

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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The fixer-upper

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A fixer-upper – a project, usually a home or a piece of property that needs money and substantial sweat. It needs some maintenance, some redecorating, some reconstruction and some redesign; it is a real project, not just a weekend outing.

The project you selected could take years to finish, maybe a lifetime. But you knew that when you agreed to it. You knew you would occasionally wonder if you took on more than you could handle, if you got in over your head.

Nevertheless, you saw the potential, not the reality. You saw the outcome, not the work needed. You saw the endpoint, not the time to get there. You saw what was possible, not what was probable.

You knew the people previously responsible for this asset fell short, in some areas very short. However, you are not them. You are younger and you have more resilience. Moreover, no one will expect you to stop your efforts before you are done. No one will take this from you before you finish.

I was surprised to learn that nearly 50% of married couples got a fixer-upper. More surprisingly, usually only one of them saw its potential; in other instances, the spouse thought it needed no remodeling or upgrading; it was just fine the way it was.

Still, you saw the potential. You dreamed of its magnificence when the work was finished. You

realized the possibilities of enough effort, enough oversight and enough attention.

When you started, you remember agreeing the project was livable the way it was. Well, sort of, or you probably would not have gotten involved in the first place. You remember seeing the basics, though a bit rough and a bit course; but there was enough there to build something of real and lasting value.

Years later, you wonder if you can finish, starting to feel the weight of the work still needed. You don't remember thinking it would take this long. You didn't plan on so many setbacks, so many diversions and distractions. It has become so much more than you anticipated. It has been a long time.

The plumbing is no longer reliable, consistently leaking where it shouldn't and when it shouldn't. And the furnace? Well, you don't remember all those noises it now regularly makes. You even occasionally get frustrated and holler at it. And though you know it cannot hear you, you like to think that at one time it could.

You still hope for a return on your investment, forgetting that over the years you have regularly invested more than the project ever returned.

You sometimes need to remind yourself of the original plan, the original goal. You need to remind yourself your plan was never to fix it up and flip it, letting someone

else enjoy the results of your success. You need to remind yourself you did not consider it a starter, a prelude to something better. No, you wanted to finish the project and keep it.

Now, when you recall the people who were responsible for it before you took over, you think that maybe they really did do their best. You realize you have spent decades working on this project with little real and sustainable progress. What happened to all the time? It just slipped away, other projects coming along that took priority.

Well, it's been thirty years and next week is your thirtieth anniversary with your project, your husband. And you're starting to accept the reality that the peak of his progress was your wedding day, with little progress since.

Even so, it has been a wonderful thirty years, worth all the time spent trying to raise him to adulthood. Moreover, along the way you created several other amazing projects, including your daughter who just got married.

You know she has the same unattainable goal you had. But, you decide not to tell her the truth. No reason to ruin her dream. Let her think men can grow up.