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5 HOMES IN 10 YEARS

THE NEXT HOME PLAYBOOK

Your roadmap for moving up to your next home.

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Trade Your 3% Rate for Your Dream Home

> **After buying five homes, selling four, building one from the ground up, and carrying two mortgages at the same time, I've learned exactly what actually matters when your family outgrows your house.**

Most people rarely move because they're always waiting for the perfect time, but I learned early on that market timing doesn't matter. I moved when my family wanted to move.

You requested this playbook because you likely **locked in a once in a lifetime rate** that feels impossible to walk away from. I get it. In 2021, I secured a 2.5% rate by paying $5,000 to get that rate! But fast forward to today, and life has changed. Maybe you can no longer get away with just one bathroom. Maybe that single-car garage is starting to feel a bit tight. Or maybe, you just want a neighborhood with a community pool to enjoy in the summers.

Right now, you feel trapped. You feel like you're **wearing golden handcuffs**—you love your 3% rate, but your family is **suffocating in the house.** Look, those are the exact thoughts I had too.



Hi, I'm Trevor Tannahill,

Mortgage Loan Officer | NEXA Lending

I've helped hundreds of homebuyers move into their next home, having personally experienced almost every scenario you might face.

This guide shares exactly how to structure your move, what it costs in cash flow and stress, and how to end up exactly where you want to be.

Let's Connect!

For daily money, wealth, and real estate tips, follow me on Instagram at

@thetrevortannahill

My Journey: From $175,000 to Debt-Free

> **Before we look at your options, I want to show you what this actually looks like in practice.**

Here is the part that matters most: every single time we moved up, we chipped away at our debt. Now, I'm not saying you need to move 5x like I did, but using real estate and time, today at 32 years old with three kids, we have zero credit card debt, zero auto loans, and zero student loans. We are completely debt free beside our mortgage, and living in our dream home. None of it would have been possible without our first starter house in 2017.

This isn't theory—this is the real blueprint of how we did it:



House 01

The Starter Home

Bought right before getting married. We built equity, did minor updates, and prepared for our next step.

Bought: $175,000 → Sold: $225,000 = **$50,000 profit**



House 02

The Growing Family Home

We rolled our initial profits into a slightly larger home to fit our rapidly growing family's needs.

Bought: $300,000 → Sold: $375,000 = **$75,000 profit**



House 03

The "Dream Home" Mistake

We built what we thought was our forever home, but quickly realized the location was completely wrong.

Built: $475,000 → Sold: $575,000 = **$100,000 profit**



House 04

The "Better Location" Home

We moved to a new area hoping for a better fit, but still missed that perfect community.

Bought: $530,000 → Sold: $655,000 = **$125,000 profit**



House 05

The Actual Dream Home

We finally found the perfect location and used our equity to settle down completely debt-free

Bought: $855,000 → Currently Owned = **$0 in Debt**

A Quick Word on the $25k Mistake

Before we dive into your three moving pathways, I need to share a quick warning about a massive blind spot that **almost cost my family $25,000** on one of our moves.

It is easy to look at your home's estimated value and assume that exact number transfers directly into your bank account. I made that assumption, and it almost derailed our dream home purchase.

> **The reality?**
>
> The equity you see on paper and the actual cash you walk away with are two completely different numbers. Guessing this number is the fastest way to turn an exciting upgrade into a stressful financial scramble.

I will break down exactly how that $25,000 mistake happened later in this playbook—and give you my proprietary Net Proceeds Calculator so you never have to guess your real numbers.

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Before You Choose Your Path

> **Moving to your next home isn't just about finding the right house. It's about understanding your financial position, your family's timeline, and your capacity to handle the complexity of a big move.**

Here is the thing most people miss: you bought during one of the best times in recent history. Chances are, you are sitting on massive amounts of equity right now. That equity isn't just a number on paper. It's a tool. The decisions you make here will shape which path makes sense for you.



Let's break down the five key factors you need to evaluate:

Factor 01

Your Financial Readiness

A bigger house means a bigger mortgage payment, and you need to know you can handle it without stress. Look at your bank account at the end of each month. If there is money left, you've got room to move.

