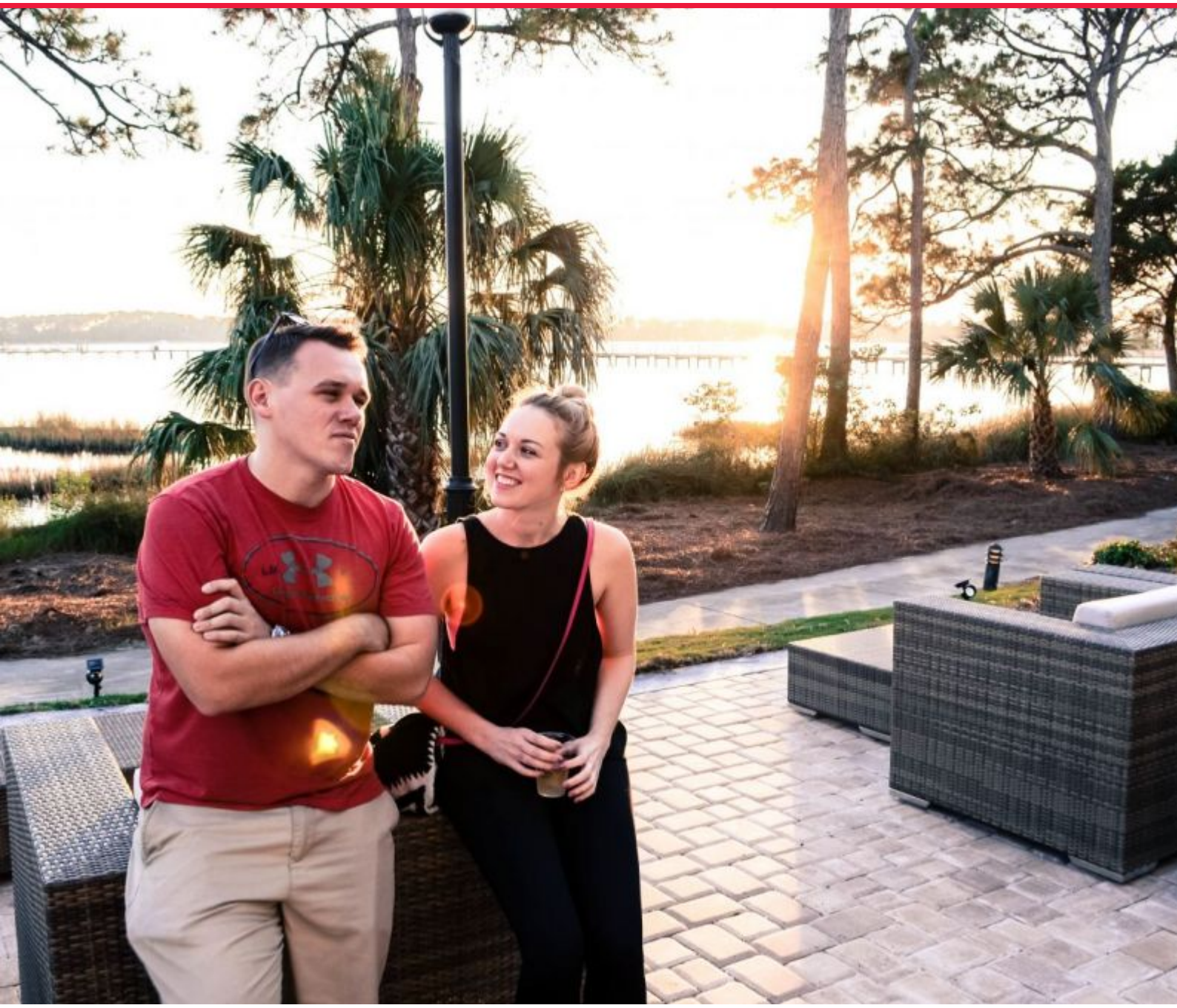

How buying a new home is just like a first date?

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Buying your first home is exciting: but do your research

You should always think of the open house and any planned inspections as a first date. You're flirting with the idea of a new home and a new lifestyle. So be open, be mindful, be honest, and be attentive.

A good homeowner will always dress up their home for you, so you fall in love at first sight. They want their home to be dressed to the nines and really impress. As the buyer, your job is not to strip all of this back, but rather look past all of the decorations and well-placed niceties. You have to understand that well-presented homes are meant to give the buyers the best impression of the property. So what should you look for as a first home buyer?

Let's get started. First, you're going to want to start at the front. For this you're going to want to look up and down, over and under!
What is the neighbourhood like? Is that a dog going crazy in someone's backyard? These should be red flags for you before you even step into the home. It's a great feeling to come across a home that seems like it's a diamond in the rough, but that's exactly it. If the rest of the neighbourhood is a little rough around the edges, that means that your potential resale value will be weak.

