

## My new abode

On a fine Spring day, with new house keys jiggling in my hand, my wife and I stepped out of the settlement office. After dutifully signing endless documents with robotic fervor, the contract was finalized and we were more than ready to get out and head to our new house. We put the pedal to the metal and pulled into the driveway of our new house in no time. Up until this moment, we were in a mind set of utility, characterized by the legal and financial process of buying a house. But the very moment we stepped out of the car, the realization that we now belong to this house and the neighborhood hit us with feelings of excitement, hope, and uncertainty.

Fast forward to ten months later, I'm sitting in my dining room tinkering with and trying to restore a Mid Century Modern lighting fixture original to homes like ours. As I hold this object from the 50's and start cleaning, my mind starts to wander to the lifestyle of former inhabitants of this house. What were they like? Did they enjoy living in this house and the neighborhood? What were their hopes and aspirations?

I can imagine theirs probably were not far off from mine at the core. Basically we all want a little piece of safe and nourishing haven where we can come home and relax after a hard day of work and where our children can grow up happily and reach their full potential. We also want a place to be responsive to our changing needs as we grow older.

So far, our house and the neighborhood meet our family's needs and we are happy to call this place our home. And that feeling of uncertainty we had when we first moved in has dissipated in the course of numerous community events, backyard BBQs, house renovations, and settling kids into new schools and activities.

I still have a long list of house work and places to explore around the neighborhood. But I feel that, mentally, I am gradually beginning to take ownership of our home and our community.

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