

# Don's Home News

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## Slowing Down: The Fast Route to Happiness?

Simplicity may well be the defining value of 2012. With money tight, most of us are homing in on essential needs.

Ironically, while many of us are “going simple,” we still find ourselves frantically busy. We still need our Twitter accounts and smart phones. We work more hours, cram too much into our days and find it hard to sit still.

Hence, the “slowdown” movement. Everyone from the slightly off-the-wall International Institute of Not Doing Much to psychologists and our family doctors suggest we slow down.

In *5 Reasons to Slow Down Your Life Today, and How to Do It*, blogger Henrik Edberg offers simple suggestions for slowing down.

One is to lower your stress by continuing to do the things you do but doing them more slowly.

Running from errand to errand? Don't stop. Just slow your pace. Take a deep breath and force yourself to relax.

But after years of pushing ourselves farther and faster, will we be able to slow down? And if we do, will we fall behind? Will we miss out on Facebook or life?

Maybe, but does it really matter? The simplicity movement sorts out what's important. The slowdown movement helps us achieve it. What's not to like about that?

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## Want to Sell Your Home Fast? Get My Free Guide

Preparing your home for sale can make the difference between getting the price you want – or ending up disappointed.

Discover some easy things you can do by requesting my free guide, “50 Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale.”

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) and I'll send it right out to you.

## How to Prepare for the Spring Housing Market

Spring is the time of year when sellers and buyers gird up for what has traditionally been the most important season for buying or selling a home. Following are some ways to prepare:

### Sellers

Sellers should be aware that there's a lot of competition for buyers in the spring. That means sellers should do everything possible to differentiate their home from others, including the following:

- Polish windows and floors, rake the yard, mow the lawn, and add flowers in containers.
- Wash blinds and curtains and have carpeting cleaned.
- If a seller has spent the winter renovating to sell, new pictures should be taken to show the renovated space to best advantage. Be sure to add the new information to the feature sheets and advertising of real estate agents.
- Consign dark linens and towels to storage and add bright or pastel accents in baths and bedrooms.

### Buyers

Buyers should have a good idea of what they want, how much they can spend and the neighborhoods they're interested in. Buyers should also:

- Have a network of experts in place, such as a real estate agent, lawyer, home inspector and mortgage broker.
- Obtain a copy of their credit report, and if there are errors, clear them up.
- Approach several lenders for preapproval.
- Decide before shopping for a home the most they're prepared to pay, and resist the urge to pay more.

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# How to Tell Stories That People Will Love

People who long to enthrall audiences with their stories can do so by following a few simple rules.

First, good raconteurs offer a unique insight into the human condition. They captivate an audience by bringing life experience to the tale.

Good storytellers also use their personality and history to create a yarn that is relevant and important to the audience.

They use body language, gestures and facial expressions that suit both the story and storyteller.

Good storytellers also pick stories that complement their personality. A witty story may fall flat in the hands of a poet, while a much-heralded raconteur may not be able to instill the passion in a tale of lost love.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) for the answer.

Which is the flattest U.S. state?

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

Good storytellers are comfortable with their stories.

They bring characters to life and make the audience care about them. They use dialogue skillfully to enhance characterizations.

Storytellers also need to remember that it's always about the audience. A skilled storyteller is constantly gauging the audience's interest and involving them.

Atmosphere helps create the magic, so a good storyteller weaves the setting into the story. The audience should almost believe they are there.

The magic doesn't happen spontaneously. To become master storytellers, individuals must practice and establish the gestures, facial expressions and body language that support the story.

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## Are You Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

Do you want to know how the price of your home has changed in today's market? Do you want to know for how much other homes in your neighborhood are selling?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I can help.

Either call 404-939-1309 or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me for a no-obligation, professional evaluation.

I won't pressure you into listing with me or waste your time. [Read about how I feel about pressure!](#) I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

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## Worth Reading

### Less Stuff, More Happiness

By *Graham Hill*  
*TED*

Graham Hill, writer, designer and founder of [treehugger.com](http://treehugger.com), is all about less is more. He makes the case for taking up less space and lays out three rules for editing your life. Ergo, viewers are introduced to his crowd-sourced, 420-square-foot Manhattan apartment that evolved out of a project called Life Edited. This brilliant space includes a Murphy bed, movable walls, and a coffee table that grows up and out to seat 10.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/65897nd>

### Three Financial Lessons Gen Z Needs to Learn to Survive

By *Nancy Anderson*  
*Contributor*  
*Forbes*

Generation Zers (children born between 1997 and 2004) have a problem. They're facing one of the most uncertain periods in recent memory, yet they're used to instant gratification. They also face significant changes in approaches to retirement planning that will be institutionalized by the time they reach the workforce. The solution: don't indulge them but model values such as self-sufficiency, saving and even the out-of-fashion puritan work ethic.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/7xj55ko>

### 6 Steps Successful People Take

By *Mike Michalowicz*  
*OpenForum.com*

This is pretty much the usual advice like setting goals, getting started, taking action, thinking positive and being determined, until Michalowicz introduces "the law of attraction," whereby your thoughts draw success to you. Or as the Buddha says: "What we think, we become."

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/7b9cgdg>

# Green Your Home: Save Now and Profit Later

With apologies to Sesame Street's Kermit the Frog, it is easy being a green homeowner. And it may be profitable, too.

To green your home you need to invest in a number of energy and water-saving measures that result in lower energy costs. While the initial cost of your green investment may be higher, greening your home can give you an immediate saving of 30% to 60% off your energy costs. Incentives offered by government and local electricity distribution companies will help too.

Best of all, when it's time to sell, you've increased your home's resale value - some say by as much as 10%.

