



NEXT STOP... DOWNSIZING

A COUPLE'S BOLD **FIRST STEP** TO THEIR **NEW CHAPTER**

BY KEISHA TELFER

Michael Middleton sat by the large stone hearth staring, mesmerized by the fire. There were many design features his architect father-in-law incorporated into the custom-built house that were specifically for his wife Judy's delight... a large walk-in closet, a convenient second-floor laundry room right off the common hallway, and a wine room in the basement. But the fireplace; that was just for him.

Almost 30 years ago, Michael enlisted David, Judy's father, to build Judy her dream home. His eyes drifted over the hand-picked stones, rusty patinaed nails sticking out of the mortar where the children hung their Christmas stockings, the dusty piano in the corner, where John, their eldest, plunked out his first chords, and the glaring dent

and scrape in the stained oak wainscotting where Jack ran his Tonka toy tractor into it at least a dozen times.

"Ten feet walls, 14 at the peak," David said, as he and Michael looked over the blueprints for this very room, with its high vaulted ceilings and oak beam spanning the length. "This room will be the heart of your home," he continued, "and you can park your easy chairs right next to the fireplace and enjoy a glass of wine after the kids are in bed." He was right!

Michael took a sip from his glass and sighed as he reached down and ruffled the fur of the recent rescue from his vet practice. So many memories, here in this room, this house, how could we ever let it go? Truth was, even though Michael built this house for Judy,

he was now more attached to it than she was.

Judy's voice broke his reverie. "It was my dream home, Michael. It was amazing for 28 years, exactly what our family needed. But it's just us now. With the boys gone, it feels empty and it's kind of selfish to keep it. Let it be the dream home for another growing family."

Judy always was more practical than sentimental, and as a high school science teacher and the mother of two boys, that was a trait that served her very well. "Besides, we're not getting any younger, those stairs are starting to hurt my knees, and the equity we've built up here could really complement my teacher's pension. And remember, it could help the boys, too!"

Michael sighed again, "But wherever we move to, it's just not going to hold all of this... this... stuff! You know what our basement looks like. I don't even want to think about... what do you call it, de-cluttering? It's just overwhelming, and honestly, I don't even know where we would start!"

"I'm surprised you can drink your wine!" Judy quipped. Of course, after 32 years of marriage, Michael knew very well he was being led down a path where he ended up as the butt of her joke, but he played her game.

"What?" he smirked.

"Well with your head stuck so far in the sand, how can you drink your wine?" she asked, with a teasing smile.

"Let's just see what the downsizing seminar says tomorrow evening," she said. "It sounds like just the thing we need to kick-start this process."

"You mean, to kick my rear into gear, right?" Michael admitted.

"Your words, dear, your words." Judy smiled.

The next evening, they attended the Transitions Realty, Downsizing Done Right Webinar. Judy was excited, Michael was impressed, but reserved.

"So, what do you think?" Judy inquired.

Michael's raised eyebrows revealed his intrigue, but playing it cool, he replied, "It was... comprehensive."

"Exactly!" Judy exclaimed. "They cover... well, just everything. I always thought downsizing was only about de-cluttering, but it's now clear that there is so much more to think about."

"And plan for!" Michael said, finishing her thoughts.

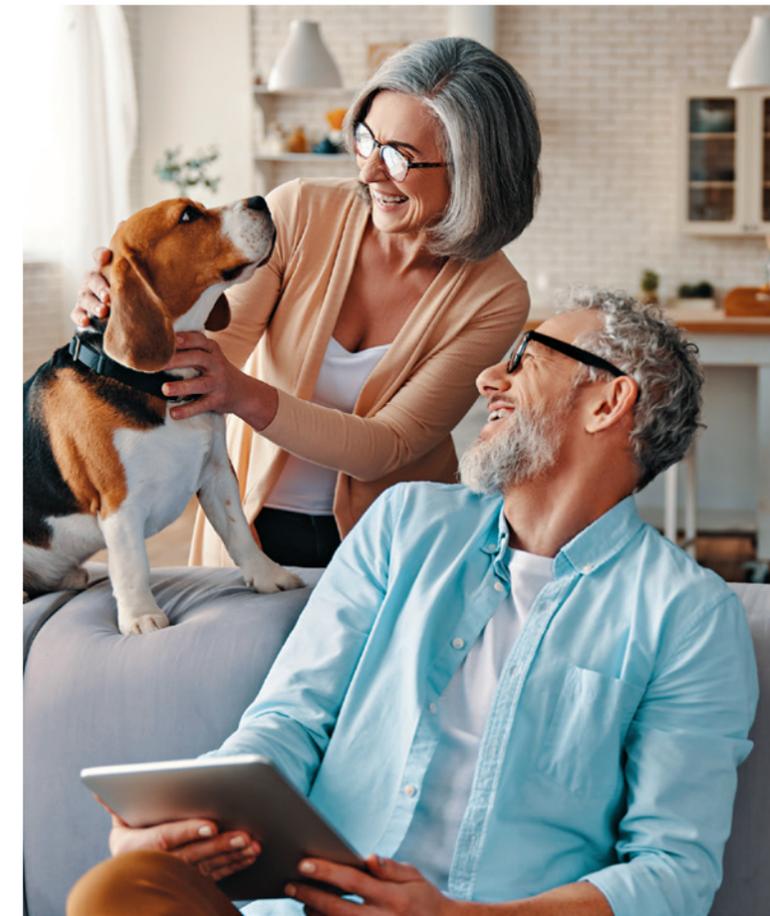
Judy continued, "Who knew, they would have a whole program, just for people like us, downsizers whose next stage of life is uncertain. Michael, you know we've always talked about being closer to nature, you know somewhere with trails and a lake? And we also talked about giving back in our retirement years, like volunteering."

Michael said, "Yes!"

Judy continued, "and so far, in my six months of retirement, I haven't done any of that. And they'll work with us to build out our entire transition plan."

"Perhaps their business sales division could even help me sell my practice next year?" Michael wondered. "Well, they sure opened up a lot of questions," Michael said, his voice showing his uncertainty.

"Yes, they did, Judy countered, "but all questions that we need answers to in the coming months if we're



going to make this transition. I'm going to book us a consultation meeting, they said it was free, right?"

"Yes, they did, but, Judy, I'm not sure I'm ready," Michael stated.

"Michael, dear, you heard what she said at the seminar, lots of clients they have feel just like you – stuck – so, you're not alone. Truth is, we both aren't ready. But that's what this program is all about. Getting us ready for this major life transition. What did she say again? Clarity to know what we want, confidence to know we will succeed, and courage to take action. This is going to be a big change – for both of us! Plus, they work on our timeline, so there's no pressure."

Michael smiled, and picked up the phone. Judy always did have a way of soothing his concerns. "I'll dial the number, but you're doing the talking."

"Deal!" said Judy. "Hello? Hi, my husband Michael and I attended your seminar last night..."



Keisha Telfer is Co-Founder and Broker of Record at Transitions Realty Inc. As a real estate expert, she provides valuable support and direction to clients considering a major downsizing or rightsizing lifestyle transition. Contact her directly at 647.948.7415.