

5 Top Downsizing Questions

And how to ... TRANSFORM AN OVERWHELMING TASK INTO AN ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE
Information from Ann Armistead, Owner of Downsize Designs, Inc.

1. Why do most people want to downsize?

Most people downsize to make their lives simpler. Usually, they've decided to move to a smaller place to eliminate the extra work and energy it takes to take care of a large home with lots of stuff.

2. What are the issues?

There are two complaints I hear from everyone. The first is, "I'm afraid I can't take everything I want to take. Second, I hear "I just don't know what to do with everything else." Of course, the underlying issue is that we're not just talking about furniture and belongings, but what makes a house a home. The challenge is to identify and preserve enough to make the new house a home, and not a storage facility. That can be a lot of work, both physically and emotionally.

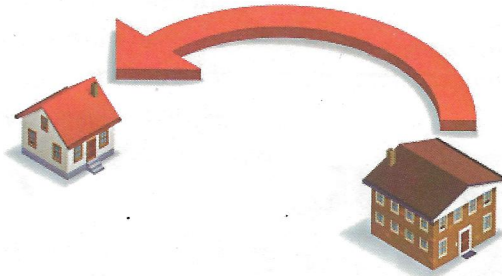
3. What's the best way to sort through all my stuff?

Know Where You're Moving: If you know all the specifics of the space you're moving into, you have exact limits to work with. If you don't know where you're going it's too easy, to tell yourself "this might fit in somewhere," and end up keeping way too much stuff. Hopefully, if you know where you're going, you can get yourself excited about a new adventure, and working toward that can take lots of drudgery out of sorting

Plan Your New Space: measure, measure, measure! This is the step most people skip, and it's the most important one. When you measure and draw to scale, you really learn what's going to fit and what's not.

Most of us can't visualize in 3D well enough to avoid big mistakes, like the sofa that won't go through the new condo's front door, or the dining table that's too wide and you can't pull out the chairs. You have to measure your new space, measure closets and cabinets, and measure what you want to take. Draw it all out to scale on graph paper, and don't forget to allow wide, safe clearances between the furnishings.

Think about using existing pieces in new ways! For example, a buffet can become a TV table. Put a priority



on keeping and using your treasures. You may be surprised what you can keep, if you're willing to use things differently. Too many dishes? How about getting rid of the every-day dishes, and using the good china all the time? It's a wild thought, but why not?

4. What if I have trouble making decisions?

For people who have a tough time making decisions, here are some guidelines to try:

Functional items— One year rule: it goes if you haven't used it.

Replacement rule— Think you might need it, but not sure? If easily/cheaply replaced, don't keep it.

Decorative and sentimental items— Does it put a really big smile in your heart? If not, let someone else love it. Is it a collection? Keep 2 or 3 and just photograph the rest for an album.

For really large items— that would cramp your new space, take pictures and keep those, instead of trying to wedge big furniture into your new space.

5. What do I do with the rest?

Let family and friends treasure the things you can't use. Next, consider giving to charities - you may be able to claim a healthy tax deduction. Selling through auctions, estate sales or dealers is another option, but if you think some items are really valuable, consider getting into an independent appraisal first. Unless you have the energy and strong desire to hold garage sales, I wouldn't recommend them - they're a lot of work, and buyers expect something for almost nothing.

For more information and resource links go to:

<http://www.downsizedesigns.com/services.html>