



**HIERARCH**  
REAL ESTATE & INVESTMENTS, INC.

## Disrupting An Industry

Brought to you by Hierarch Real Estate & Investments, Inc.

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## Is Your Family History Preserved for Posterity?

It used to be that family histories, stories, and traditions got passed down orally from the older generation to the younger generation, to be continually preserved and shared.

Nowadays, in a world where life moves fast and almost everything happens online, that kind of oral storytelling happens less and less. But without it, the memories of our elders will disappear when they pass. The solution: combine that storytelling with the power of technology to record those stories and make them permanent. Here's how.

**Get your elders on board.** This could be your parent, grandparent, or even a neighbor whose stories you enjoy. Explain to them that you love hearing their life's tales and want to record them so that you'll never forget.

**Choose your equipment.** If your storyteller agrees, set up a camera or smartphone on a tripod so that you can capture their voice and their physical presence. If they're nervous, stick with a recorder or app that does the same.

**Use prompts.** You'll want to provide some direction to help inspire your storyteller. This could take the form of a stack of family snapshots, heirlooms, or a list of interview-style questions. (Where did you grow up? Tell me about your wedding day.)

**Turn the recordings into a keepsake.** This could mean editing your footage into a family movie, interspersed with photos and clips. Or you could create a scrapbook that includes transcriptions of your recordings, along with a USB key that can be popped into a computer to play the audio file.

## Want to Sell Your Home Fast? Get My Free Guide



Preparing your home for sale can make the difference between getting the price you want – or ending up disappointed.

Discover some easy things you can do by requesting my free guide, "50 Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale."

Just call me at 209-753-0123 and I'll send it right out to you.

## 5 Things You Need to Know about Your Future Neighborhood

Are you currently on the home hunt? You probably have a list of needs and wants. Have you included anything about the neighborhood?

In addition to bedrooms, baths, and interior upgrades, it's a good rule of thumb to ask a few questions about the potential neighborhood you may want to call home. When you're thinking about buying, here are some questions you can ask to help determine if the neighborhood will be a good fit for you.

- 1. Is the area well-maintained?** Take a walk around the block. Drive through the neighborhood. Are properties well-maintained? Are roads in good condition? The appearance of the lawns, homes, and public spaces can reveal a lot about the area.
- 2. Are there any rules and regulations you need to be aware of before you commit?** Do you mind if your renovations and landscaping are restricted by homeowner association bylaws? Find out if the neighborhood has any rules and regulations, and what they are.
- 3. What is the reputation of the school district?** Even if you don't have children, the school district's status can affect property values. Get the scoop on the district's rankings in academics and financial stability.
- 4. What's the crime rate?** Oftentimes you can find maps provided by the city that show what crimes occur in the area and how often. The FBI may also have reports available for the area. Do a little research to make sure you'll feel safe in your new home.
- 5. What amenities are nearby?** For some homebuyers, access to public transportation is important. Others want to live near parks, shops, or restaurants. Find out what amenities the area offers to ensure that you choose a neighborhood that suits your lifestyle.

# Listen Up: Here's How to Become a Better Listener

If you can believe it, listening is a complex process. It involves receiving information; taking meaning from it; recalling and sorting the information conveyed; evaluating its credibility, completeness, and value; and responding in both verbal and nonverbal ways.

Being a good listener is tougher than you might think. Consider that, when it comes to recall, we forget half of what we hear almost immediately. We lose another 15% within eight hours. And 24 hours later, we can barely recall 20% of what was said to us.

Still, it is possible to train yourself to be a better listener. Here are a few tips:

Lean in and focus attention on the speaker. Try to eliminate any distractions. Watch for visual communication cues, such as facial expressions and body language, that

affect meaning. Paraphrase concepts to put them in your own frame of experience, and don't be afraid to ask for clarification or a re-explanation. Pause and think before responding or giving input.

If appropriate, offer verbal and nonverbal feedback to the speaker to indicate you are engaged. Verbal signals might be things like "oh," "uh-huh," or "right." Nonverbal signals could be eye contact, forward posture, or nodding.

You can also train yourself to listen more critically so as to better evaluate the credibility and worth of the messages you receive. First, consider whether statements are facts or inferences. Then weigh the arguments and evidence presented. Try to be aware of any biases or possible feelings about the other person that might impact your judgment.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at [info@hierarchrei.com](mailto:info@hierarchrei.com) or call 209-753-0123 for the answer.

How can you salvage a cake that is stuck to the bottom of the pan?

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

## Wondering What's Happening in Your Neighborhood?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for? Do I need a house inspection?

These are all critical questions that shouldn't be overlooked when thinking about buying or selling your home.

Whether you're curious about prices in your area, whether it's an excellent time to sell, or just need an expert to answer your questions, I can give you the tools and offer guidance through the entire buying or selling process.

Let me know how I can help by simply giving my office a call at [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) to set up a time to connect.