> **What is the absolute maximum monthly payment we would feel comfortable making?** $

Factor 02

Your Family Timeline

Get clear with your spouse on what your family actually needs. Are you planning for more kids? Do you need an extra bathroom to stop morning chaos? These details define exactly what house you need, and how soon.

> **What #1 space issue or daily frustration is driving us crazy?**

Factor 03

Your Current Equity Position

Your current equity decides your down payment on the next house. Most people guess this number and get it wrong. You need to know exactly what you'll net after you sell.

Our estimated net proceeds after selling: $

Note: Don't worry about this number just yet. In a few pages, I'll share my proprietary Net Proceeds Calculator so you can find your exact equity in 60 seconds. You can always come back and fill this in later.

Factor 04

Your Debt Tolerance

Moving up and carrying multiple debts at once is how people get stretched too thin. You can use the net proceeds from your sale to clean up student loans, credit cards, or auto loans first. Get clean first, then move.

Which debts should we pay off first?

Factor 05

Your End Goal

Is this next house your forever home, or a five-year stepping stone? You plan a bridge house completely differently than your ultimate dream home. Be honest about your timeline. It dictates exactly how we structure your move.

We are treating this next move as a:

Ready to skip the guesswork? Let me build your plan.

You've looked at the five factors. If you're ready to make a move, you don't have to figure out the logistics alone.

Book a quick, no-pressure Strategy Session with me today. We will review your exact numbers and map out a custom, stress-free game plan for your family together.

Book My Strategy Session →

Not quite ready? Turn the page to explore the three distinct pathways...

The Three Pathways

> **There are three main ways to move, each with its own financial structure, timeline, and trade-offs.**

Because I've walked all three paths myself, in the next sections, I'm going to break down how each one actually works, what to watch out for, and when it makes sense to choose it. Keep your checklist answers in mind. By the end, you'll know exactly which path fits your situation.



Pathway 01

Sell First, Buy Second

You sell your current home and get the cash in hand before you ever make an offer on the next one.

This is actually where you have more control than people realize. As the seller, you can dictate your own timeline. You can list your home, get it under contract, and request a longer close date—say 45 days—which buys you time to actively shop for your next home while your sale is already locked in. And if you list and haven't found anything yet, you can simply take your home off the market as long as you haven't accepted an offer.

From My Own Experience

We used this exact method going from our second to our third home. We sold our place, put everything into storage, and lived with my folks while we built our home.

The Upside

Absolute financial safety. You have zero stress trying to sell while you buy. You know exactly down to the penny what you can afford, and you are never carrying two mortgages at once.

The Downside

Unless you time the sale and purchase perfectly, you are likely moving twice. You're packing up, putting things in storage, moving to a temporary spot, unpacking, and then doing it all over again a few months later. If you have kids or pets, it's a massive logistical headache.

Stress Level

Financial Stress: **LOW** Logistical Stress: **HIGH**

Who This Is For

Choose this path if your #1 priority is financial security, and you want one seamless transaction without juggling two payments.

Your Key Question Answered

01. Where do we live, and how do we move everything in one day?

Do not just wing this.

Even if you time your sale and purchase to close on the same day, you can usually negotiate a few extra days of possession after closing to actually move.

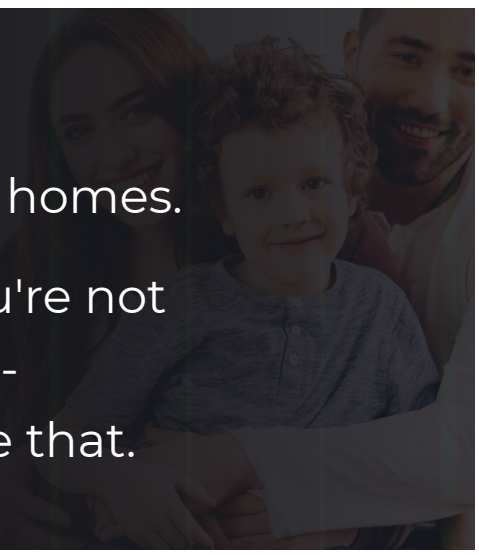
If your timelines don't align perfectly, your best move is to negotiate a 30- to 60-day rent-back (post-occupancy) agreement with your buyer so you can stay in your house after closing while you look.

