

BUYING A HOME

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## A Home Buyer's Story: Withdrawing an Offer for a House

By Kristin Offler

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So you're working with a great agent, you've been [preapproved for a loan](#), and you know how much [house you can afford](#). Then it happens—you find *the house*. You submit an offer and negotiations begin with the seller's agent. But then you start to have second thoughts as you realize this may not be the right fit after all. In the back of your mind you're thinking about withdrawing the offer: Is this just nerves, or should I

listen to my gut?

My husband Matt and I looked at houses for a couple of months before we found a home we liked enough to try and buy. It was in a nice little neighborhood and was just the right size for a starter home. It was also the first house we had seen that didn't need substantial renovations (remember, we had a wedding coming up and couldn't afford to do too much work on a house). We placed our offer and waited... only to have the seller come back with a counter offer much higher than our original offer.

### Evaluating the Counter Offer

This is when we had to start making difficult decisions. Was this house worth the extra money the seller wanted? Sure, it was in pretty good shape, but it didn't have everything we wanted. We were hoping for one- and-a-half bathrooms and it only had one. The yard was a little small; however the basement was partially finished. It had a nice fireplace, but the kitchen was tiny and a little dated. Compromising is part of [finding a home](#), but we had to figure out if these compromises were worth it.

Ultimately we decided to withdraw our offer because there were some things that we really wanted in a house—like more than one bathroom and a little more space in the kitchen—and this house just didn't meet those needs.

### When to Withdraw an Offer

When should you walk away from a house you love and when should you stick it out? Rather than base decisions on your gut feeling, it helps if you go in knowing exactly what you will not compromise on. Maybe you refuse to live on a main road, or you absolutely want a house connected to sewers. Figure out your non-negotiable items first, and then think about the things you can be flexible about. We weren't too picky about having a garage or attic and we weren't too set on living in a specific town. However, we wanted a house connected to natural gas and on a septic system or hooked up to the sewers. Other things were negotiable: number of bedrooms, square footage, yard size.

**The Lesson:** Having an idea of what you *must* have and what you can live without helps you determine [what to look for in a home](#). It will also help you decide when it's time to withdraw an offer for a house.

We were able to do withdraw the offer without too much trouble because there was no signed contract yet. The process gets a lot more complicated when you have a signed contract. It's hard, but sometimes you have to ignore your emotions (and your visions of living in the house) and look at the situation realistically. Is the seller countering with a too-high offer? Is the neighborhood too far from your work? Will you need to do major renovations that you can't afford? Lay it all out there and be honest with yourself. Yes, withdrawing an offer and walking away from a house you fell in love with is difficult, but it just means the right home is still out there, waiting.

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Kristin Offler is a freelance writer who recently completed a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. She lives happily in her new home in the Northeast with her husband and dog.

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