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Don't be blinded by love when you buy a home

By Richard F. Pezzino

Buying a home is a lot like getting into a new relationship – you are blinded by love. Unfortunately, if you make a mistake in either one of these areas it can be very costly.

With a relationship, the only thing that helps you see the real person is time. With a house, it's the housing inspection. Find a good inspector by asking friends or anyone you might know who has recently purchased a home for a referral. Be sure to ask if they were satisfied with the on-site inspection, the final report, and ask if any problems have come up that the inspector didn't find.

When you've scheduled the inspection -- first take off your blinders – and then be sure to attend the inspection. Allow two to three hours for a thorough job. Follow the inspector around the house as he/she works. Be sure to ask questions, remember there is no such thing as a dumb question, especially when you are talking about an investment that is probably well over \$100,000.

So, ask questions and listen to the answers and to everything else the inspector tells you. A good inspection should not just cover any flaws in the construction of the house it should also cover preventative maintenance.

This is not a pass/fail test it is a visual inspection of all the major components of your future home. At the end, you will have ask the current homeowner to correct any

flaws that you and your inspector see as important. After the work has been done you should return to the house to see if it has been done properly.

After the house site visit you will receive a report from your inspector. Some reports are computer-generated, some are “check list” style, and some include digital photos of the problem areas. It can take a few minutes to go through the report and really look at the issues the inspector discovered.

You’d be surprised at how many of my customers call me later and ask me why I didn’t tell them about a certain problem with the house. I ask them if they’ve read their report. They tell me they lost it. So I look in the report and sure enough, there’s the problem, in writing, and often illustrated with a photo.

You paid for the report – read it and keep it in a safe place so you can refer back to it. And if you have any questions after you read through it, give your inspector a call.

Just like relationships, getting the most out of a housing inspection is a two-way street. You have to put in your share of the work. But in the long run you’ll be a lot happier with the house. And also like relationships -- when you buy a house -- chances are you’re in it for the long run.

Richard F. Pezzino is a certified housing inspector and the owner of Accu-View Property Inspections.