

# Don's Home News

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## These Days, We're "Uber-Happy", But Is it for Real?

Consider your happiness. Is it a "now" thing or a "someday" thing? In an Intelligence Squared talk, author and speaker Petrea King comments on how "the drive for happiness implies dissatisfaction with the current moment." She goes on to add, "We keep pushing happiness to the future. We're acculturated to believe that happiness lies at some distant point."

We know modern consumer culture thrives on dissatisfaction with the current moment. We're pushed (or influenced) to believe we'll be happier when we have the newest product, or we look at our neighbors and say to ourselves, "I'd be happier if I had the life/husband/kids she has."

But do we show it? Not so much. Despite King's theories, it's now trendy to act uber-happy: We have to "like" this; be ecstatic about that. However, we may have pushed too far. Even happiness guru Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky quoted in an article on happiness in the *New York Times*, comments that: "I really hate all the smiley faces and rainbows and kittens."

Dr. Lyubomirsky, an author and psychology professor who has studied happiness for most of her career, suggests we all have our happiness set points; we veer back and forth according to circumstances and then return to the set point until another circumstance throws us off again.

So, if we're programmed to a certain level of happiness, is there any point in looking for it? To return to Petrea King's theories, perhaps we should just live in the moment and find happiness in that.

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## Are You Searching for a New Home on line?

Now you can search Metro Atlanta listings in real time just as real estate agents do.

Due to recent changes in multiple listing service rules, I can now set you up with an account where you can search for properties just as I do. No more stale and out of date data like you get on the internet from web sites like Realtor.com, and Trulia.com.

Call or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me today to have me set up an account for you. It is **FREE** and takes only minutes for me to set it up.

## Faced With a Low Appraisal? Check Out Your Options

Lenders rely on appraisals. So, if the appraisal on your dream home comes in lower than expected, it may kill your deal. But there are solutions.

Low appraisals happen for many reasons. A low appraisal may have nothing to do with your property – it may be all about the market: In a buyers' market, a low appraisal may reflect high inventories due to market conditions; in a sellers' market, particularly in hot areas with low inventory, multiple offers may push up prices artificially. Both can skew the data used by the appraiser to value the property.

Whatever the reason, you'd be wise to consult with your lender, who really does want your business, and your local real estate agent, to request a second appraisal. Even though you have to pay for it, the second appraisal often does come in higher; this may happen if the appraiser is inexperienced or not local and may have made the appraisal based on incorrect sales data.

Here are other options:

- As the buyer, you can make up the difference between the low appraisal and the selling price in cash to the seller.
- If you're the seller, you can lower the price to be consistent with the appraisal.
- The seller also can offer to hold a second mortgage on the property.
- As the buyer, you can walk away from the transaction.

That said, if this is your dream house, chances are you'll find it worth the effort and extra cost to make your deal work.

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# Online Gurus Teach Gen Ys to Watch Their Ps and Qs

In these days of instant technological gratification, manners appear irrelevant. Cellphones, Twitter and Facebook seem to be wiping out civility and replacing it with impatient and crabby technology users. Fortunately, our tech-savvy generation has not been abandoned; a new breed of etiquette gurus and attentive arbiters has appeared, and they're putting manners back on the radar, according to *New York Times* reporter, Alex Williams.

Social protocols as common as how to shake hands may be foreign to Gen Ys. Fortunately, however, online tutorials and videos are ensuring today's generation puts its best foot – or hand – forward.

No facet of modern life is too arcane for these gurus to consider, says Williams.

## 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.

What is the diameter of the moon?

## 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](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com)!

There are even videos that explain how to behave at a drive-in window. "[And] there are more than 500 videos on the momentous subject of how to properly set the dinner table," he adds.

Most important is the Internet itself and how to behave while using it. This is called "netiquette," and it's the social code of network communication: Should you use emoticons in business emails? Is it a good idea to limit baby picture postings?

With so much going on technologically these days, users don't want to be shamed by doing or saying the wrong thing; this is where the new netiquette gurus are cashing in.

So, if you're wondering whether to re-tweet your favorite team's tweets 30 times a day, or text your crush immediately after your first date, don't worry: there's a website, channel or video for that.

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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.

I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me at 404-939-1309 or email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) and we will arrange a time to get together.

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## Worth Reading

### Does trying to be happy make us unhappy?

By Adam Grant  
*LinkedIn*

Western society's obsessive pursuit of happiness may be destroying our lives. Using studies and a good friend's career path, author Adam Grant suggests that searching for happiness can lead to depression. His solution: Stop trying to figure out if you're happy. The idea needs to be lived to be fully appreciated, but reading this is a good first step.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/pyjeodx>

### A Facebook of two halves ...

By Becky Evans and Eleanor Harding  
*MailOnline*

Newsflash: Men talk about sports more than women do. OK, it's not revolutionary. Nevertheless, the data collection method may be; a British scientist gathered gender information from thousands of willing Facebook users. As he notes "What's amazed me ... is how much systematic information it's been possible to get all at once." Some may find the implications scary, but not to worry: Another study suggests we lie more on social media sites than we'd like to admit.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/bkqja27>

### What's your anger style?

By Jenna McCarthy  
*Real Simple*

Anger is universal, but everyone deals with it differently. This article describes the various ways we express anger, from explosive to sarcastic. Luckily, we don't need to be slaves to our anger: McCarthy considers why we get explosively angry (or sarcastic) and suggests what to do to deal with our own anger style.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/oupm5f7>

# Opt for Roof Repairs, not Granite, When Renovating

When homeowners hear the words “renovate” or “remodel”, most will have visions of granite countertops and hardwood floors dancing in their heads.

