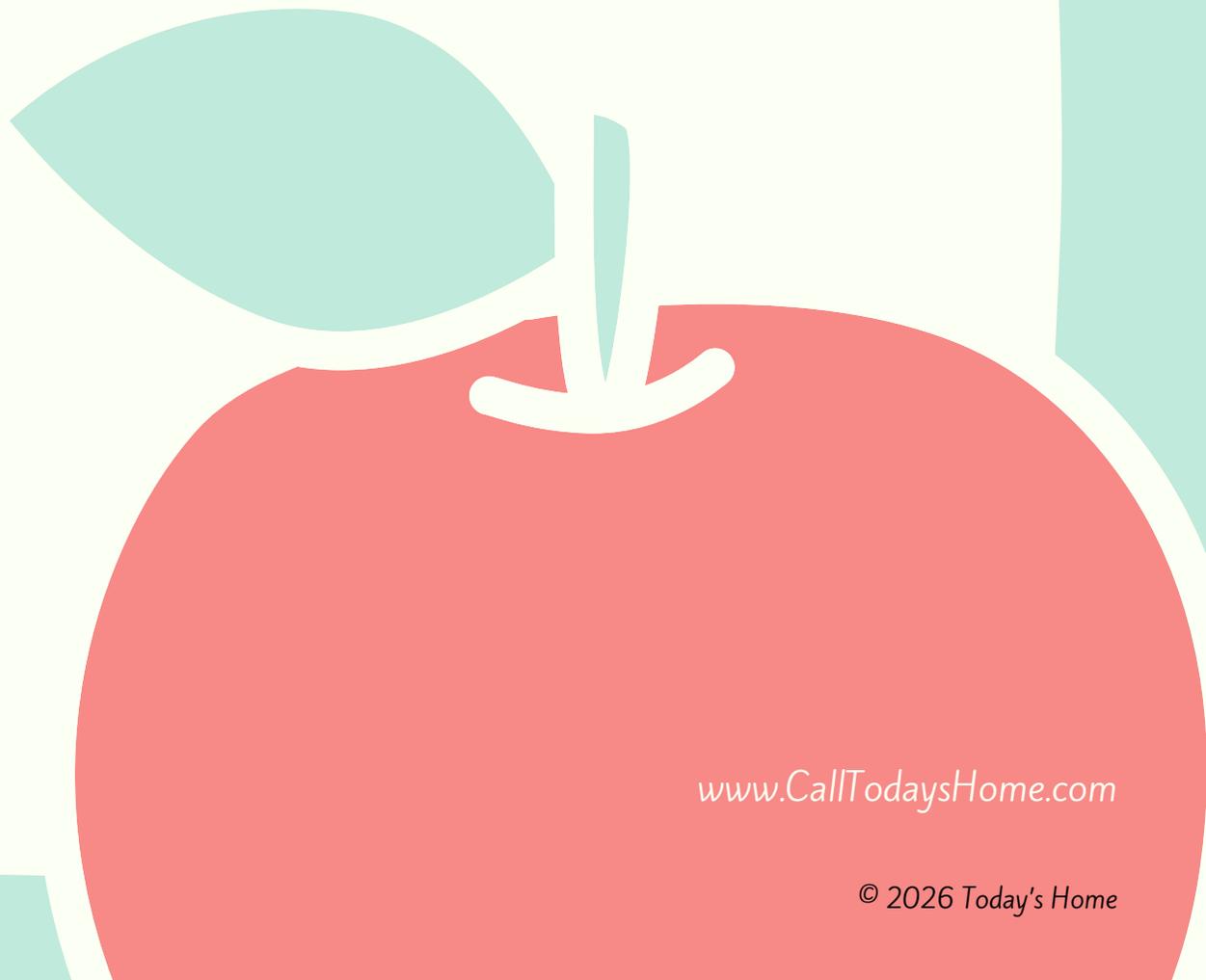


MORTGAGE 101 FOR REAL LIFE

*A Savvy Buyer's Guide to
What You Can Really Afford*



www.CallTodaysHome.com

© 2026 Today's Home

THE REAL QUESTION NOBODY ANSWERS

(It's not "How much can I borrow?")

Most buyers start with the wrong question.

They ask:

"How much can I afford?"

What they usually mean is:

"How much will a lender approve me for?"

Those are not the same thing.

Lenders measure risk. You measure lifestyle.

This guide helps you bridge the gap.

Why it matters...

Affordability isn't about surviving the payment.

It's about living well after the payment.

It's living with a legacy mindset.



