

4 Simple Home Buying Steps: Good, but a Bit Too Simple

What a simpler world it would be if Charlottesville home buying could be reduced to anything like a simple 4-Step process. Even better if those were four *easy* steps. Without actually coming out and saying so, that's the tantalizing prospect hinted at on radio financial guru Dave Ramsey's web site's "*Home Buying Process Made Easy*."

Ramsey is the likable media expert in household budgeting and financial planning. A good deal of his guidance could be summed up in just 2 steps:

- 1) **get out of debt** (except for mortgage debt) as soon as humanly possible; then,
- 2) **stay out**.

Since that's not bad advice, the promise of home buying in 4 steps seems almost reasonable. After all, his millions of listeners have undoubtedly benefitted greatly through the years (once they've figured out a way to act on the advice).

And in fact, his 4 easy home buying steps are actually not far off-target—although I think they're out of order:

1. Put your **finances in order** before home buying; IOW, know what you can afford.
2. Do the **cash flow** math. Ramsey thinks your Charlottesville home's monthly mortgage payments should be no more than a quarter of your net income.
3. Get a **home loan**. Make this a 15-year fixed rate mortgage to minimize total interest paid.
4. Find a **good real estate agent** to "help make sure you don't pay too much" and deal with any "unexpected home buying hurdles."

Realistically, Charlottesville home buying involves a bit more involvement than that. Also, Step 4 should actually come after Step 2, and Step 3 (getting a mortgage) should come after that—and after you and your good real estate agent have zeroed in on your target Charlottesville home.

One more practical alteration: the 15-year mortgage structure automatically results in a higher monthly payment that, when combined with a 25% of net income budget cap, could yield an unrealistically limited budget target. Being financially conservative also means being realistic. A growing family, for instance, might find that they have wasted money if they have to move to a larger home after only a few years.

That's where your good real estate agent can save the day. Call us at any step in the process: We'll be your sounding board on today's practical short and long term Charlottesville home buying trade-offs!



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SETH BATTON

REALTOR, ABR®, e-PRO®, GREEN®

Born and raised in the Shenandoah Valley of Central Virginia, I love everything outdoors. Most of my free time is spent hiking, rock climbing, playing water sports, or cooking out on the back deck with friends. As a child, my parents built me with the core values of a southern gentleman. Trust starts with honesty and honesty builds integrity. I'm a technology guru! One of my favorite hobbies is restoring old homes in depressed neighborhoods to meet the needs of our generation today. My mission is to build a career worth having, a business worth owning, and a life worth living.

I'm an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR) with the National Association of Realtors. Which means I have extensive training to help walk you through the home buying process from start to finish. From lenders and home inspectors to mortgage agents and closing companies, together we will find the best home for your family's needs!

As an e-PRO®, I can show your home to over 500 million visitors today. And you don't even need to vacuum! Curb appeal isn't just about looking good from the street. It's about looking good from the digital highway!

For more information contact me at:

Seth Batton, Realtor

3510 Remson Ct., Suite 301

Charlottesville, VA 22901

(c) 540-241-1877

(w) 434-220-2200

SethBatton.com

seth@FindHomesInCharlottesville.com



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