Pathway 02

Buy First, Then Sell

You buy your next home before you sell your current one.

You can time these close together or space them out by a few weeks, depending on what makes sense for you. Most people using this strategy put the minimum down, typically 5 percent, on the new home. That keeps your out-of-pocket cash low at closing.



From My Own Experience

This is the path my wife and I used for our 4th and 5th homes.

> **The upside is real:** your offer stands out because you're not contingent on selling your current home first. A non-contingent offer is a stronger offer, and sellers notice that.

The Upside

You only move once. You pack up your old house, move straight into your dream home, and skip the chaos of temporary rentals or double-moving. Plus, you don't miss out on a great house while waiting for yours to sell.

The Downside

Carrying two payments. If your current home doesn’t sell as fast as you expected, you are temporarily holding two mortgages, two utility bills, and two sets of insurance. It requires strong cash reserves and high risk tolerance.

Stress Level

Financial Stress: ⬆ **HIGH** Logistical Stress: ⬇ **LOW**

Who This Is For

Choose this path if you have a higher, stable monthly income, have been at that income level for a while, carry little other debt, and are comfortable holding two mortgages for a short stretch.

Your Key Questions Answered

01. Where does the down payment come from before selling?

You need liquid funds (savings, checking, or stocks) for your down payment and closing costs. If your money is trapped in your current equity, this path is not for you.

02. What happens if my home doesn't sell right away?

There is no fixed timeline; your home could sit longer than expected. Be fully prepared to carry two mortgages for several months if necessary.

03. What does carrying two mortgages feel like?

It is tight and stressful. You must manage cash flow carefully and rely on a strong market strategy with your realtor so your home sells fast.

04. Is 5 percent down a strict requirement?

No, 5% is just the minimum for a non-first-time buyer. You can put down 10%, 15%, or more depending on your available liquid cash.

05. What happens to my new mortgage after my old home sells?

Pro Tip: *This is one of my absolute favorite strategies to use for my clients. Once your old home sells, we do what's called a loan recast. We take your sale proceeds and drop them directly onto your new mortgage principal. This permanently lowers your monthly payment without forcing you to refinance, lose your rate, or pay new closing costs. It's the ultimate insider hack to secure your dream home today, and drop your payment tomorrow.*

06. Does buying with two mortgages affect my rate or approval?

Your rate isn't impacted, but qualification is harder because underwriters count both payments against your income. You may carry temporary PMI until your recast lowers the balance.

Pathway 03

Using Your Equity for the Down Payment

There are two ways to do this: a Bridge loan or a HELOC

Bridge Loan

Think of this as a short-term cash advance on the profit you will eventually make from selling your current house. It gives you the exact funds you need for a down payment right now, usually for a window of four to five months, with no monthly payments required during that time.



The Upside

You keep your hard-earned savings safely in the bank. This strategy lets you leverage the wealth you have already built in your current home to secure your next move without draining your cash.

The Downside

It is a rigid tool. The bank will require you to qualify for three simultaneous loans (your current mortgage, the temporary bridge loan, and the new mortgage). Additionally, the money you get can only be used for the down payment—nothing else.

Real-World Example

Let's say you want to buy a **$500,000 dream home.** You leverage your current home's equity to take out a $100,000 bridge loan, covering a 20% down payment. You move into your new home, and the day your old house finally sells, the proceeds instantly wipe out the bridge loan.

The HELOC

A Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) works like a high-limit credit card backed by your home. Instead of a strict lump-sum loan, you get a flexible pool of cash. You only draw exactly what you need, exactly when you need it.

The Upside

Ultimate flexibility. You can fund your down payment and still have a financial cushion left over for pre-move-in repairs, fresh paint, or new furniture. It is also the perfect strategy if you are considering keeping your old home and renting it out.

The Downside

Timing is everything. You absolutely must set this up before you list your house for sale or start serious house-hunting. Also, interest rates can fluctuate over time, and lenders have the right to lower your credit limit if housing market conditions suddenly shift.

