

# Rightsizing Move: Couple buy two homes for price of one



AT HOME WITH  
**Marni Jameson**

“I never thought I would want to leave my lake house,” Katie Seymour told me when I stopped by the Lake Mary, Florida, home she and her husband, Thad, had lived in for 31 years.

Katie had asked me to come by to offer some staging tips to help the house sell. As she showed me around the lovely, 3,000-square-foot lakefront pool home, where their three children had grown up, I couldn’t help but pry.

“Why?” I asked.

I’m always curious to learn what motivates those long settled in a family home to voluntarily roll up their rugs, empty their closets and drawers, unpack their attics, and move. It takes courage, vision, faith, and fortitude, qualities you don’t see often enough. While more retirees — Katie’s 65 and Thad’s 67 — should move once their kids are launched, many stay tethered like root-bound oaks to homes that no longer serve them.

“We knew we would eventually sell the family house and move to something more fitting for empty nesters,” Katie told me, adding that Thad embraced the idea first.

“Though I loved the house,” he said, “I didn’t have the same emotional attachment to it as Katie. I was ready to let go and move on to the next chapter. The amount of work involved in keeping it up felt like more every year.”

I could relate. Anyone who has



THAD SEYMOUR | Courtesy photo

**Moving on — Empty nesters Thad and Katie Seymour are selling their Lakefront, Florida, home and using the proceeds to buy two, smaller “lock and go” homes. They plan to summer in Wisconsin near family and winter in Florida.**

owned a big home knows it can turn into a microeconomy.

Katie hit her tipping point last fall when she learned their first grandbaby was on the way.

“The baby changed everything,” she said, and literally started packing with her eye on Milwaukee, where her daughter, son-in-law, and soon Grandbaby live.

Their son lives just an hour and a half away in Chicago, and five of Katie’s siblings also live nearby. While a Wisconsin home made sense, they didn’t want to abandon Florida.

Soon the answer was clear: They would buy two smaller, lower-maintenance homes for the price of the one they were selling. And that’s the plan.

“We’ll spend more time with family, less time taking care of our home, and still have people to Florida to have all the fun that is here,” Katie said.

They bought a smaller home in

Lake Nona, a planned community about 25 miles south of their current home. The house has almost no yard. The weekly fee to maintain the small strip of grass out front is \$15, which sounds great after years of paying several hundred dollars a month on pool and yard maintenance. The home still has four bedrooms, so the kids and, ultimately, grandkids can visit.

And they’ll want to. The property has access to three pools, a ropes course, and hiking and biking trails. It is walking distance to restaurants, just six miles from the airport and 20 minutes from Orlando’s major theme parks.

Next, the Seymours will hunt for a small, single-family home in Wisconsin “after we sell this,” Katie said, which reminds me that I am supposed to be helping her stage. I apply the advice I’ve doled out in this column and followed myself many times: deep clean, declutter, de-pet, depersonalize,

de-politicize, de-religicize, and sell a lifestyle — margarita pitchers and glasses on the patio table.

As Katie and Thad explained what lay behind their life-changing move, I kept thinking, these guys are getting it right. They thought through what they want their lifestyle to be in retirement and what matters. They figured out where they want to live, how much house they need and want to maintain, and how they want to spend their time and money. They’re living with intention, and I’m impressed.

Rightsizing in your later years doesn’t always mean downsizing; it can mean resizing. As we talked, I gathered several pieces of good advice for others contemplating such a move:

### Don’t wait

Maintaining a large home doesn’t get easier as you get older. Nor does moving. Katie and Thad have seen what happens when people wait too long to move. They know a couple in their 80s

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*Ashley Mann*

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