

Getting Inside Your Clients' Heads

Blog piece helping REALTORS® understand buyer psychology and build a rapport with potential clients.

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Let's face it, we're all a little self-absorbed. Our personal hopes, fears, and dreams dominate our thoughts much of the time, and even the most generous people get lost in themselves from time to time. That said, real estate sales is all about helping people achieve *their* American dream, and your success hinges on your ability to get outside of your own head and see the world from a different point of view.

By age four or five, most of us understand that our best friend doesn't share our love of strawberry JELL-O or our passion for the color blue... but it's easy to forget when we become emotionally invested in our opinions. Despite all your training as a real estate professional, you may be floored when your buyer passes on that quaint country cottage by the lake, forgetting that *her* dream home isn't *your* dream home.

The only antidote for projecting your personal preferences onto your clients' desires is to get them talking. The more they talk about themselves, the more you'll learn about how you can meet their needs.

While you don't need much to get some people talking, your introverted clients may need a little nudge. Michael J. Maher, author of *The Seven Levels of Communication*, uses the acronym "FROG" to help people remember four topics to get people talking fast. "FROG" stands for "Family," "Recreation," "Occupation," and "Goals," and at least one of these topics will touch on something your clients want to discuss.

Figure out what inspires them, dig deeper, and learn to appreciate it as best you can. Even if you don't share their passion for woodworking... or bird watching... or reenacting key battles from the Civil War, there's something wonderful about seeing someone open up about their work or their hobbies. As Physicist Richard Feynman wrote in his autobiography, "Pretty much everything is interesting if you go into it deeply enough."

Once you've built rapport and understand what makes your client tick, you can transition into specific questions about their real estate needs. The National Association of REALTORS® has some helpful articles that cover [Prequalifying Questions for Buyers](#) and [Questions to Ask Before a Listing Presentation](#), and these checklists take you step-by-step through everything you ought

to ask. However, these lists are no substitute for getting into your prospects' heads and forging a bond that runs deeper than business. After all, your clients may have several reasons for why they want to buy or sell, and they may not think to mention them all.

If you have a real conversation with your clients before delving into your checklist, you'll learn a bit about your clients' backgrounds, their values, and their vision for a perfect life—making it that much easier to help them realize their dreams.

In the end, isn't that what our business is all about?