**AT TODAY'S HOME, WE HELP BUYERS MAKE
DECISIONS THAT FEEL GOOD LONG AFTER THE
CLOSING DAY.**

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

HOW LENDERS THINK (THE PROFESSOR VIEW)

What lenders actually look at

From a mortgage standpoint, lenders focus on:

- Gross monthly income
- Existing debt
- Credit profile
- Employment history
- Cash reserves

They use ratios (called debt-to-income) to determine:

- What you qualify for
- Not what's comfortable

Lenders ask:

"Can this borrower technically make the payment?"

You should be asking:

"Can I live the life I want with this payment?"



AT TODAY'S HOME, WE BELIEVE THE BEST MORTGAGE IS THE ONE THAT STILL LEAVES ROOM FOR PEACE, PURPOSE, AND THE LIFE YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO LIVE.

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

HOW LENDERS THINK (THE PROFESSOR VIEW) **CONT.**

The two most important numbers buyers should know

1. *Front-end ratio*

How much of your income goes toward housing?

2. *Back-end ratio*

How much of your income goes toward all debt?

Both matter.

But neither the professor nor the lender knows:

- Your childcare costs
- Your travel habits
- Your health goals
- Your stress tolerance

That's your job.



AT TODAY'S HOME, WE BELIEVE THE SMARTEST BUDGET IS THE ONE THAT REFLECTS YOUR REAL LIFE, NOT JUST YOUR FINANCIAL PROFILE.

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

REAL AFFORDABILITY (THE HUMAN BUDGET)

Your true monthly costs includes

Mortgage

- Property taxes
- Insurance
- HOA (if applicable)
- Utilities
- Maintenance
- Lifestyle costs
- = Real affordability

Many buyers only plan for the mortgage.
Then wonder why money feels tight.

The lifestyle test

Before choosing a price range, ask yourself:

- Can I still save each month?
- Can I travel or enjoy hobbies?
- Can I handle unexpected expenses?
- Would I feel trapped if income changed?

If the answer is no... the home is too expensive,
even if you're approved.



**AT TODAY'S HOME, WE HELP BUYERS FOCUS ON
BUILDING A LEGACY. FAMILY. FINANCIAL. FUTURE.**

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

MOVING UP OR MOVING OUT (TRANSITION STRATEGY)

From renter to homeowner

The biggest shift isn't financial. It's responsibility.

Renters move from:

- *Fixed costs*
- *No maintenance*
- *Predictable budgeting*

To:

- *Variable expenses*
- *Repairs*
- *Insurance and taxes*
- *Long-term planning*

Smart renters prepare by:

- *Practicing a higher payment before buying*
- *Building repair reserves*
- *Reviewing credit early*
- *Understanding total monthly costs, not just rent*

From homeowner to move-up buyer

Move-up buyers often underestimate:

- *How much equity is actually usable*
- *Selling costs*
- *Timing gaps between homes*
- *Emotional stress of overlapping payments*

The smartest move-up buyers:

- *Run numbers with conservative sale estimates*
- *Avoid stacking new debt before selling*
- *Keep emergency reserves intact*

Equity gives options.

It should not create pressure.



THE RIGHT TEAM DOESN'T JUST HELP YOU BUY A HOME, THEY HELP YOU MAKE DECISIONS YOU'LL FEEL GOOD ABOUT LONG AFTER CLOSING.

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

THE MORTGAGE PROFESSOR'S BONUS LESSONS

(THINGS BUYERS RARELY
HEAR BUT SHOULD)

Lesson 1: Cash reserves matter more than down payment

Buyers with emergency savings sleep better than buyers with bigger houses.

Lesson 2: Interest rates affect psychology more than affordability

Small rate changes feel scary, but lifestyle alignment matters more than timing.

Lesson 3: The cheapest home isn't always the smartest

Commute, maintenance, and lifestyle costs can erase price differences.

Lesson 4: Pre-approval is not permission
It's a tool, not a target.

Lesson 5: The best budget is the one you'll actually follow

Rigid plans fail. Realistic plans work.

BECAUSE, IT'S ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A HOUSE!

At Today's Home, we help buyers think beyond approval numbers and focus on building a life that feels stable, not stretched.

Whether you're buying your first home or moving up, affordability should create freedom, not anxiety.



WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS THAT MORE BUYERS ARE CHOOSING HOMES THAT SUPPORT PEACE, FREEDOM, AND FUN RATHER THAN STRETCHING FOR THE BIGGEST OPTION ON PAPER.

To schedule a call with a Today's Home agent, visit our website, www.CallTodaysHome.com or scan here



www.CallTodaysHome.com

© 2026 Today's Home