

The Importance of a **GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION!**

A buyer's first impression of your home is formed by viewing the outside of your property. Especially in today's market with an average of ten homes on the market for every one buyer, it's more important than every to make a **Great First Impression!**

Curb Appeal is Essential. Inspect the exterior of your home, including shutters and windows. Steel or aluminum siding should be clean. If the house needs painting, buyers will notice and may consider it a major objection to purchasing your property.

Neatness Counts. A sparkling clean home greatly enhances its appeal to buyers. Scrub each room from top to bottom covering every nook and cranny. The entryway, kitchen and bathrooms are key. Shampoo the carpet if necessary. If the carpet is old or matted, it will be a detriment so you may well need to consider replacing it or removing it if there is hardwood underneath.

Eliminate Clutter. Closets, cupboards and all storage areas should be neat and uncluttered. Look at each room in the house with a "less is best" objective.

If it's Broken, Fix it. An afternoon spent repairing the little things like loose door knobs, dripping faucets and squeaky doors all detract from a property's value.

Small Additions Make a Big Impression. With minimal expense, you can improve the appearance of any room. New towels can freshen a tired bath, consider replacing worn area rugs and throw pillows. Flowers add warmth and charm to any location.

It's a Team Effort. Enlist the help of all household members to get the house ready-and keep it ready-for prospective buyers. A few minutes spent tidying up each morning can make the difference for a showing in the afternoon!

Life Is a Miracle

*Life is a such a miracle
don't let it slip away,
Open your heart to others
and give of yourself each day.*

*See the beauty in everyone
regardless of where they've been,
Some have a difficult journey
and really need a friend.*

*Share your gifts and talents
and listen with your heart.
Do the things you dream about
but don't have time to start.*

*Pick a bouquet of flowers
to show someone you care,
Be gracious and forgiving
because life is never fair.*

*Hold on to your courage
you may need it down the road,
since we all have a cross to bear
and it could be a heavy load.*

*If you practice all these things
no matter where you roam,
You may find both sun and rain
but you'll never feel alone.*

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The older I get, the more I enjoy Saturday mornings. Perhaps it's the quiet solitude that comes with being the first to rise, or maybe it's the unbounded joy of not having to be at work. Either way, the first few hours of a Saturday morning are most enjoyable.

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the garage with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time.

Let me tell you about it.

I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band on my ham radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap net. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. You know the kind; he sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business. He was telling whomever he was talking with something about "a thousand marbles." I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say.

"Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. It's too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital" he continued. "Let me tell you something that has helped me keep my own priorities." And that's when he began to explain his theory of a "thousand marbles."

"You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years."

"Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3900, which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime. Now, stick with me, Tom, I'm getting to the important part. It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail", he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy. So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to round up 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside a large, clear plastic container right here in the shack next to my gear."

"Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away. I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life."

"There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight."

"Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure that if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time."

"It was nice to meet you Tom, I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again here on the band. This is a 75 Year old Man, K9NZQ, clear and going QRT, good morning!"

You could have heard a pin drop on the band when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few hams to work on the next club newsletter.

I instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss. "C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast." "What brought this on" she asked with a smile. "Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. And hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles."