

# Depersonalizing... What is the Fuss About?

By Susan Crema-Martin

Often I come across the question, “Why do stagers want us to take down family photos and depersonalize when selling our home?” Many homeowners have lived in their homes for many years and it is very difficult to take down what has been collected over the years. The main reason for taking down family photos and collectables during the sale of a property is to de-personalize the home so that buyers can see themselves in the property and our goal is to help them form an emotional bond. It makes this link very difficult for the buyer when “Billy’s” baby photos from the last 16 years are scattered throughout the property. When the buyers leave your property, their lasting memory should not be about your cute family but how your property can fit their needs.

Personal collections that hold memories of the family such as family photos, trophies, diplomas, distinctive artwork and religious artifacts distract the buyer. The personal collections also act as information about the family so I also stress the matter of safety and security for the family, especially for the children in the home. I feel that the buyer should be focused on the features of the property and when this is not happening the emotional level is lost.

During consultations, I often come across small collections scattered on side tables, dressers, fireplace mantles and shelves. I typically ask clients to remove most of these items leaving only a select few because too many items (such as frames, statues) only serve as visual clutter and distract from the house once again. Remember, our goal is to connect a buyer to a home and not get caught up in looking at your personal belongings, if this occurs then they’ve lost their emotional attraction to your property and move onto the next one on their list.

Example 1 – Before Staging: displays the family photos over the fireplace. This den is the first room you see when you walk into this property.



Example 2 – After Staging: we switched the family photos to artwork, depersonalizing these photos made it welcoming to any buyer. Once the house is sold, the homeowner can remove the artwork and display her beautiful children’s photos once more.



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*“It is just as disastrous to have the wrong accessories in your room as it is to wear sport shoes with an evening dress.”*

*Dorothy Draper*