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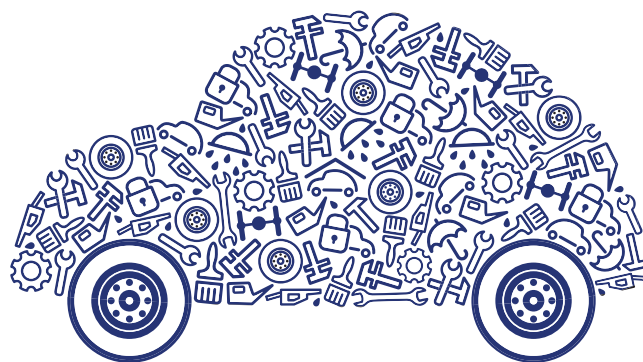
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OLD CAR, NEW TRICKS

When it comes to purchasing a vehicle, there are lots of benefits to buying used: things like ample selection, lower insurance rates, and, of course, affordability. But there are some downfalls. Maybe the passenger seat has a mysterious stain, maybe the roof has one too many cigarette burns, or maybe the exterior could use a little work; whatever it is, it's a constant reminder that someone sat in that seat before you—and now you're paying for their carelessness. However, there are some simple (and inexpensive!) solutions to help you make your used car feel new!

Prepare for some serious scrubbing: You're going to need more than a car wash for this step—although that's a good start. Begin by vacuuming everything—and I mean everything (don't forget the trunk!). Shampoo the floor, the seats, and the ceiling—if it's made of fabric, you should be shampooing it. From there you're going to wash, wipe, and wax every little nook and cranny. Bonus: This is the perfect time to inspect your vehicle from top to bottom!

Focus on the cockpit: This is the area you're going to see, use, and touch the most. A worn steering wheel can be updated with a simple steering wheel cover—and a dash cover can make a huge difference to the look and feel of your car.



Replace dimming lights, broken knobs, and scratched Plexiglas in the cockpit, and give everything a once-over with a coat of dashboard wax.

Update your electronics: Nothing says "used car" like an ancient tape player... or worse, an 8-track. Update your stereo head unit and opt for something with an iPod jack. Welcome to the 21st century!

Let there be light: Plastic headlights can dull over time—making them dim and unattractive. Invest in a headlamp restoration kit to make them sparkle and shine like the day they were installed.

Replace it: Some things just need to be replaced. If your driver's seat appears to have been mauled by a bear, it might be time to invest in a new seat—or at least a quality seat cover. If you can no longer tell what the original color of the car was, it's probably a good idea to think about a fresh coat of paint. And if your wheels look more like doughnuts, or your tires are losing air, you're going to want to replace them (for your own safety). None of these options are exactly "cheap," but they're way cheaper than buying a new car.

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POWERFUL REAL ESTATE TIPS & STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE

The Power Of Gratitude Why Thanksgiving Matters

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues, but the parent of all the others.”
-Cicero

Every year, millions of Americans gather for Thanksgiving to celebrate family, friends and connection. Thanksgiving is more than just a cultural tradition, however, and science now shows that celebrating Thanksgiving and practicing gratitude can elevate our levels of happiness. Gratitude enriches human life and mental well-being. It increases self-esteem and increases your energy levels. Gratitude elevates, energizes, inspires and transforms. It strengthens relationships, reduces stress and improves health.

So how does gratitude improve health? On one level, it helps people sleep better. A 2009 study of 401 people—40% of whom had clinical sleep disorders—found that the most grateful people had better sleep quality, normalized sleep duration (not too long or too short), were able to fall asleep faster at night, and also had less daytime tiredness compared to those who weren't as thankful.

Gratitude also puts situations into perspective. When we make a point to see the good as well as the bad, it becomes more difficult to complain and stay stuck in a rut. Gratitude helps us realize what we have and reduces our constant need for wanting more all the time. So, while it may seem easier to focus on problems and grievances, you should make a point to introduce a little gratefulness into every day instead.

Gratitude not only helps you, it also helps those around you. Other people are moved, opened and humbled by your expressions of gratitude.

So how can we increase our gratitude? We can make gratitude a daily habit. At the end of every day, I try to write down at least one thing that I am grateful for. This simple, daily ritual improves my mood, (which is particularly helpful after frustrating days) and gives me more energy for the next day.