## Worth Reading

### Computer Eye Strain: 10 Steps for Relief

By Gary Heiting, OD, and Larry K. Wan, OD

[Allaboutvision.com](http://Allaboutvision.com)

Eye fatigue may be an inevitable consequence of frequently using a computer, but it doesn't have to hamper your productivity. This article gives some tips for how to prevent over-tired eyes. You can adjust your computer display settings, your workspace furniture, and your lighting. Remember: consult an eye doctor. Regular eye appointments are crucial. Your doctor may be able to give you a prescription for glasses designed for computer use. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/worth06192>

### 30 Things to Always Keep in Your Gym Bag

By Maghan McDowell

[Livestrong.com](http://Livestrong.com)

A well-stocked gym bag is crucial for a successful workout. Your bag should include proper gear for the gym: headbands, simple running shoes, socks, and a hand towel. As you pack, you should also consider your activities beyond the gym. Include makeup, toothpaste, and a toothbrush so you're prepared for post-workout appointments. Keep protein bars and salt tablets handy to nourish yourself. And remember: never forget deodorant. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/worth06191>

### 12 Small-Deck Design Ideas for Outdoor Dining and Lounging

By Lauren Dunec Hoang

[Houzz.com](http://Houzz.com)

Prepare your small deck for optimal use this barbecue season. Use the space strategically. Overhead lights and hanging plants can free up valuable floor space. Purchase small furniture. Outdoor rugs that are themed for specific seasons can make your space more engaging. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/worth06193>

# 3 Real Estate Myths Television Has Taught Us

Jim and Suzy Homebuyer just found their dream property for \$50K and fixed it up in three weeks.

Stories like this have skewed viewers' expectations of real estate reality.

Shows about home buying and renovation projects can be fun to watch, but we may not realize that they often don't depict the realities of buying, selling, and owning a home.

Here are three common myths popularized by today's TV lineup.

## **"Three homes will do."**

On TV, a couple looks at three homes and is able to find the property of their dreams. This isn't how things work in the real world.

The number of homes buyers must look at before finding the right one for them differs in each situation. It's not uncommon to look at 20 homes. It may even work out that you look at just one (but it's not likely).

## **"I can afford that."**

Shows that depict real estate purchases and renovations rarely reflect prices that are realistic for viewers. We may witness a bargain deal on TV and assume we could get something similar.

The fact is, markets vary greatly. The price of a home or a remodel in the area where the show is filmed may be completely different from what we can expect in our home town – either much higher or much lower.

## **"This will be a cinch."**

While some DIY projects can be completed quickly, the amount of time most renovations take is longer than TV would have you believe. Homeowners shouldn't expect to dive into a basement remodel on Friday and wake up Monday morning with the project behind them. Even if you hire professionals, they may encounter unexpected delays or simply need more time to do the renovation right.

If you're considering buying, selling, or renovating, the more information you have, the better prepared you can be. Contact me for some professional input – I'm happy to help.

## Picnic Like a Pro This Summer

Summer and picnics just go together. If you're a fan of the seasonal outdoor party, this year you can picnic like a pro. Here are ways you can enhance your al fresco experiences.

While you're enjoying the great outdoors, you want to be kind to it too. This means picnicking with a conscience. Think reusable and recyclable. Forget paper plates and napkins. Invest in inexpensive enamel plates. They're sturdy, light, and reusable. Colorful cloth napkins add a festive touch. Flatware from home beats plastic forks. Choose your menu with attention to simple, safe, and transportable help-yourself foods, or prepack individual meals in divided, covered containers. Finger foods are usually best, but family-style salads and desserts are fun and easy to serve.

Avoid mayonnaise (which can spoil), sticky puddings, and sugary cakes that invite creepy-crawlies. And remember to pack a natural bug balm to keep the nasties away. A frozen juice container will keep your food chilled while the juice defrosts. Or frozen, water-filled balloons will do the trick, and they're reusable and fun.

A blanket, delicious food, and plenty to drink are the basic requirements. With a little effort, your picnic event can be a memorable one. And that's the whole idea, isn't it?

## Better Lighting Leads to Better Sleeping

Did you know proper bedroom lighting may be the secret to a good night's sleep? This means more than buying a blackout blind or thick curtains that can keep the room dark. It also means considering the lights you keep in your room.

Lights should be chosen strategically. Smaller lights are good choices, such as reading lamps on night stands or small lights mounted on walls. These can help you control the amount of light, and they

can be less disturbing to others in the room. Lightbulbs on the red spectrum can also be helpful, as these encourage sleep. Lastly, experts continue to recommend that people leave screens out of their bedroom, including televisions and smartphones. The blue lights they emit can disrupt sleep. Smartphones and other mobile devices should be charged in another room overnight. Yes, those notifications can wait until morning.

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

### *What can make my offer stronger?*

To get the best response from a seller, you want to put your best foot forward.

This starts with a preapproval. Before you make an offer on a home (and before you even begin to look at homes), you should meet with a lender and get preapproved for a loan. Having this preapproval in hand to submit with an offer lets the sellers know you are a serious buyer who can afford their home. I have lenders that I work with regularly if you ever need a referral.

And, of course, price is important. In a hot market, you may be competing with multiple offers and need to come in at full price. In other situations, you may have more negotiating power. Your real estate agent will help determine a reasonable offer. We provide valuable insight to help you make the best offer.

Flexibility and a willingness to close whenever is most convenient to them are also nice perks that could put the cherry on top for the seller.

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**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9 × 9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3 × 3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

## Cabbage and Pineapple Slaw

Here's a new spin on an old favorite.

This tasty Hawaiian-style coleslaw is sure to be a hit at your next BBQ.

Serves 6

- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons pineapple juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups shredded white cabbage
- 1 cup julienned jicama or green apple
- 1 cup finely chopped pineapple
- 1/4 cup sliced scallions
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Whisk the mayonnaise, vinegar, pineapple juice, salt, and pepper together in a medium bowl.

Add the prepared cabbage, jicama, pineapple, scallions, and cilantro.

Toss well and serve chilled.

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