But, according to experts, you should be thinking structure over style; the outside of your home provides protection from the elements and should be your top priority when you’re deciding where to invest your renovation dollar. Ask yourself these questions. If you answer “yes,” it’s time to consider making some repairs.

**Is your roof sagging?** Tackle your roof first: Look for sagging areas, cracked or worn shingles, mold or rot, and dangling gutters and downspouts. Unless you’re experienced, don’t walk

on an old roof yourself to look for damage – hire a professional. If your roof is in need of repair, don’t give in to the temptation to save money with a cheap fix; invest in high-quality shingles and installation.

**Brick flaking?** Examine your home’s exterior for signs of wear and tear. Chipping, peeling, and bubbling are symptoms of siding that may need repair or replacement. When it comes to brick, flaking, cracking or crumbling mortar may signal the need for TLC.

**Basement leaking?** Your basement is another area of the home that should be top-of-mind when deciding what to fix. Don’t ignore leaks, even small ones. Make sure that water isn’t getting in from outside. By fixing cracks in the foundation

and properly insulating the basement, you’ll conquer “damp basement syndrome.”

**Energy costs skyrocketing?** Any renovation that improves efficiency is worthwhile. Greening your home can provide a recovery rate of up to 60 percent of the cost of the renovation. In old homes, windows, doors and skylights can be a big source of heat loss. To keep heat in and cold out, windows need to be double- or triple-glazed. Consider upgrading old windows and exterior doors to models that qualify as energy efficient.

Granite countertops can wait; these repairs can’t.

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## Your Dog May Be Smarter Than You Are

After watching yet another pet trick on YouTube, you might think the dog population is divided into dumb dogs (yours) and smart dogs (theirs); but according to Brian Hare, associate anthropology professor and founder of the Canine Cognition Center at Duke University, you would be wrong. Hare believes all dogs are geniuses in their own way.

“People can often underestimate the intelligence of their best friend,” Hare told *Scientific American* earlier this year. He says it’s all about figuring out what your dog does well, because “different dogs use different strategies to solve problems.”

One impressive canine skill is the ability to follow human gestures. For example, if you point in the direction of a toy, your dog can follow your point.

But perhaps a dog’s most intelligent feature is its capacity for cross-species bonding and empathy. Like most humans, dogs who have bonded well with their owners will find that owner’s yawn just as contagious as humans will.

Studies also have shown that, like their owners (the “petters”), dogs (the “pettees”) experience a boost in a “love” hormone during petting – an experience obviously enjoyed by both petters and pettees.

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## Can You Ignore Those “Best Before” Dates?

A simple misconception is responsible for millions of dollars of wasted food in households across North America.

At issue are those mysterious “best before” dates. It seems almost everyone is throwing out edible food once it reaches its best before date, assuming it’s no longer safe to consume.

While it is an environmental concern – experts are anxious to turn this around with

consumer education – it’s also a question of dollars and cents. Throwing away good food is costing the average family hundreds of dollars a year.

In fact, there’s wiggle room here: Most best before dates indicate that food may lose some flavor, freshness or nutritional value after that date. Not that it should be thrown out.

The answer: Try a sniff test. Chances are you’ll taste the savings.

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## Ask the Agent: This Month’s Question

*Do you have home insurance tips?*

Before starting your home search, you might want to look at possible neighborhoods from the perspective of an insurance company. For insurance carriers, it’s all about location: However perfect your home-to-be is, an area with high crime rates will add dollars to your premiums. You also can cut insurance costs by:

**Looking** for a home with updated wiring and plumbing: Fires and floods are less likely with upgraded electrical and plumbing systems.

**Checking out** the heating system: Gas and electric heating is less likely to cause problems than oil furnaces.

**Inspecting** your home’s roof – most policies won’t cover water damage if it results from a failure to maintain the property.

**Considering** whether you’re willing to pay for increased liability as a result of purchasing a home with a pool or hot tub.

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	8				2		4	6

**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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## Recipe: Coconut Curry with Fall Vegetables

Serves 4

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 tablespoon ground turmeric
- 1 tablespoon mild curry powder
- 3 cups bite-sized fall vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, squash, etc.)
- 1 can coconut milk
- 2 cups water
- 1/3 cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Dried chili flakes to taste (optional)

Heat oil in a medium-sized pot. Add garlic, onion, ginger, turmeric and curry. Cook until soft. Add veggies. Stir until they're slightly cooked and beginning to turn brown.

Add coconut milk and water, mix and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes.

Season with salt, pepper and chili flakes. Sprinkle with cilantro before serving over steamed rice.

