

A GUIDE FOR BUYERS

ALL THE DETAILS YOU NEED TO
SUCCESSFULLY BUY A HOME



CONTENTS

04	About
08	Successful Buying Process
11	Setting Your Budget
12	Timeline
14	Wish List
18	Pre -Approval Process
23	Find your New Home
24	Under Contract
33	Closing Day



HI, I'M NICOLE

**AND I TURN DREAMS
INTO ADDRESSES**



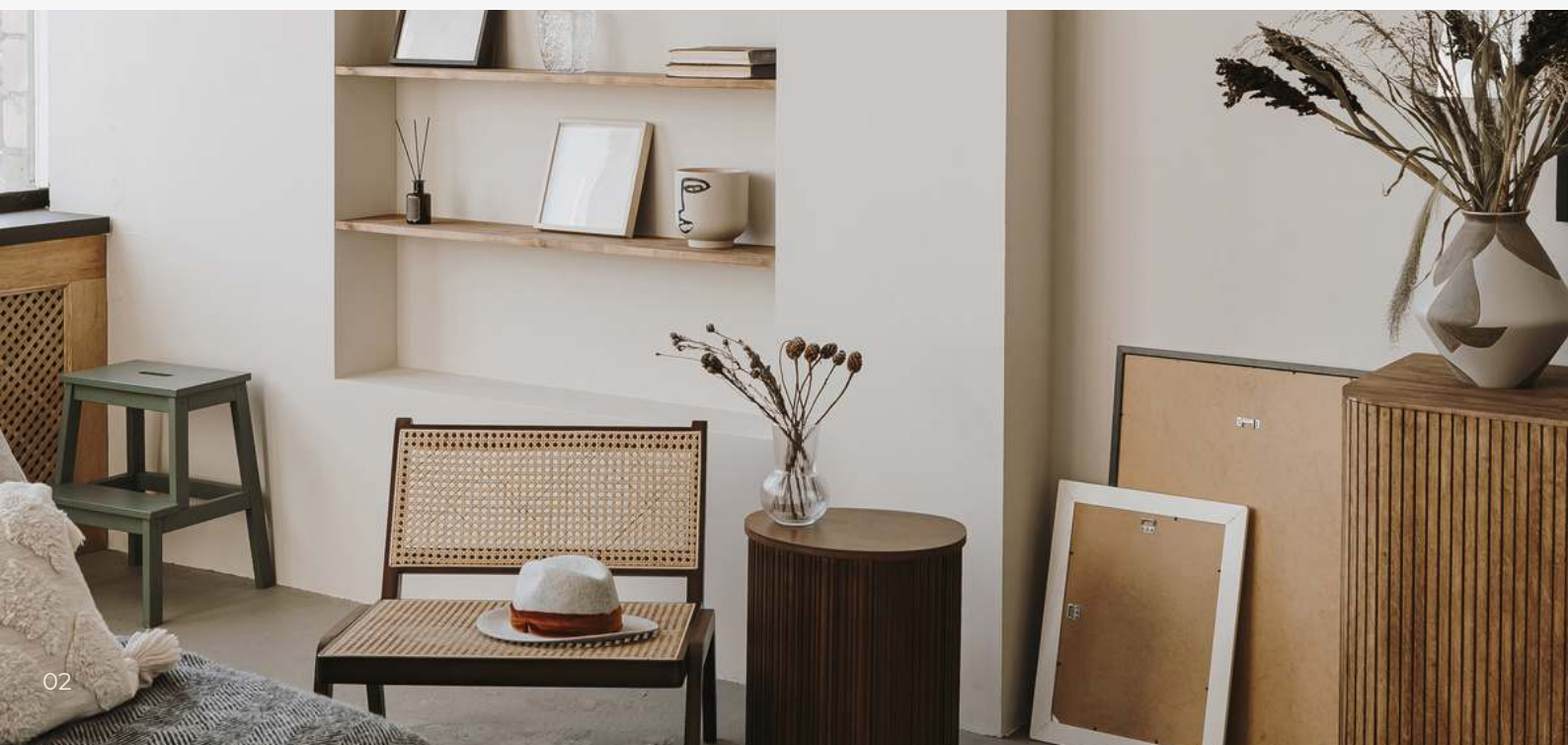
WELCOME

A home is more than just a place to live. It is where routines take shape, memories grow, and everyday comfort is built. When it is time to start a new chapter and search for another home, it is completely normal for the process to feel overwhelming.

Buying a home is emotional. It is exciting, but it also involves major decisions, and you should not have to handle them by yourself. We will move through each step together so you always understand what is happening and feel supported along the way.

