

News To Move You Forward



NMLS# 422932

Brought to you by Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus, Nicole Ellis & Angie Domine

715-387-1122 • ffbmortgage@forwardbank.com

It's True: People Do Need People, and Here's Proof

Despite bookshelves full of self-care books teaching us how to feel contented on our own, the one proven truth about how to be truly happy is this: our happiness depends on other people.

As writer Ruth Whippman points out in a recent article in the *New York Times*, a long line of studies into what makes a happy life have consistently arrived at a common conclusion: it's healthy social relationships that are the "strongest, most consistent predictor." Whippman adds: "Humans can't actually be happy without them. This is a finding that cuts across race, age, gender, income and social class so overwhelmingly that it dwarfs any other factor."

For example, scientists first began tracking the health of a group of students at Harvard University in 1938 and followed them into the present. The Grant Study was revolutionary, as brainpickings.org explains: "(At that time) having not yet uncovered the structure of DNA, we knew close to nothing about genetics (and) mental health was a fringe concern."

As it turns out, the results of Grant Study were, and are, groundbreaking. A key finding: those participants who were most satisfied in their relationships at age 50 turned out to be the healthiest at age 80.

Professor and psychiatrist Robert Waldinger, who now directs the study and recently gave a Ted talk on its findings, explains: "Our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health."

The takeaway: more than wealth or professional success, close relationships are what keep humans happy and healthy.

Are You Selling Your Home? Get My Free Guide



First impressions count. So if your home isn't looking its best, you could fail to get the best price for it.

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Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I'll send it right out to you.

Why Americans Are Now Buying into the Small Home Trend

Call it the tiny house effect, or perhaps it might be considered a change in attitudes after the 2008 housing crash. Whatever the reason, small houses are continuing to gain in popularity with home buyers. As pointed out in a recent article by real estate industry news site RISMedia, some in the industry see smaller houses beginning to sell faster than larger properties. They're not just a fad. Small houses are an increasingly attractive option for many buyers. Here's why:

Affordability

In many hot markets with rocketing prices, prospective homeowners have had to reevaluate what they can afford. Other buyers have decided it's not worth it to go house poor, and have sacrificed space for cash in their bank accounts. Many consider a small home a smart investment.

Less maintenance

The upkeep of a larger home can result in stress, especially for young families or aging owners. A smaller footprint requires less upkeep and outdoor maintenance, reducing stress and freeing up time.

Location vs. square footage

Location, not square footage, has become the marker of desirability in many of today's real estate markets. Homebuyers now would rather buy a smaller house in a hip, vibrant, well-served neighborhood than go bigger in a less desirable part of town.

Trends

TV design shows where well-functioning and beautiful small spaces are created have become just as popular as those on multimillion-dollar properties. Maybe more so. Instead of thinking of a house as cramped, buyers are now just as likely to see the creative possibilities of a smaller property.

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“Is It Done Yet?” Home Remodeling with Kids

Spring home improvements can be stressful, especially when you’re living in the middle of it. Add children to the mix, and the tension increases.

But you don’t need to take a vacation while your home is being remodeled — even if walls are coming down. Here are some tips on how to continue to live as a family during a major renovation.

Your children’s space — and their routines — will be disrupted. To avoid comments like “When can we use the kitchen again?” share the construction schedule with them.

Prepare for disruptions: Kitchens and bathrooms are often the rooms being remodeled; unfortunately, they’re also the most used. If possible, consider completing one room at a time.

Set up a temporary kitchen in another room and prepare meals in advance that can be quickly reheated. Get the kids to help you devise a bathroom schedule; they may be more inclined to follow it if they’re involved.

Make safety a priority: Know where your kids are during work hours. Make sure they understand the safety risks, and put lots of space between them and the work. Also ensure your contractor stores tools away safely at the end of the day.

Dust can be hazardous for anyone with allergies. Plastic sheeting should be used to seal off the area under construction from your temporary living space, but you also may want to consider closing the heating and cooling vents. As well, your contractor should use nontoxic paints and stains.

Choose your contractor wisely. Make sure the company has a reputation for completing jobs safely, and be prepared to pay more for contractors who are properly insured and follow regulations. Ask them how comfortable they are with children on site and make sure everyone agrees to and obeys the safety rules.

Finally, when it’s finished, have fun together in the new space. After all, you — and the kids — deserve it.

Ask the Agent: This Month’s Question

Everyone says I should get a home inspection. Is an inspection really worth it?

Too often, buyers forgo a home inspection in an effort to save time and money. This is not the place to skimp. A home inspection is a crucial step in the home-buying process. Keep in mind the option to perform a home inspection is included in all standard real estate contracts. This should be a clue to buyers that it’s important.

A home inspection reveals any issues that are a safety concern or affect the value of the property. It allows the buyer to discover what items need to be replaced, serviced, or repaired immediately, as well as those that may require attention in the near future.

Buyers can use the information to decide if they should walk away from a lemon or negotiate further with the seller for repairs or credit. They can also learn a great deal about the home, including what potential repair costs to expect down the line.

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Forward Financial Bank, NMLS # 422932

1001 N. Central Ave.

Marshfield WI 54449

715-387-1122

ffbmortgage@forwardbank.com

www.forward.bank/mortgage-loans/

NMLS # 1263205, NMLS # 1057622, NMLS # 950523 & NMLS #720544



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