Real-World Example

You plan ahead and open **a $130,000 HELOC.** You pull out $100,000 to secure that same $500,000 home. You still have $30,000 sitting on standby to cover unexpected moving costs or modernizing the new kitchen. Once your old home sells, you simply pay off the balance and pocket the rest of your profit.



Whether you choose a bridge loan or a HELOC, both equity-based down payment strategies share the following:

Stress Level

Financial Stress: **HIGH** Logistical Stress: **LOW**

Who This Is For

Choose this path if you have built up strong equity in your current home, but you absolutely do not want to drain your hard-earned liquid savings to fund the down payment for your next move.

Your Key Questions Answered

01. How do I qualify?

We review your full financial picture—income, credit, and debts—to make sure you can safely handle three simultaneous payments: your current mortgage, your new mortgage, and the bridge loan or HELOC.

02. What if my home doesn't sell in time?

If your home hasn't sold before the term ends, a bridge loan can usually be extended to give you more time.

03. How much does a bridge loan cost?

While every situation is unique, you can generally expect your closing costs to fall somewhere in the $4,000 to $10,000 ballpark.

04. Can I do this if I still owe money on my house?

Absolutely—that's exactly what these tools are designed for! As long as you have built up solid appreciation over the years, you can use these tools. What matters is your equity (the difference between what your home is worth and what you currently owe).

05. Do I pay interest on the entire HELOC or just what I use?

This depends on your specific HELOC terms and structure. Let's have a quick conversation to find the exact setup that makes the most sense for your situation.

06. Bridge Loan vs. HELOC: Which should I choose?

It comes down to flexibility. If you only need funds for the down payment, a bridge loan gets the job done. If you want extra breathing room for updates and repairs, a HELOC gives you that space.

07. What happens to my HELOC when my old house finally sells?

Because it is tied directly to your current property, the HELOC gets paid off completely the moment your house sells.

Which Path Fits You?

Every move is unique. If you're curious which path makes the most sense for your goals, let's have a quick, no-pressure chat to map it out.

Book My Strategy Session →

Turning the Numbers Into Your Next Move

> **You've seen the three ways to structure your move. Now, let's turn those strategies into your exact numbers.**

Everything we've covered so far—your financial readiness, your equity, and your debt—comes together right here. This is where you stop thinking in general terms and start seeing exactly what is possible for your family.

Before we get into the tools, I want to say this plainly: as you look to move up, I firmly believe you should aim to be as debt-free as possible. Do not just "manage" your debt. Eliminate it.

My $75,000 Wake-Up Call

I carried debt for years, and it never left me alone. At one point, I had over $75,000 in student loans, a car payment, and credit card balances. It was always there—a constant weight sitting on my shoulders every single day.

> **You don't realize how much mental space debt takes up until it is finally gone.**

Depending on your current equity, this move might be your chance to hit the reset button. You aren't just upgrading your house; you have the opportunity to walk into your next chapter completely unburdened. That is worth thinking about just as much as square footage or school districts.





To help you see exactly what that looks like, I've built two tools into this guide:

Tool 01

The Debt Payoff Worksheet

This walks you through every debt you are currently carrying, what you owe, and your monthly payments.

Once you have that baseline, you can see what happens when you use your home's equity to wipe it out. Less debt means more buying power, lower monthly obligations, and honestly, a lighter life.

Tool 02

The Net Proceeds Calculator

This tells you exactly what you will walk away with when you sell your current home (after your mortgage payoff, closing costs, and realtor fees are factored in).

That net number is what actually funds your down payment, your debt payoff, or both—depending on which pathway you choose.

Together, these two tools answer the one question every move-up buyer really wants to know:

> **What can I actually afford, and what does my life look like on the other side of this move?**

Let's start with the worksheet. ↓

Tool 01

Debt Payoff & Equity Worksheet

> **This is the same exercise I walked through myself: list out every debt, see the real monthly cost, then check what selling your current home could clear off the board.**

Interactive Worksheet: Type directly on your screen, or print to complete by hand.