From creating a realistic budget to exploring the right neighborhoods to negotiating terms that protect your interests, this guide is designed to simplify the journey and make your next move feel clear, confident, and achievable.

nicole
elizabeth





THE LIFE YOU'VE BEEN
DREAMING OF
starts at your
new front
door



Nicole Elizabeth

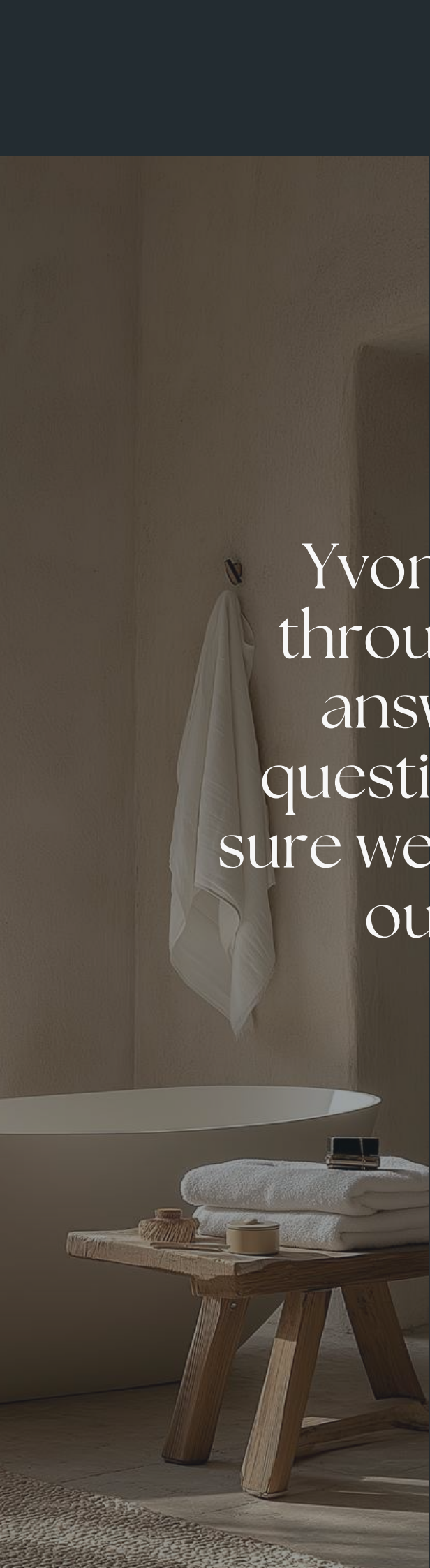
Realtor

Hi! I'm Nicole, an Ann Arbor Realtor passionate about guiding clients seamlessly from where they are now to the home that aligns with the next chapter of their lives. I manage every detail and timeline with precision and care so you can focus on what matters most.

My goal is to create a real estate experience that feels effortless, informed, and genuinely exciting, transforming what can be overwhelming into a smooth, elevated journey toward a home you'll love for years to come.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a green dress, is sitting in a black office chair and talking on a white corded telephone. She is looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. In the foreground, there is a desk with a white model of a house, a Starbucks cup, and some papers. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE
we'll handle
the rest