A simple change of habits can start you

on the road to a green home: For example, toasters, microwaves, computers and TVs steal "phantom power" - even when they're not in use. Unplug them for lower electricity bills.

## Easy changes

Going greener may be as simple as installing energy efficient lighting, upgrading your appliances to Energy Star-rated products and switching to low-flow toilets and water-saving shower heads

Outside, planting large deciduous trees on the west and south sides of your home moderates the temperature. The result: lower heating and cooling costs and an attractively landscaped yard.

To kick it up a notch, you could really

reduce costs with energy efficient windows and insulation. A high-efficiency furnace will quickly pay for itself; as will an energy friendly air-conditioner.

You may even opt for installing solar panels to reduce your dependence on the electricity grid.

And when you're renovating, why not consider a green reno, using toxin-free building materials, cork or bamboo floors and low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) paint.

Ready to sell? Don't forget to trumpet your green investments. They may just sell your home.

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## Stumped for Breakfast? Try the Fridge

Hate breakfast? Want something healthy, quick and fun? Leftovers may be the answer.

Among the dozens of suggestions for breakfasts that are quick and healthy yet not boring, posters at Ask Meta Filter indicated that leftovers are king.

Take Marsha 56's refried beans with salsa on a tortilla nuked for a minute or Ixia's rice and daal. The lentils in the daal are full of protein and the rice provides plenty of complex carbohydrates.

Others trumpet the joys of leftover curry, pasta or even fried rice.

Cilantro likes leftover chicken or steak on a tortilla rolled up with salsa and lettuce, while one visitor to India enjoyed leftover curry wrapped in flatbread. Leftover noodle soup is also delicious and filling.

For those with more time and hungry guests to feed, blueberry breakfast polenta, as imagined by Four Kachinas Inn in Santa Fe, New Mexico, includes polenta, maple syrup, blueberries and other goodies. Check out the recipe at <http://tinyurl.com/8654ood>.

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## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

### How should I prepare my home for sale?

You want your home to show well, which means getting rid of clutter and making sure it is clean, neat and well maintained both inside and outside.

1. Remove all clutter. Pack or store anything you do not need. Donate the rest to your favorite charity or having a garage sale.
2. Store your valuables or lock them up in a safe place. This includes jewelry, collectibles, artwork and medicines in your medicine cabinet.
3. Eliminate smoking odors and pet odors.
4. Paint the inside and outside with neutral colors, steam clean carpets or replace with new carpeting or flooring. Stage the furniture and accessorize with pillows, plants, candles and other accessories.
5. Curb appeal matters. Manicure your lawn and trim trees and shrubs. Plant new flowers. Mend broken fences or gates.

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## Four Tech Tips to Make Your Life Simpler

The world of technology moves quickly.

Following are four products that will help simplify your tech life:

- Have an iPhone? Download the magicJack application to make free local and long distance calls in North America.
- Check out StumbleUpon, a search engine that lets you save the cool photos, videos and stories you find online. You can also check out what other users

have saved.

- Want to tag, share and edit photos with family and friends without making them public? Try Fotobounce, a photo-organizing program with face recognition.
- Protect your phone, laptop and tablet from theft. Download Prey, a program that tracks the location of your products and helps you find them if they get lost or are stolen.



10. Pod vegetables
11. Endure
12. Psychic's phrase (2 wds.)
13. Tattle
18. Bicycle part
21. Fleshy fruit
24. Locale
25. Fable collector
27. TV host
28. Adjacent
29. Space org.
30. Antlered animals
31. Entranced
32. \_\_\_ vera
33. Tranquil
35. Singer \_\_\_ Hayes
36. Children's game
42. Buffalo's lake
43. Begin again
46. Firstborn
48. Hold on to
50. Secretly marry
51. Dressed to the \_\_\_
52. "Ave \_\_\_"
53. Aquatic animal
54. Looks intently
55. Actress \_\_\_ Moore
56. Uniform
57. Showed up
58. Fragrance
60. Grade
62. Vampire \_\_\_

### ACROSS

1. Seafood choice
5. Use a tent
9. Divided
14. Possess
15. Territory
16. Tantalize
17. Having leaves year round
19. Artist's prop
20. Military rank
21. Pale color
22. Explosive initials
23. Gathered
25. Exist
26. Very hot pepper
31. Speed contest
34. Metric measure
37. Brunch, e.g.
38. Cry of sorrow
39. \_\_\_ Diego
40. Large barrel
41. Horseback sport
42. Zealous
44. Periods in history
45. Type of paint
47. Get by
49. Driver's \_\_\_
52. Janitor's tool
55. Decipher
59. Able to read
61. Elude
62. Napoleon \_\_\_
63. Office notes
64. One who mimics
65. Stadium part
66. Inactive
67. Quiz
68. Hearing organs

### DOWN

1. Trunk
2. Black bird
3. Ward off
4. Ice mass
5. Chewy candy
6. Sports stadium
7. Comes together
8. Cooking vessel
9. Constant

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## Recipe: Chicken Piccata

### Serves 4

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1/4 cup flour
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 6-ounce jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped green olives
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 4 tablespoons butter

Lay chicken breasts between 2 sheets of plastic wrap and pound to 1/4-inch thickness. Dredge chicken in flour, patting off any excess.

In small bowl, stir together lemon juice, capers, artichoke hearts, olives and parsley.

In large non stick skillet over medium heat, warm 1 tablespoon butter until melted. Add chicken breasts to pan, sautéing until golden, about 3-4 minutes each side, and cooked through. Remove chicken breasts and reduce heat to low and add remaining butter to pan. Stir until melted; add lemon juice mixture, continuing to stir until hot. Spoon some sauce over each chicken breast. Serve immediately.

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