'There's an old saying in real estate: buy the worst house in the best street. There is a lot of merit in this'

The sellers know that they really only have one shot to make a lasting impression. That's why buyers should be well aware that a well-presented home does not mean that the home is totally perfect. It is common for sellers to give the impression of a well-presented home in order to hide problems and imperfections! And obviously the seller won't make their home open to public every day, this is why it is essential to drive by the home on a number of different times and days! By driving by the home on a non-open house day, you will be able to see what the street and area are like at all times.

Is the home in a busy sporting precinct which brings in loads of traffic on the weekend?
Is the street a short cut in peak hour?
Is the street only busy during the week but quiet on weekends?

Where I live, the street is near a hospital and business banking precinct which results in loads of week day traffic but really quiet on weekends. Nobody should buy a home just because they fell in love at the first open house! You really need to do your research and find out what the street appeal is like, and what the other homes are like before you even think about an offer.

Be mindful of sellers trying to set the mood by creating a welcoming atmosphere.
For instance, if you walk into the open house and all of the windows are open, some candles are lit, and the house has a fai

'Of course, this doesn't mean you should be sceptical about all open houses, we just want you to be aware of tips and tricks'.

Other trimmings such as cute cushion covers, clean new towels, and fresh flowers are just decoration at this point. These little things are just there to make you think that this home is very well presented and looked after. A home that smells fresh, and looks cared for whilst still being low-maintenance is usually a dream for most people. Inspection time is when the sellers put in the real elbow grease for a quick sale at a good price.

Let's look in more detail at six areas which should examine to get you well on the way to making a correct decision.

1) House Size

How big do you want your house to be? How big should it be? And the most important point how big can you afford? Houses will vary in total square footage, the number of rooms through to the size of the rooms.If you have a family or are planning on having one having enough room to enjoy your life will greatly impact your decision when buying a house... On the other hand, if you do not have children or they have moved out you may be looking for a smaller, easier to manage property.

When making the decision if a house is big enough it is also important to think about your furniture and how it will fit into the rooms. There is no point buying a house that is too big or too small and results in you selling your furniture as it doesn't fit... potentially costing thousands of dollars.

2) The Kitchen

Even when you have large family spaces, often all the activity still centres around the kitchen. It is the most important

room in the house. Homes with well designed, functional kitchens, with modern appliances, are more desirable. With today's open floor plans the family room is normally adjacent to the kitchen making it even more important as it functions as an extension of your main living area.

Consider too, outdoor eating areas. As Australians we love a good summer BBQ and often spend summer nights outside enjoying the weather. If this is important to you then consider if the house you are looking at has a deck or outdoor entertaining area.

3) Bedrooms and Bathrooms

Once again, thinking about resale value, three and four bedroom houses are the most popular, therefore, easier to sell. But the question, how many do you need. Every home has a bathroom, but it's a great idea if you cannot afford a home with two bathrooms to at least have two toilets. You may be able to extend the home later or upscale to a larger home when needed.

With bedrooms it is important to really think about how many your family will need. There is no point paying extra money for an extra bedroom that sits vacant.

4) Storage - Closets,Garages and Laundry

Great storage is a pretty important consideration. Most of us possess sporting equipment, art and craft supplies, books, documents, etc. All require efficient storage. And don't forget the linen and towels!

Check out the storage space and make sure it suits your needs.If there isn't enough storage but you love the house it is important to look at the size of the rooms where it is need (bedrooms, laundry etc.) and assess whether is can be added later.

A garage will also add to the resale value, and a two-car garage increases the value again as they offer extra storage options.

5) The garden and the block

So the garden looks great but are you willing to maintain it. The house has a view, but the back yard is steep. Every property and garden will have different features: from the small courtyard to the fully landscaped garden and outdoor area. Think about what you want in the yard and if you do have the time and desire to keep a big garden or would prefer a more manageable space.

You can always create a landscaped garden or bring in features and value-add to the property yourself after you purchase the property. This way you are adding to the value and not paying a premium price for someone else's work.

6) And again Neighbourhood

Location, location, location is the mantra of real estate agents across Australia. A beautiful home in a cheaper or less developed neighbourhood will never sell for the same price as it would in another area. When determining how much a house is actually worth, the homes adjacent to the house you are interested in are the most important when it comes to accurate market research.

There's an old saying: buy the worst house,in the best street and then do it up! This is very true. If most of the nearby houses are smaller than your house, or not as well cared for, they can impact on the resale value of your property.

It is also wise to look at infrastructure and services in the immediate area such as schools, hospitals and retail shops. These things immediately increase the value of a property.

So what are "most desirable features" for you and which of these will improve your resale value of the home. What do you not need and what can you afford.

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