Step 01

Current State: Monthly Debt

(List your current mortgage, auto loans, student loans, and credit cards below.)

DEBT NAME	TOTAL BALANCE OWED	MONTHLY PAYMENT
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$
	$	$

CURRENT STATE TOTALS

Total Balance of All Debts	$
Total Monthly Payment on All Debts	$
Total Balance Excluding Mortgage*	$
Total Monthly Payment Excluding Mortgage*	$

**The "excluding mortgage" totals matter most — that's the debt your new housing payment adds to*

Step 02

Debt-to-Income Snapshot

Estimated New Monthly Housing Payment	$
Gross Monthly Income (before taxes)	$
Debt-to-Income Ratio*	

**(Total Monthly Payment Excl. Mortgage + New Housing Payment) ÷ Gross Monthly Income*

Step 03

Equity & Debt Payoff Snapshot

Estimated Net Proceeds *Based on the Net Proceeds Calculator linked later in this guide*	$
Total Debt Payoff *Sum of balances you plan to pay off*	$
Remaining Equity After Debt Payoff	$
Remaining for New Down Payment**	$

***This is the number that changes the conversation — what your equity can actually do for you.*

Strategy Notes & Questions

Wondering how different choices affect your bottom line? Jot down your questions and alternate scenarios here so you have them ready when it's time to review your options.

Step 04

Buying Power Calculator

To determine how much home you can afford, lenders look at what percentage of your monthly income goes towards paying debts.

Pro Tip: Choose a target between 28% and 35%.

While 35% is considered a standard limit, some lenders can approve up to 49% depending on your finances. Pick a percentage you are comfortable with to use in the math below.

Gross Monthly Income (before taxes) $

Total Monthly Debt Excluding Mortgage $
Take the number from Step 01

Target Back-End Ratio (28% to 49.99%)

Total Allowable Monthly Debt $
(Gross Monthly Income × Target Back-End Ratio)

Your Maximum Housing Payment $
(Total Allowable Monthly Debt - Total Monthly Debt Excluding Mortgage)

> **The Bottom Line: The less debt you carry into your move, the higher your buying power climbs.**

Let's Review Your Numbers Together

Now that you've mapped out your debts and buying power, let's have a quick, no-pressure chat to see what it all means for your next move.

Book My Strategy Session →

The $25,000 Mistake I Almost Made

Earlier in this guide, I mentioned that we sold one of our homes for **$375,000** and used the proceeds to build our dream home. Here is what I didn't tell you: I almost got that number completely wrong.

In my head, the math was simple: sell for **$375,000,** pay off what I owed, and whatever was left was mine to put toward the next house.

But I wasn't thinking about the hidden costs that come out before you ever see a dollar:

> — Realtor commissions
>
> — Closing costs
>
> — Prorated taxes
>
> — Small administrative fees

I was calculating my equity, not my actual net proceeds.

Those are two very different numbers. If I had walked into that next purchase using my equity number instead of my real net proceeds, I would have been **short by close to $25,000.** It was money I thought I had, that simply wasn't there.

