a few — but nothing beats taking charge of the barbecue and cooking a slab of raw meat over an open fire. There's just something about grilling that's irresistible. Here's a few tips to help you grill the ultimate burger ... and earn you the title of "King of the Grill."

Start with the meat. If super-juicy, tender burgers are what you're going for (and honestly, who isn't?), get 80 percent lean chuck and ask for it "twice ground." Now, shape the patties. Form loose ¼-pound balls (resist the urge to pack them like Play-Doh) and flatten ½- to ¾-inch thick. Again, don't pack them too tightly or your burgers are going to be tough (and that adverb is reserved for you). Make an indentation in the center of the patty to compensate for the burger's tendency to bulge as it cooks.

On to the fun part; the grilling. Go ahead and crank the heat to "high." Hold your hand just above the grill. If you can only hold it

there for a few seconds before you start to feel like Anakin Skywalker floating above a pool of lava, it's ready. Salt the patties liberally (no, it won't dry them out) and grill 'em until droplets of blood appear on the raw side (about three minutes). Flip! Cook for another two (medium-rare) or three minutes (medium) ... and try to resist pressing them down to make them sizzle. I know, it's music to your ears, but it's also the quickest way to smooch out all those tasty juices you've worked so hard to preserve. Slap it down on a toasty bun and prepare for the best burger you've ever tasted!



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POWERFUL REAL ESTATE TIPS & STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE

BECOME THE ARCHITECT OF YOUR FUTURE

“ We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and the future. ”
~Frederick Douglass

All of us dwell on the past from time to time. As we live our lives, it's only natural that we sometimes cling to what once was. But when our desire to cling to the past affects our future, we begin an unhealthy battle with anchors that can hold us down and sink us. Dwelling on mistakes gives power to the past and can perpetuate behavior we may want to change.

When you think about it, everything that happens occurs in the present. Memories of events are thoughts occurring in the present. Anger or hurt about the past is happening now. What's amazing about this understanding is that it shows you that the way out of your suffering is always in the present. You can change your perspective right now, you can focus on something different right now. If you want to transcend the past and move forward, place your attention on the present — this is the first step to getting beyond the past and beginning to take control of your future.

Every day, you have the opportunity to make new memories. This is a gift we often take for granted. Anchors don't have to hold you down. If you choose to let go, they can simply become bends on the highway of life, on your way to the future you desire.

Develop a nostalgia for the future instead of for the past. Always put something ahead of you to look forward to. When you're not goal-striving and looking forward, you're not really living. Good luck. Onward and upward!



***Join me at my three-day real estate workshop: Friday, Saturday and Sunday July 10 – 12 at the Meadowlands Hotel, 2 Harmon Plaza in Secaucus, NJ, where I'll reveal a technique I've never shared before. Get more info and pre-register at geralducas.com.**

Gerald Lucas



GERALD LUCAS
Real Estate Expert & Best-Selling Author

DID YOU KNOW?

GOOGLE STARTED OUT AS A RESEARCH PROJECT?

You use Google products every day. You might not think too much about it, but Google is everywhere with Gmail, Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Maps and Google Earth, the Android and Chrome operating systems, and their Nexus branded devices (phones and tablets), as well as numerous other products. Google has worked its way into many facets of both our digital and real lives, and there is no sign of slowing down.

The company got its start in 1996 when Stanford PhD students Larry Page and Sergey Brin were working on a research project. The two designed a new way to link webpages in search results, dubbed PageRank (named for Larry Page, not the web page, as is often assumed). In short, it was programmed to figure out a website's relevance to search terms, based on how many pages any given site had, along the links going to the site from those pages and other web pages across the Internet. They called the first iteration of their search engine "BackRub."

Obviously, the name didn't last long. Page and Brin wanted a name to convey the scale of information their search engine accessed and brought to the user. They picked "Google," a misspelling of googol, a number of epic proportions. They registered the domain in 1997

and from a Menlo Park garage of a friend, Susan Wojcicki (current CEO of YouTube), they maintained it and watched it grow. And grow it did. As more people began searching the web in the late '90s, Google rose through the ranks of the once-crowded search engine landscape. Now, Google dominates the web, and the company is constantly developing new ways to make web search more efficient.



In addition to doing the soil test, to be safe, I would suggest removing the oil tank altogether before you close on the property. When you remove an oil tank, you want to make sure you get all the appropriate paperwork that confirms the oil tank was removed properly. You may even be able to get the seller to remove the oil tank for you prior to closing. In addition, I would also suggest you have an oil tank sweep done on the entire property to check to see if there are any other underground oil tanks on the premises.

Thanks for your question, Evan — good luck!

For more real estate tips and information, visit my blog at geraldlucas.com.

ASK GERALD a Real Estate Question

Q: Gerald, my wife and I found a home we want to buy, but it has an oil tank buried in the front yard. What should we do? (What to do if you're buying a house with an oil tank.)

Evan, Jersey City

A: Good question, Evan. The first thing you should do if you're buying a property with an oil tank is to do a soil test to check for contamination. There are underground oil tank inspection companies that specialize in this, so it shouldn't be hard for you to find a company in your area to do it.

Teacher Says

"Failing to plan is planning to fail" — I know, you've heard that one before — probably from your high school math teacher; but, just like algebra actually comes in handy after graduation (we were surprised too), this little gem of a quote is one that should surely be remembered, lest it come to bite you in the rear later on in life! Implement these two tips to make sure you're planning today to avoid calamity tomorrow!

1. MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE: No, we don't assume you moonlight as Saint Nick, but his habits would be great to adopt. Take 20 minutes in the morning and plan what you need to get done throughout the day; later, update your list with what got moved to the top, or what needs to be moved to tomorrow. This way, nothing gets forgotten and you're on top of your game!

2. JUST LIKE A COOKBOOK COMES WITH TIME SLOTS FOR EVERYTHING FROM PREP TIME TO COOK TIME, SO SHOULD YOUR WORK DAY: Rachel Ray and Guy Fieri aren't the only ones who can make timelines work for them. Allocate specific time increments for everything you do — are you going over your time allotments repeatedly throughout your day? You are either getting distracted a lot or you aren't planning enough time for each activity. (Another gem from that math teacher!)



Real Estate Insights



1. When you overprice a home, it takes more than three times as long to sell.
2. New Jersey's land is worth more per acre than any other state (almost 50 percent more valuable than the second-highest state).
3. The homeownership rate in the U.S. continued its multi-year slide, recently falling to a rate not seen since 1993.
4. Real estate market bottoms tend to take more time to develop than real estate market peaks.



- 1 Check references and get a sample inspection report before you hire a home inspector
- 2 When you're buying a property, attend the home inspection, ask lots of questions, and listen so you don't misinterpret what's written in the inspection report.
- 3 Look at real estate markets and trends locally, not nationally. Every local real estate market is different.
- 4 When you monitor and track your local real estate market, trust what you see, not what you think or hear other people say — the market is always right; you aren't.