



Donald Puryear

Service For Life!®

“Insider Tips For Healthy, Wealthy & Happy Living...”

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Broker Associate, ABR, CRS, CLHMS
Accredited Luxury Home Specialist
Certified Distressed Property Expert
Licensed Attorney
Owner-Happy Tails Dog Spa

Member of
Houston Association of Realtors
Distressed Property Institute
Council of Residential Specialists
Institute for Luxury Home Marketing
Employee Relocation Council
Greater Houston Builders Association

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Which Of These Costly Financial Mistakes Do You Make?

Does paying bills, making investments, and saving for the future always seem to leave you short on cash? Most people worry about money, and money management can be a constant struggle.

You are not alone in your money management frustrations. The Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, which focuses on the need to provide high school students basic financial knowledge, has developed some money management principles that can help all of us.

- 1. Know your take-home pay.** This is the amount left after all mandatory deductions. Before you borrow, compare your total payment obligations with the income that you will have available to make these payments. Never financially commit to more than you can repay.
- 2. Map out your financial future.** Most people have no financial plan at all. List your financial goals and a plan to achieve them. Remember to always pay yourself first. Make regular deposits into an account specifically designated for long-term financial goals.
- 3. Start saving as soon as possible.** Remember that your savings are determined by the interest that you earn over the period you have saved.

Money doubles by the “Rule of 72.” To determine how long it will take your money to double, divide the interest rate into 72. For example, an account earning 6 percent interest will double in twelve years (72 divided by 6 equals 12).

- 4. Compare interest rates.** Get rates from multiple firms in order to get the best value for your money. Remember that high returns equal high risk. Diversification of assets is the best way to take advantage of these great returns without risking your entire financial future.
- 5. Be sure that you are adequately insured.** This is the only way to ensure that you will not be wiped out by an unexpected illness or an accident. The cost of insurance should be figured into your financial plan.



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Brain Teaser Of The Month

The shape of my form
will waver and bend.





From the things I'm destroying
and the things I will rend.

My color will vary
from bright **red** and **blue**.

The power I'm using
will dictate my hue.

(answer at the bottom of last page)

SUPPORT ANIMAL RESCUE

-  If you're interested in selling, schedule a listing appointment with us, and we'll donate **\$100** to the animal rescue group or shelter of your choice.
-  Buy or sell a home through us, and we will donate **\$250 or more**.
-  Adopt an animal featured on our website, and we will contribute **\$100** towards the adoption fees.
-  Refer a friend or family member to us, and we will donate **\$100**.
-  Visit the Pet Resources section of our website to see how simply **clicking a PURPLE button** can support animal rescue!

Snap, Crackle, Pop

The popping sound you hear when you crack your knuckles is actually caused by a collapsing bubble of gas. Your knuckles are surrounded by a clear liquid called synovial fluid, which lubricates the joint. When you pull your finger, it expands causing carbon dioxide gas in the synovia to form a bubble. Then, the bubble bursts as the finger is released. Some specialists feel that cracking your knuckles is unlikely to cause arthritis, but a lifetime of the habit could eventually damage ligaments.

Let The Sunshine In

Recent research has shown that when students study using natural light they tend to excel on tests and learn the material better. So, if you need to learn a new concept at work or school, try to study during daylight hours near a window.



Sleep Disorder Alert

There's a sleep disorder that strikes more than 12 million Americans, yet many people don't even realize that they are being affected. Sleep apnea is a serious disorder that has been tied to heart disease and stroke. People who have sleep apnea stop breathing as many as several hundred times during the night. This prompts people to wake up frequently in order to resume breathing. The process can leave you feeling extremely tired.

Obstructing tissue in the back of the throat usually causes the condition. The American Sleep Apnea Association has tips for identifying sleep apnea. If you are a loud, habitual snorer, are often sleepy during waking hours, are overweight or have a large neck, you may be more at risk for sleep apnea. A free brochure on sleep apnea is available online at www.sleepapnea.org.

If You Enjoy This Newsletter, Why Not Share It With People You Know?

Provide me the name and contact information of friends or family you think might enjoy receiving my newsletter, and I'll send them a handwritten note with their first issue letting them know that you were the thoughtful person who suggested they receive this newsletter. It's that easy!

