

Boomers, Seniors learn the 'Upside of Downsizing'

Major conference led by prominent professionals addresses emotional, physical and financial aspects, teaches benefits and six steps to downsizing

Home ownership is the quintessential American dream – a direct reflection of the culmination of hard work and smart investing. But most home owners see their home as more than just a good investment or a place to hang their hat. For some, it is a keeper of a lifetime worth of memories made with family and friends.

Then one day it happens. Children move away, leaving aging parents with a large house that can become a burden rather than a joy. Retirement looms on the horizon, reducing the amount of income. Longtime friends move from the neighborhood. A spouse may have passed away, and loneliness sets in. Safety while being alone at home becomes a valid concern.

Time to Downsize

Whatever the reason, sometimes the American dream needs to be revised. A home where someone has spent a lifetime may need to be sold to alleviate the burdens of owning and maintaining a large home. But for many Boomers and seniors, knowing what logically needs to be done is not as emotionally or physically easy to achieve.

Years of accumulated belongings must be sorted, sold, donated or packed for the move. As arduous a task as that may be, it's not the biggest obstacle for many homeowners when they find they must downsize.

Packing Up Emotions

"Some people know aging in place isn't practical, but they have all of the memories that are attached to that home.



Downsizing and selling a home in preparation for retirement can be very liberating, but can also present many emotional, physical and financial challenges. Attendees at a recent "Upside of Downsizing" conference learn about overcoming the potential obstacles, along with the six key steps of the downsizing process.

That's an enormous obstacle and something we address at our conferences," said Mary Spann, President and founder of the Upside of Downsizing®.

Mary and her husband, Jerry Spann, know all about the process involved with downsizing. The parents of five sons, the Spanns made the decision to downsize, moving out of their large family home and into a more "empty-nester" friendly high-rise. In the process, the Spanns managed to reduce their overall living space by 60 percent and eliminated the hassle and expense of lawn care and home maintenance and repairs. Their personal and professional experience, combined with their educational backgrounds, have helped to make the Spanns downsizing experts.

Learn from Experts

The Upside of Downsizing® was borne out of the Spanns' desire to share their knowledge of downsizing and help others through the process. The Upside of Downsizing® primarily assists Boomers and seniors in gaining the freedom through downsizing. This concept may also benefit newly-single people who are looking for a fresh start. Through

What attendees are saying about 'Upside of Downsizing'

Those who have participated in previous Upside of Downsizing® conferences speak to the value of attending:

"The Upside of Downsizing Conference offers practical information for Boomers and seniors looking to concentrate on the life they want to live, instead of the details of maintaining a large home," said Donna Raagas. "I was impressed with the variety of professionals

focused on this vital population."

Don Woods, a retiree who has attended past conferences, said the most important information he obtained was how to get his house ready for sale. Another previous conference attendee, Kathleen Browning, said the emotional aspects of downsizing were the hardest for her, and the information provided at the conference helped her tremendously.

the Upside of Downsizing® Conference, the Spanns provide helpful ideas and insight about making a smooth and successful transition to a healthier and more manageable living environment.

Over the last five years, the Spanns have held 38 conferences in Washington and Oregon. Their next conference is scheduled for April 9 at the Tacoma Dome, Tacoma, Wash.

"Typically, people don't know where to begin when the decision is made to sell a larger home to move into a smaller space. Without an organized,

step by step approach the process can be an emotionally draining situation and result in lower proceeds from the sale of the home," said Mary Spann. "We offer a better, healthier approach that won't cause an undesirable outcome."

Six Steps of Downsizing

During the conference, attendees will learn about the Six Steps of Downsizing. "When they leave, they know exactly what steps to take and in what order," said Jerry Spann, Vice President of Upside of Downsizing®.

THE UPSIDE OF DOWNSIZING EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

LOCATION:
The Tacoma Dome

DATE:
Saturday, April 9

TIME:
9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

REGISTER NOW:
UpsideofDownsizing.com
or 206-430-5249
#uptacoma16

REGISTRATION FEE:
Includes lunch. \$25 per person through March 24; \$35 per person March 25-April 2. No ticket sales at the door.

EVENT SPONSORS:

CHOICE **THE NEWS TRIBUNE**

Get Answers from Local Professionals

Attendees also will have the opportunity to meet with reputable, local professionals who can make the downsizing process easier: including real estate advisors, packers and movers, home stagers and estate planning attorneys. Counselors also will be on hand to assist with the emotional aspects of downsizing.

Gain Freedom by Downsizing

"We encourage our conference attendees to think about the things they enjoy doing and to look and set some new priorities," said Jerry Spann. "For us, downsizing allows us to spend more time with friends and family. We have the time to do the things we enjoy, instead of spending so much of our time and resources maintaining a house that was no longer practical for our needs."

To learn more about the Upside of Downsizing® Conference, visit UpsideofDownsizing.com or call 206-430-5249.