“

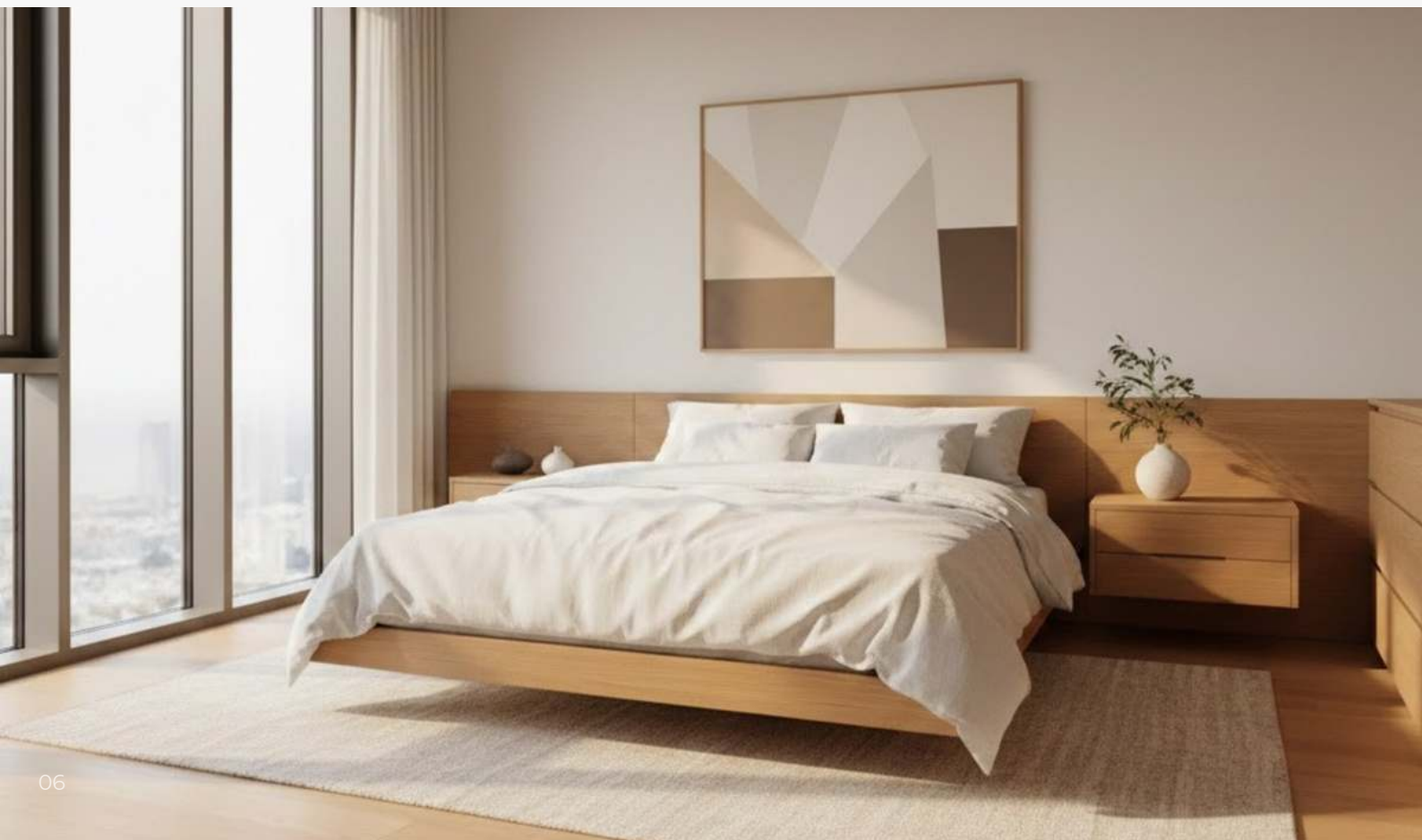
Yvonne walked us
through every step,
answered all our
questions, and made
sure we felt confident in
our decisions

WHY HIRE ME?

When it comes to buying a home, having someone you can truly rely on makes all the difference. I'm here to answer your questions, show you properties, and guide you through every step so you feel supported, informed, and confident along the way.

Buying a home is one of the biggest financial decisions you'll make, and my goal is to make the process feel manageable, even exciting, while helping you avoid surprises and feel secure in every choice.

Thanks to my connections in the Ann Arbor real estate community, you'll get insider access to off market and upcoming listings before they hit the market. And when it comes to inspections, appraisals, or negotiations, I work to protect your interests, provide expert guidance, and ensure you get the best possible outcome.



A woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a black top, sitting on a boat. The image is darkened to serve as a background for the text.

“

What stood out the most was her responsiveness—whether I had a question or needed advice, she were always just a call or message away, and her communication was clear and timely. She also helped us navigate the negotiation process and secured a great deal, which we are truly grateful for.

We felt supported and well-informed throughout the entire journey, and couldn't have asked for a better experience. If you're looking for a reliable, dedicated, and professional realtor, I wholeheartedly recommend Nicole!

A modern, minimalist living room with a light-colored sofa, a round coffee table, and a large window. The room is decorated with a potted plant, a small side table, and a piece of abstract art. The overall aesthetic is clean and contemporary.

TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF
buying

SUCCESSFUL BUYING PROCESS

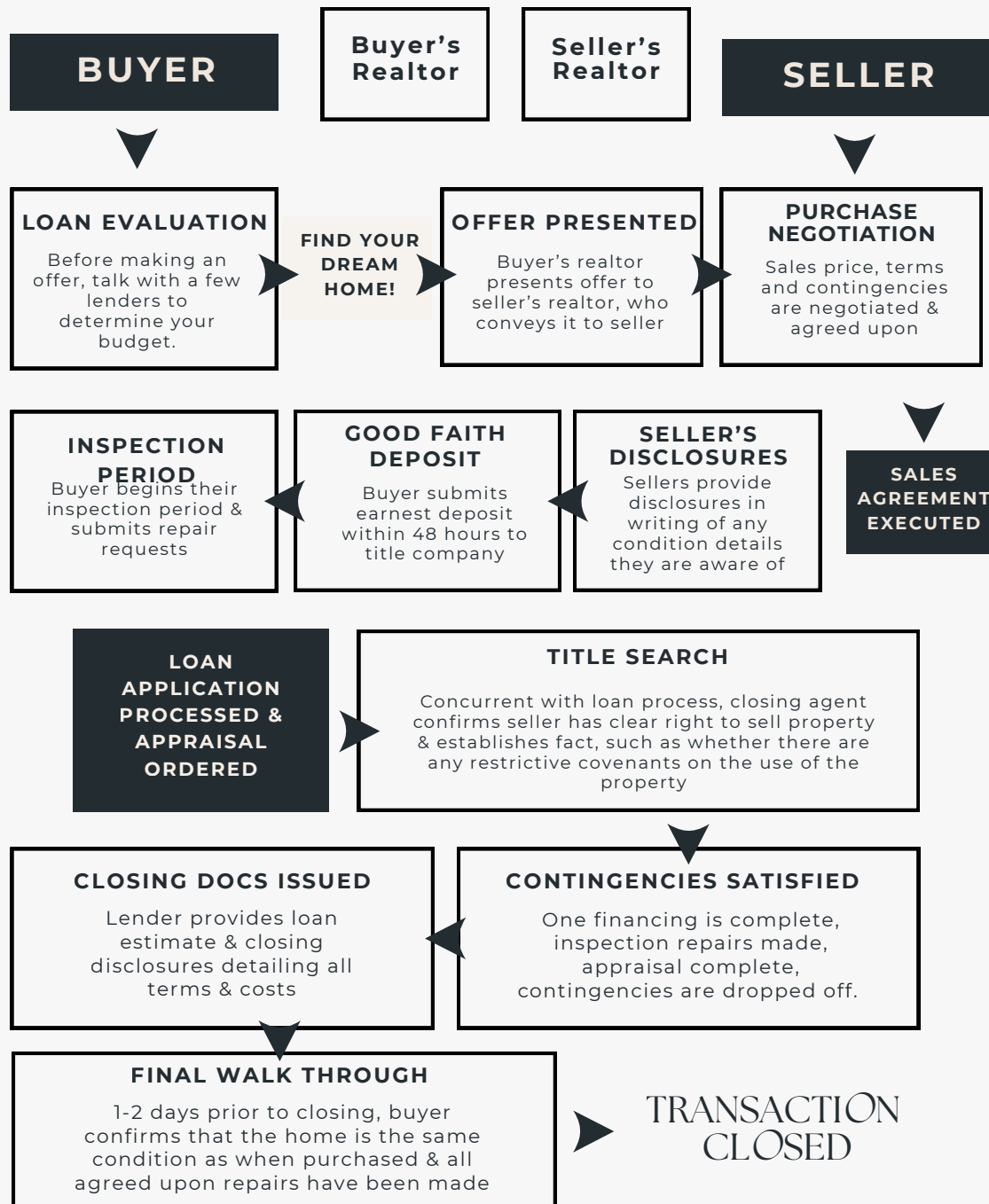
I know that buying a new home can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be. With the right guidance, it can be the exciting start of a new chapter, a home where you'll make lasting memories and enjoy a space that fits your lifestyle.

I'm here to help you plan your budget, discover the perfect Ann Arbor neighborhoods, and celebrate with you when you hear "offer accepted!"

Moving to a new home should feel thrilling, not overwhelming, and I'll be by your side every step of the way to make sure it does.



HOW DOES A REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION WORK?





SETTING YOUR BUDGET

Ah, the dreaded B word: budget. But having a clear budget will make the home buying process so much easier and less stressful. Start by meeting with a lender to get a clear picture of your numbers, but first, think about what monthly payment feels comfortable for your family. A helpful rule of thumb is to keep your mortgage under one third of your take home pay, though there are always exceptions depending on your life stage.

Early in your career? You might be able to stretch your budget a bit. For example, young professionals, like new attorneys, may overextend slightly, knowing their income is likely to grow over time.

Near retirement or on a fixed income? It's best to stick to a more conservative budget to ensure long term financial stability.

With the right planning, setting your budget can feel empowering rather than intimidating, giving you confidence every step of the way.



BUILD YOUR TIMELINE

Are you renting, or do you need to sell your current home before moving? Understanding your timeline can make the process much smoother. Closings typically take about 30 days, so it's important to line up your dates to ensure everything works for you.

If you need to sell your current home before buying your new one, it helps to have it cleaned, staged, and photographed before you start touring homes. This allows me to negotiate a buyer contingency, meaning your new home purchase depends on the sale of your current home. As your agent, I'll make sure sellers see that we're ready to go to market quickly, so we don't risk delaying the closing process.

If you're renting, here's a helpful tip: your first mortgage payment is usually due 45 to 60 days after closing. This gives you some breathing room and helps prevent overlapping rent and mortgage payments.

Understanding the timeline upfront helps everything fall into place, so your move can feel seamless and exciting.

TIMELINE

BUDGET

- Determine what you want your monthly payment to be
- Determine how much you want to put down

MEET WITH A LENDER

- Interview lenders
- Crunch the numbers to determine how much home you can afford

SET UP YOUR HOME SEARCH

- Determine what your must have items are
- Define the location you want to live in
- Set up your home search

SHOWINGS

- Walk any homes that meet all of the qualifications you've set until you find the right one & submit an offer

OFFER ACCEPTED!