Six Habits for a Longer Life

1. Get about seven hours of rest per night
2. Eat five servings of fruit & vegetables daily, exercise, don't smoke, and drink alcohol in moderation
3. Make friends and socialize (FACEBOOK!!)
4. Work puzzles and brainteasers to keep your mind sharp
5. Maintain a healthy weight and waistline
6. Get fresh air

Extended Warranties

With the ever-expanding market of technological gadgets, many extended warranty offers are available. If you decide that you want to purchase an extended warranty, here are a few tips to help you get the most for your money.

- Be sure that the warranty is backed by an **"A" rated insurance firm** and offers access to convenient customer support.
- Look for a **"no lemon" guarantee**. This allows you to get a replacement item if your product does not perform properly after a set number of repairs.
- Verify that service will be provided at a **convenient location** by a qualified technician.
- Watch out for **hidden costs** such as trip charges, parts, or deductibles.
- Be sure that the warranty covers **unexpected occurrences** such as power surges.
- Ensure that the warranty can be **transferred** if you decide to sell the product.
- In addition to extending the manufacturer's warranty, you should look to see if the offer includes **additional benefits** during the original warranty period.

Thanks for Thinking of Me!

Did you know I can help you or any of your friends, family or acquaintances save time and money when buying or selling a home? Thanks for keeping me in mind with your referrals...and spreading the word!

Energize Your Career With Good Feng Shui

Feng shui is an ancient Chinese belief that preaches that your physical surroundings affect the positive and negative energy in your life. If your career could use some energizing, you might want to follow these tips from the Feng Shui Institute of America:

- Position your workplace so that you are facing the door with your back to a solid wall. This will give you a sense of control and support.
- Eliminate clutter and trash from your workplace to make room for more positive objects.
- Place decorative red objects around your office, such as red roses or candles, to attract greater recognition.
- Add live plants and lights to energize the room.

Low Fat Alternatives

- Remove the majority of fat from a can of soup by putting it in the freezer for 10 minutes and scooping the fat off the top.
- To flavor your next batch of rice without adding lots of calories, cook it in broth instead of water.
- Use plain low-fat yogurt on your baked potato instead of sour cream.

Answer To Brain Teaser...

Fire 

THANK YOU for reading my Service For Life!® newsletter. Your feedback, suggestions and contributions are always welcome.



Donald Puryear
RE/MAX Metro
713-302-6543

donpuryear@remax.net
www.NoPlaceLikeHouston.com

“Who Wants to Win a Sheet of Forever Stamps?”



Your chances to win could be better than you think!

Guess Who Won March's Trivia Question? The winner is ...drum roll please: **Melanie Nelson** won a \$50 Starbucks gift card!!!

When was the first St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City?

- a) 1901 b) 1762 c) 1737 d) 1841 e) 1945

The answer is letter “B,” **1762**. So let's move on to this month's trivia question...



What year did the United States Postal Service begin using ZIP Codes?

- a) 1963 b) 1639 c) 1913 d) 1918 e) 1775

The first five to go to the Contact Us section of our website, www.NoPlaceLikeHouston.com, and send the correct answer will win a sheet of Forever Stamps!

Real Estate Corner...

Q: How can I figure out how much insurance coverage I need to protect myself if my home is ever destroyed?

A: Over 70 percent of homes in the United States are underinsured. And, of those homes, 70 percent are underinsured by at least 30 percent. This is a major problem! The confusion between market value and replacement value is where many of these problems originate. Many people base their insurance coverage on the market value of their home. Market value is what a buyer will pay for your property, but this is irrelevant if your home is destroyed. What you should really be basing your coverage on is replacement value. This is much more complicated to compute.

When computing replacement value you must figure in all of the costs of rebuilding your home. This is often 20 to 30 percent more than new construction because of the added demolition and removal costs. Once the land has been cleared, you will need to add the cost of actually building your home by multiplying the square footage by the average cost per square foot. You can find out average square-footage costs from your local builder's association or builder's union. Then, you need to add in additional money for upgrades and improvements that you have made.

Also, check your local building codes because changes in codes since your original home was built can cost a bundle when rebuilding. In some cases, it may cost even more to rebuild your home than the market value. This is often the case in run-down areas where land values have fallen. In any case, don't just base your homeowner's coverage on the lender's requirements. These often only cover the mortgage balance leaving you with nothing.

TIP: *If your house has had some water damage, unless the repairs are substantial, consider not filing an insurance claim. Water damage and dog bites are the top two claims that are most likely to result in a premium increase....and that increase may be more than you would have paid to fix the problem yourself!*

Get Free money-saving home tips at www.NoPlaceLikeHouston.com