

GARAGE SALES

Cleaning Out While Grieving

Holding an estate sale, or even a large garage sale, while you're grieving the loss of a loved one is difficult. Every piece that goes on the sale table is a memory, and those memories are priceless.

It can be difficult to watch pieces of your loved one's life going for pennies or be rifled through by masses of bargain hunters. Here's how to deal with the emotional side of an estate sale.

WHAT IS AN ESTATE SALE?

Estate sales are commonly held after someone dies and they serve to liquidate the belongings — the estate — of the deceased.

The good news is that you don't have to bear this alone. There are professional companies that take over the duties of an estate sale in exchange for a cut of the profits. Ask your friends and family for recommendations and, once you get a list of professionals, go through each one, checking referenc-



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es, insurance information and rates. Keep thorough records and make sure you read through your contract before signing. Depending on what your loved one has, you may also need to retain an

appraiser for certain works of art or jewelry. Ask lots of questions as you go through the process so that you are clear on what to expect as you liquidate your loved one's possessions.

WATCH OUT FOR THE MEMORIES

Grief can sneak up on you unexpectedly, like when you're sorting through socks or old suits for sale. Be prepared for these emotions to

pop up. If you can, have someone come with you while you're sorting items for sale. Talk about the happy memories until you feel you can continue. Try to stay focused on positive memories, if you can, to get yourself through this trying process.

Give yourself time, both to complete the daunting task of sorting through your loved one's belongings and also to feel the feelings as they come up. Preparing for an estate sale can bring you a sense of closure and accomplishment.

RELY ON THE PROS

Estate sale companies know more than just how to organize things for a great sale. They, along with estate lawyers, can help you get a game plan for how to dispose of your loved one's possessions and how to deal with the grief. Some planning can even be done in advance, while your loved one is still alive, to help the process.

A revocable living trust gives the title to real estate and other belongings to someone else while the owner is still alive. When they die, the decision-making transfers smoothly to the person of their choosing, avoiding probate or court. Wills can also specifically list what should be done with certain items.

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BUYER'S TIP

Join Mailing Lists for First Dibs on Deals

Some estate sale companies have weekly or monthly emails that advertise upcoming sales. If you're a hardcore bargain hunter, join these mailing lists for the first dibs on when and where to score your next big deal. You can also like or follow estate sale companies' social media pages for more great deals.

AD SPACE