- Deposit earnest money
- 5-10 day inspection period
- Appraisal

CLOSING DAY

- Sign all lender documents
- Sign all title documents
- Sent to record + fund

MOVING DAY

- Schedule your movers
- Turn on all utilities in your name
- Welcome Home!



WISH LIST

Buying a new home is one of the most exciting parts of the process, the part where you get to dream big and imagine all the possibilities. I like to start by removing any constraints of budget or location and jotting down everything I'd love to have in a home. My list tends to be pretty epic, but it's fun to let your imagination run wild.

Once the possibilities are laid out, the next step is to sort and prioritize them, narrowing your list down to three to five true must haves. Doing this before looking at homes helps you stay focused and prevents distractions from features that might look appealing but aren't actually essential.

We'll use this list as our guide while touring homes. If a pool is on your must have list, for example, we'll focus only on homes that have pools or are priced in a way that makes adding one possible. This approach saves time, keeps the search focused, and ensures you find a home that truly meets your needs and dreams.

NEW HOME WISH LIST

BATHROOMS

KITCHEN

BACKYARD

FAMILY ROOM

FRONT ENTRY

BEDROOMS

MISCELLANEOUS



Why Hire an Agent?

Unrepresented consumers account for 70% of all real estate lawsuits.

Do you have to work with a real estate agent to buy a home? Technically, no. But when you're making one of the biggest financial decisions of your life, having an expert by your side isn't just helpful, it's essential.

Buying a home is a major investment, and there's a lot that can go wrong, from hidden repairs to tricky negotiations or unexpected contract pitfalls. A knowledgeable agent helps you avoid costly mistakes, moves quickly when opportunities arise, and guides you confidently through every step so you get the home you want without the stress or surprises.

Agent Compensation

In most real estate transactions, there are typically two agents involved: one representing the seller and one representing the buyer. Each agent's role is to advocate for their client and create terms that work in their best interest.

Traditionally, sellers offer 3% of the purchase price to their agent and 3% to the buyer's agent. While new NAR regulations now prohibit offering a buyer co broke directly in the MLS, it's still highly recommended that sellers include a co broke. Here's why:



It makes their listing more appealing. Buying a home comes with a lot of upfront costs, and when the seller covers the buyer's agent commission, it allows buyers to afford more and reduces financial stress.

It creates a smoother transaction. A represented buyer is an educated buyer, and having an agent working on your behalf helps ensure everyone stays on track and reaches the closing table without surprises.

Sellers are not required to offer a buyer's agent co broke, which means buyers should be prepared to cover their agent's commission if necessary. As your buyer's agent, it's my job to secure the best possible circumstances for your purchase, and that's why we always aim to negotiate a seller paid commission structure whenever we can.

DOWN PAYMENT

Knowing your down payment is an essential first step in the home buying process. While some buyers put 20% down, you can often qualify with as little as 3.5%. Being clear on this number is key, as it will directly affect your monthly mortgage payment.

You'll also need to have your earnest money ready. Typically, buyers put about 1% of the purchase price down as earnest money. Don't worry, I'll break down exactly how your earnest money works in just a bit, but for now, know that it will be applied toward your down payment on closing day.





MEET WITH YOUR LENDER

Now that you have a clear idea of what you want and the price range you're aiming for, it's time to talk to a lender. Every buyer needs a pre approval before touring homes. For certain price points, especially luxury listings, listing agents may also require proof of funds before showings. This ensures sellers aren't preparing their home for buyers who aren't in a position to purchase.

Your pre approval will be submitted with any offer, so sellers know you can secure a loan for their property. Once you have it, revisit your must have list to make sure those items can realistically be achieved within your budget.



