

It's your move: Time to pare down

BY MARILYN ATTENSON
Special Writer

Even though I'm an interior designer, and am able to think through the logistics of good design, I often must make the same design decisions for myself as everyone else does. For instance, our recent move from a grand old house to a lovely smaller place. The scenario goes like this:

What do I give up? New space is

smaller. Ceilings are lower. I like all my armoires. Do I give up this vase? Is it worth something? What will Aunt Matilda think of me if she doesn't see her vase? Look at this bowl. It was a wedding gift. Been in its box for 30 years. Grandfather clock must move. I'll fix it eventually. It is my dining room table. I don't care if it's bigger than the dining room!

All who have moved have gone through this tortuous process of what to

move and not move. We have flippantly labeled this agonizing process "paring down."

It is agonizing because most people don't think about incorporating their furnishings in their new place until they have moved into their new place. They don't think of the total move, only each part of the moving process.

Don't forget: You decided to move because you wanted change. Paring down isn't just to clean the basement and garage. It is a selection process.

What to move? Where will you place the armoire, clock, piano, punch bowl? Do you have any room measurements of your new place? Did you do any floor plans? Do you know how much storage space you'll have?

Because people are still emotionally involved in the space they are moving from, not the space they are moving to, they don't bother to gather the right information, and agonize over "possession decisions."

But, no one has to give up anything. You need to choose what you want to move with you, based on your new space's size and shape. What are your decorating plans? What ambiance do you want in your new space?

I just finished paring down. We

moved from a very comfortable home to a half-the-size condo. If I couldn't place the possession in the new condo, it didn't make the move.

We chose to move because we wanted an easy lifestyle. With the latter in mind at all times, we went through all furnishings and possessions with the following criteria: We had to really want to still own it. If one of us didn't "just love it," the item didn't make the move; the item had to enhance an area or be a usable object that would complement our lifestyle. All possessions had to have a reason for living with us.

We weren't giving up anything. We were editing our furnishings and accoutrements for our new life in our future home.

The value of the item, or who gave it to us, didn't enter into the discussion. Size, shape, where and how were continuously discussed. Our new decor was always part of the conversation. Each item was tagged designating its new place - we were already in the process of moving. It went very well. Somehow, we knew it would.

Attenson, an interior designer from Bloomfield Hills, is in Michigan Design Center's "Designer On Call." For a free consultation, call (888) DIAL-MDC.

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