Know Your Real Number Before You Offer

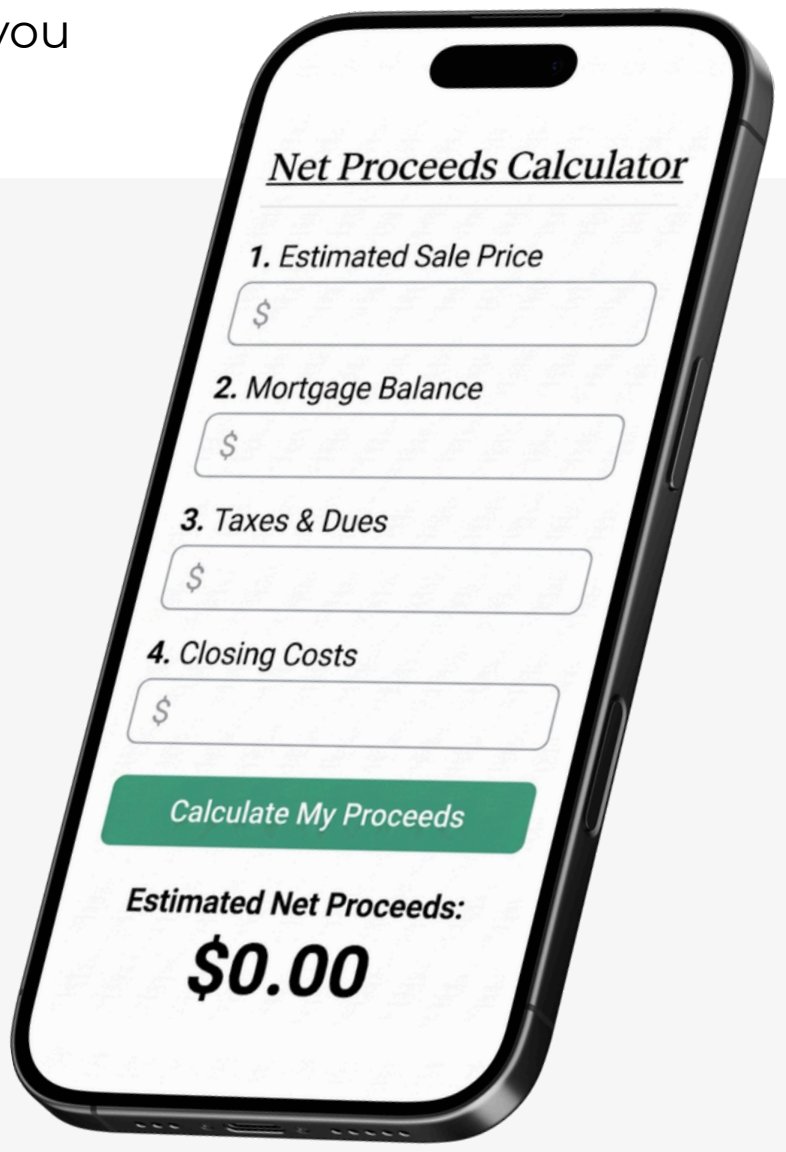
That close call is exactly why I built the Net Proceeds Calculator I am about to give you. I never want another buyer to make the same assumption I did. This tool does the real math for you, so you know your exact, to-the-penny number before you ever make an offer on your next home.

Tool 02

The Net Proceeds Calculator

> **Alongside the worksheet, I've built a Net Proceeds Calculator to give you real numbers instead of guesses. It is a simple, user-friendly tool.**

Just click the button below, and it will walk you through entering a few key details:



01. Your home's **estimated sale price**

02. Your remaining **mortgage balance**

03. Property taxes and **HOA dues**

04. Title fees and your **estimated closing date**

Once you plug in your numbers, you'll see exactly what you can expect to walk away with after your home sells. No spreadsheets. No guesswork. Just a clear picture of what your equity actually looks like in real dollars.

Open the Net Proceeds Calculator →

Take that final number and use it alongside the worksheet on the previous pages. Once you know your true net proceeds, you'll know exactly what you have to work with—whether that's funding your down payment, paying off debt, or both.

Let's Keep the Conversation Going

If this guide gave you some clarity, let's stay connected. I share real numbers and strategies on Instagram to help navigate your next move.

@thetrevortannahill

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Your Next Move Starts Here

> **If this guide gave you clarity on how to actually structure your next move—and helped you finally break free from the three percent mindset that has been holding you back—then it did exactly what I set out to do.**

I know it is no small thing to sit down and read through all of this, so thank you genuinely for taking the time.

But reading about these pathways is one thing. Applying them to your actual mortgage rate, your exact equity, and your family's specific timeline is another. You do not have to guess or do the math alone.

If you are ready to stop wondering and start seeing exactly what your next move looks like on paper, let's map it out together. **A quick phone call is all it takes to get absolute clarity.**

Book My Free Strategy Session →

I am never far away, and I am here to help when you are ready.

Let's get you home.

Trevor Tannahill

Trevor Tannahill
Your Mortgage Advisor



P.S. Did this guide help you see your own path a little more clearly? Consider passing it along to someone else who has outgrown their space too. They might need the exact same clarity you found today.