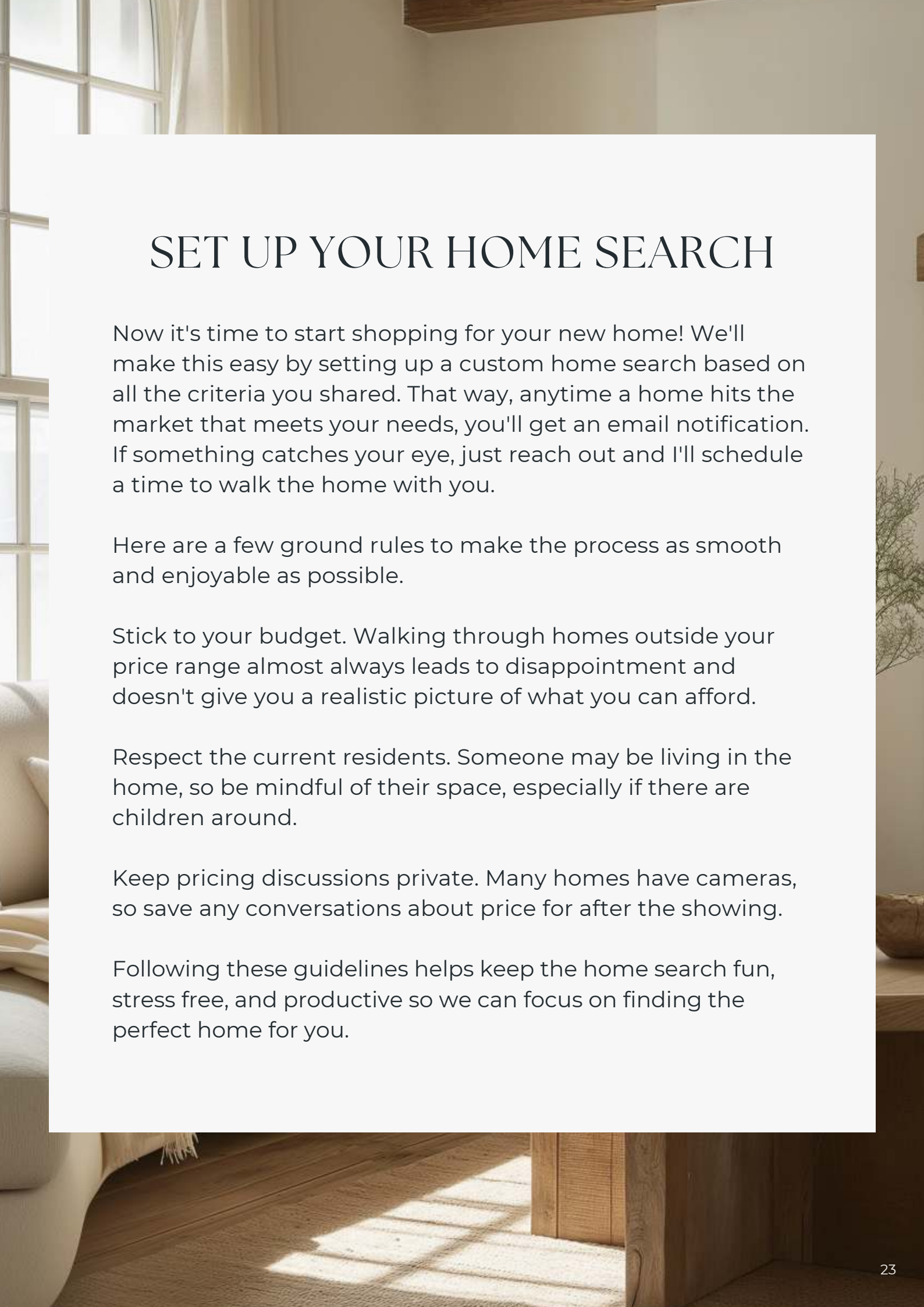
“

I CAN'T RECOMMEND NICOLE ENOUGH!

We were moving from out of state and unfamiliar with the area, which could have made the home buying process a nightmare. She was able to give us insight on the area and guide us on where to buy. Each time we reached out with a property we were interested in she was quick to schedule a tour and provide us with as much detail about the home as you can virtually. Our buying process was smooth during a time where houses were flying off the market. Thank you Nicole!

A modern interior scene featuring a dark wood cabinet with three drawers and two doors. On top of the cabinet is a black bowl with a green fern. To the left is a tall, thin floor lamp with a brass-colored pole and several white, spherical shades. The wall behind the cabinet has three large, abstract, diamond-shaped mirrors with dark frames. The floor is dark wood, and a light-colored rug is partially visible in the bottom left corner.

**I USE A VARIETY OF
STRATEGIES AND TOOLS
TO HELP YOU FIND
YOUR PERFECT HOME,
MAKING SURE YOU
HAVE ACCESS TO THE
BEST OPTIONS ON THE
MARKET.**



SET UP YOUR HOME SEARCH

Now it's time to start shopping for your new home! We'll make this easy by setting up a custom home search based on all the criteria you shared. That way, anytime a home hits the market that meets your needs, you'll get an email notification. If something catches your eye, just reach out and I'll schedule a time to walk the home with you.

Here are a few ground rules to make the process as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

Stick to your budget. Walking through homes outside your price range almost always leads to disappointment and doesn't give you a realistic picture of what you can afford.

Respect the current residents. Someone may be living in the home, so be mindful of their space, especially if there are children around.

Keep pricing discussions private. Many homes have cameras, so save any conversations about price for after the showing.

Following these guidelines helps keep the home search fun, stress free, and productive so we can focus on finding the perfect home for you.

YOU'RE UNDER CONTRACT...

Now What?

Once we have an accepted contract, we send it to the Title Company, which will handle all of the closing documents. The Title Company coordinates with everyone involved — buyer, seller, both agents, and the lender — to gather and prepare all the paperwork needed to successfully close on your home.

