

Challenges of Downsizing

How to fit 2,500 sq. ft. of stuff into 900 sq. ft?

By Cheryl Comento

After 35 years and raising three children, Robert and Madeline realized that their 2,500 square foot home with five bedrooms and three baths was too much for them.

They found a nice, one bedroom apartment in a nearby retirement village that would fit their needs. But they were overwhelmed with the idea of moving from a 2,500 square foot home to a 900 square foot apartment. They hired a certified senior move manager to help them through the process of downsizing and moving.

What to take, what to toss?

The senior move manager helped them figure out how much to downsize. Together, they looked at their current living space and the space they would have in their new apartment. This helped Robert and Madeline realize that there was “a lot of furniture, clothing and stuff” that they weren’t going to be able to take with them.

The senior move manager developed a floor plan to show exactly what space they’d have in their new home. With guidance, Robert and Madeline thought about how they could use the living areas of their new home. For example, they decided to create a home office area in a corner of the living room rather than put a desk in the bedroom.

Using the floor plan, they created a list of furniture and household



items to take with them. By combining things from different rooms, they designed a living area that was comfortable, functional but attractive.

Sometimes they had to make difficult choices. Madeline loved the living room sofa but they decided to take the one from the family room because it was more comfortable for Robert’s back.

A bigger challenge was deciding what to do with the items they no longer needed. They asked their children, family and friends if they could use any of the stuff. Their grandson Seth was moving into a new apartment so he took a dresser and a bed.

Their daughter Sylvia wanted the dining room set. There were many other items that family members and friends wanted. The senior move manager helped coordinate



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the arrangements for picking up and moving.

Of course, there was stuff that family members didn’t want or need. These were arranged by the senior move manager to be sold through eBay, auction houses or consignment shops. The remaining items were donated to a favorite charity to help those in need.

The senior move manager also helped them clean out their accumulated paperwork. Boxes and boxes were removed from the attic. Older, sensitive papers were shredded and disposed of. The remaining documents were organized so to be easily found when needed.

Wills, trusts, medical directives, health and insurance information were put into a “Grab and Go” kit. In case of an emergency, family members now know where to find all of their vital papers.

“Everything went pretty smooth,” said Robert. “Our move manager saved us the nightmare and chaos of downsizing.”

Cheryl Comento is the founder of Living thru Transition, Inc., a Senior Move Manager, Professional Organizer and Estate Liquidator in Campbell, CA. She focuses on helping seniors live in a safe and comfortable environment. For information, contact Cheryl Comento at 408.483.9973 or email Info@LivingThruTransition.com.