Take time every day to appreciate what you have as well as those you have around you. Happiness, meaning, and value in life don't come from external things; they only come from within. Happiness is not discovered; it's created on an individual basis based on the attitude you possess.

So this Thanksgiving, express gratitude for all you have. When you express gratitude for something, you attract more of that thing into your life. Gratitude is one of the surest paths to continued happiness.

Onward and upward!

Gerald Lucas

THANK YOU



GERALD LUCAS
Real Estate Expert & Best-Selling Author

THE LOGISTICS OF LONG JOBS

Have you ever assigned a task to someone (an employee, your children, etc.) and felt like something that should have taken a few hours took them days or even weeks? Or, have you ever found yourself in a situation where something you have undertaken is dragging out way past its estimated time of completion? Why do some tasks take so much longer to complete, while others of seemingly the same difficulty and length, are finished in a snap? Here are the top 10 reasons why some tasks take way too long to complete.

- 1. There are too many people involved:** Too many opinions, tastes, and preferences can be hard to get in sync. If you throw one too many egos into a job, you will likely stall the process.
- 2. The task is too big:** The fact is, in general, tasks are much more manageable in bite-size chunks. Throw the whole enchilada at someone, and the sheer size of it may cause them to put off the job altogether.
- 3. The task gets stuck in the planning phase:** The process of just figuring out how to go about a difficult task can stop some projects cold. When too much thought (and normally, disagreement) goes into just figuring out how to get to step one, chances are, step one will never be reached.
- 4. The people involved don't see the benefit of doing the task:** When workers don't see the benefit of completing a task, it can often be stalled or forgotten about. If they don't understand what their task will result in, why finish it? It's important for employers to help their workers feel vested in the projects they assign them; when they feel connected to them, they are far more likely to give 100% to get the projects accomplished.
- 5. The people doing the task take issue with it:** Sometimes tasks really shouldn't even be done in the first place. It might be inefficient, unethical, or it just might not make sense. When the worker knows this, they delay or stall finishing the task.
- 6. Too much is being done at once:** Sometimes tasks take too long because the people doing them are biting off more than they can chew. It takes a

lot longer to complete one task when you have five others you are focusing on at the same time. It's best to prioritize and take on things one by one.

- 7. The task is difficult:** Sometimes we go into a task knowing it is going to be very difficult and time-consuming. Sometimes this knowledge alone is enough to stall a task out of the gate. Bottom line: It seems too intimidating and it feels easier to procrastinate. The best way to avoid this is, once again, to break it into smaller, more manageable portions.
- 8. The people involved just don't want to do it:** Some tasks take forever because the person or people doing it, plainly and simply do not want to. For example, you can clean your child's room in less than 10 minutes (because it's really not that big of a job and you are starting to forget what color the carpet is in there). But, if you delegate that job to your child, it might take them 30 minutes to an hour to get it done. Why does it take them so much longer? Because they flat out don't want to do it, so they don't put the same amount of effort into it as they would a task they did want to do.
- 9. The task is badly defined:** When someone doesn't actually understand what they are doing, how can they get it done at all, much less quickly? Clear, definitive tasks are a must if you are looking for efficient work!
- 10. The tools are missing:** Sometimes people are ill-equipped to do a certain job. Maybe they don't have the knowledge of a computer software program that someone else could navigate in their sleep. Or maybe they don't even have the software program and they have to try and figure out something else altogether.

If one or more of these issues exists, you can imagine how hard it might be for you or your team to get anything done. We suggest using this article as a checklist! If you ensure that your project doesn't have too many people involved, is manageably-sized, doesn't get hung up in planning, has a clearly defined directive and purpose, and that the people involved are motivated to work hard, you will be knocking things off your to-do list left and right!

ASK GERALD a Real Estate Question

How To AVOID ROOFING RIP-OFFS

Q: *I need a new roof, but the last contractor I hired ripped me off. How can I protect myself this time?*

—Chris, Memphis, Tennessee

Hey Chris!

Finding a good roofer isn't always easy. A roof is one of the most expensive items to replace on a home. So when you're spending that kind of money, it's worth it to take your time, find a roofer you can trust and then protect yourself with a solid written contract.