01

EARNEST DEPOSIT

02

INSPECTION

03

APPRAISAL

THE DETAILS...

01

EARNEST DEPOSIT: Your earnest deposit is typically 1% of the purchase price. Once all contingencies are met, your earnest money will be non-refundable and will be applied towards your down payment.

02

INSPECTION PERIOD: This is your time to do all of your due diligence on the property. It is **HIGHLY** recommended that you hire a professional inspector to do a full inspection of the home.

03

APPRAISAL: Once the inspection is complete, the next step is the appraisal. Most lenders require it before funding, ensuring the home's value matches the purchase price and keeps the process on track



Inspection Period

This is your time to do a thorough review of the property, and it's highly recommended that you hire a professional inspector for a full home inspection. I'm happy to share trusted companies I've worked with, but ultimately, the choice is yours.

The inspector will check everything from the attic to the A/C, run all the faucets, inspect electrical systems, and look for anything that's not in proper working order. They'll provide a detailed report highlighting what's working well and what needs attention.

Once the inspection is complete, you can request that the seller repair or replace items that aren't functioning properly. If buyer and seller cannot reach an agreement during this due diligence period, you have the option to cancel the contract and receive a full refund of your earnest money.

APPRAISALS



A modern bedroom with a large window and a bed. The text is overlaid on the image.

HOME APPRAISALS ENSURE ACCURATE VALUE, GUIDING FAIR AND INFORMED REAL ESTATE DECISIONS

Once the inspection is complete, the next contingency to remove is the appraisal contingency. Most loans require an appraisal, and if the home doesn't appraise for the purchase price, buyers and sellers have a few options. The buyer can exercise their right to cancel the contract and receive a full refund of their earnest money, or buyer and seller can renegotiate on the price, or the buyer can bring the difference between the appraisal amount and loan amount in cash to the closing table to bridge the gap.

Once the appraisal contingency has been met, the buyer's earnest money becomes non refundable. This means that should you decide to cancel the contract, you will not receive a refund of your earnest money deposit.



“

**NICOLE WAS
NOTHING SHORT
OF AMAZING.**

She was professional, and super easy to work with. She answered all of our questions extremely promptly, and was very detailed through our entire home selling process. She is also very current, and has the latest knowledge and tips! 10/10 recommend Nicole!



ADDITIONAL CONTINGENCIES

If you need to sell your current home in order to buy your new one, this contingency will also need to be satisfied before your earnest money becomes non refundable. We'll review all of the important dates together so you know exactly what's expected of you and how the sale of your home fits into the timeline.

The background of the page is a modern interior space. At the top, there is a dark ceiling with a grid of recessed lighting. Below the ceiling, the walls are dark with some lighter panels. In the foreground, there is a round, light-colored marble coffee table with a black metal frame. To the left, a white sofa with a dark cushion is visible. To the right, a white armchair is partially visible. The floor is dark and textured.

FINANCING

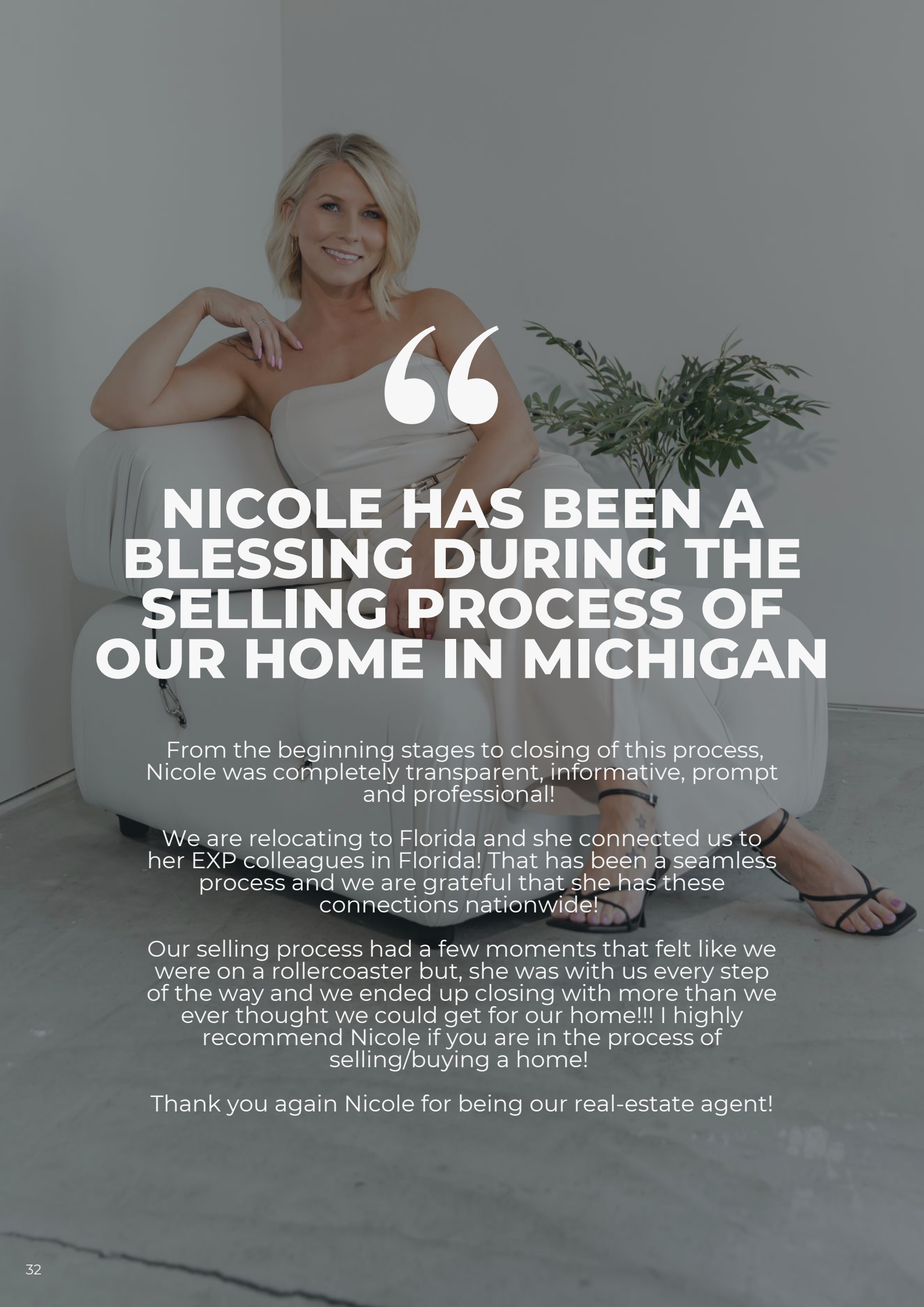
During this time, it's essential to stay in close contact with your lender. They'll need specific paperwork and information that only you can provide. It's also extremely important to avoid any major purchases that could affect your financing. This includes buying a new car, boat, or even charging big ticket items like furniture for your new home. These purchases can impact your debt to income ratio and potentially jeopardize your loan before closing.

Hang tight until we close on your dream home. Then you'll have full freedom to furnish, decorate, or make any big purchases you've been dreaming about.



Final Walk Through

This typically happens one to two days before closing and is your opportunity to walk through the home one last time. You'll want to make sure all requested repairs have been completed and that the house is in the same condition as when you agreed to purchase it. It's normal to see boxes stacked in the garage, the sellers are moving too! If everything looks good, you'll sign the paperwork acknowledging the home's condition, and we'll be on our way to a smooth and successful closing.



“

NICOLE HAS BEEN A BLESSING DURING THE SELLING PROCESS OF OUR HOME IN MICHIGAN

From the beginning stages to closing of this process, Nicole was completely transparent, informative, prompt and professional!

We are relocating to Florida and she connected us to her EXP colleagues in Florida! That has been a seamless process and we are grateful that she has these connections nationwide!

Our selling process had a few moments that felt like we were on a rollercoaster but, she was with us every step of the way and we ended up closing with more than we ever thought we could get for our home!!! I highly recommend Nicole if you are in the process of selling/buying a home!

Thank you again Nicole for being our real-estate agent!



CLOSING DAY

This is it, the big day!

The Title Company will receive your loan documents about three to five days before closing, and we'll have a few days to review everything to make sure your numbers are all set. When it comes time to sign, you'll have two options: you can schedule an appointment at the Title Company or at one of my offices. Either works perfectly!

Your property is officially closed once the title has been recorded and the loan has funded. Depending on the day and time, funding may not happen immediately. For example, if closing occurs late on a Friday, banks in different time zones may not fund until Monday.

The great news is that as soon as funding occurs, we can release the keys and you can start enjoying your new home!

We'll go over all of these details and timing when scheduling your closing, especially if it's important for you to get your keys on a specific day.

What You CAN EXPECT

I know this is about more than selling high and buying low and I can promise you that while there will be some bumps in the process, I'll be doing my best to help you avoid any delays or roadblocks. You can expect weekly phone calls with my trademark *tell it like it is* honesty & creative problem solving to get you where you want to go.

nicole
elizabeth

READY TO BUY?

nicole
elizabeth

Real Estate Agent

🌐 734-368-0832

@ @buywithy_realtor

✉ NicoleElizabethRealEstate@gmail.com



NEST
REAL ESTATE GROUP

exp
REALTY

ELEVATED LIVING, ONE NEST AT A TIME