I suggest getting at least 3 quotes from licensed roofing contractors. A big temptation that many people fall victim to is using a roofer without a license who agrees to do the work for a cheaper price—this I would not recommend. I have used unlicensed contractors in the past and have paid the price for it later. Unlicensed contractors will often promise cheaper prices in the beginning of a project then cry poverty and ask for more money mid-job.

Getting referrals from other people is a smart practice particularly when those referrals come with before and after photos of work they've done. Reliable roofers offer guarantees for their work, so you should demand a written guarantee of at least 5 years if not longer for a new roof.

Lastly, when you're working with a roofer or with any contractor you should always require they sign a written agreement or contract with a specific scope of work and a payment schedule that is tied directly to the completion of specific milestones. The rule to live by when dealing with contractors is to make sure their work precedes your payments—this prevents them from walking away with your money to work on someone else's project.

Good luck, Chris! For more real estate tips, visit performanceproperty.com
—Gerald

WHY MILLENNIALS Are Renting Instead of Buying

Real Estate Insights

As homeownership rates have fallen in the US, a lot has been written recently about the changing attitudes among the younger Millennial generation about renting versus buying. This change has been driven less by a fundamentally different outlook on home ownership than by current economic and financial realities. Younger Americans are renting more than buying now for several reasons that have nothing to do with a lack of desire to own their own home. First, younger Americans were hit disproportionately hard by the recession and their employment numbers are still the weakest of any age group. Income ultimately drives everything in our economy and having a job obviously affects your ability to buy real estate. Young people also carry record amounts of student loan debt, which reduces their disposable income and makes it harder for them to qualify for a mortgage loan. They also face a much stricter credit environment which is keeping many of them on the sidelines unable to buy. Furthermore, lenders are increasingly requiring larger down payments and mortgage insurance premiums have risen. In my state of New Jersey, the average age of first-time homeowners has risen from 29 to 37 in the last five years. The two biggest challenges to Millennials in qualifying for a home loan are: 1) Improving their personal credit score and 2) Saving for a down payment. The desire for home ownership is still high among Millennials like previous generations, however, current economic circumstances make buying more difficult. The American Dream of home ownership is alive and well but for many in the Millennial generation, it is a dream deferred.



DID YOU KNOW...



Show Me The MONEY!!!

FedEx was founded in 1971 by Fred Smith with \$90 million of investments (\$4 million of which was his own money). Three years later, there was only \$5,000 in the bank due to rising fuel costs. Unfortunately, that wasn't even enough to even get a plane in the air, and no one was willing to give him a loan or invest any more cash. On the brink of bankruptcy, Fred decided it was time to take a gamble—a real one that is. Pulling all \$5,000 out of the bank, Fred headed off to Las Vegas for the weekend where he played Blackjack with the remaining company funds. Later, when asked what he'd been thinking, Fred would be quoted saying, "What difference does it make? Without the funds for the fuel companies, we couldn't have flown anyway." As it turns out, Fred had a great instinct, since he came back to work on Monday with \$32,000. Shortly thereafter, he was able to raise \$11 million to keep the company going, and by 1976, Federal Express had made its first profit of \$3.6 million. Today, FedEx is worth an estimated \$25-34 billion, and Smith, after risking it all on a weekend in Las Vegas, is worth around \$2 billion.



Real Estate Tips

- 1** You can legally invest in real estate with your IRA and 401(k) and pay little or no taxes, provided your IRA or retirement plan uses an approved custodian. People have created the widespread misconception that permissible IRA investments are limited to stocks, bonds, mutual funds and CDs.
- 2** Be careful when you make offers to purchase bank-owned property, also known as REOs, because there is no previous owner compelled to disclose problems like a leaky roof or oil tank. You must do your own homework, which includes a property inspection—the bank will only give you a clear title.
- 3** Never pay upfront fees for a loan modification. Sub-prime predatory lenders that modify loans for money are often the same companies that originated so many of the bad loans that contributed to the real estate crisis the US real estate markets are still recovering from.
- 4** Keep detailed records of each expense related to your property so you will be able to take advantage of every single tax deduction you are legally entitled to use.