

Exclusive Interview: ‘Million Dollar Listing’s’ Josh Altman Says, “Relationships are Harder Than Owning a House”



By [Whitney Baker](#)

Thanks to Bravo’s reality television hit *Million Dollar Listing*, viewers have gotten an inside peek at the high-end real estate business. And thanks to the aggressive tactics of real estate agent Josh Altman – also known as “The Shark” – fans of the show know what it takes to make it in such a cutthroat industry. What they may not realize are the lessons in love that Altman learns from selling houses to bachelors, single women, new couples and divorcees alike. Luckily, in an exclusive interview with CupidsPulse.com, he shared some tricks of *both* trades: real estate and romance.

Altman, who works with the Beverly Hills firm Hilton & Hyland, has certainly found success in the Los Angeles real estate market. He recently sold a condominium on Ocean Drive for \$10.5 million, making it the highest sale in Santa Monica history.

“Everybody wants to know, ‘What the hell do you get in a \$10.5 million condo in LA?’ It’s one thing in New York – everything is like \$10 million bucks,” he says with a laugh. “But in LA, you get 8,000 square feet of 360-degree views. Plus, you get an 8,000 square foot rooftop deck. It’s absolutely incredible.”

He continues, “On one side, you have the entire coast, and then you turn around, and you have Hollywood Hills. It was

the most spectacular condo I've ever seen."

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Of course, most people cannot afford such an expensive home. Even so, regardless of the price tag, everyone approaches house hunting from a different perspective, with single people and couples perhaps having the most distinctive viewpoints.

"It's two totally different ballgames," says Altman. "Most bachelors love to have a nice, plush movie theater. They want the cool, outdoor pool and entertaining area too."

Couples, on the other hand, have a much more standard focus. "For couples, it's always about the kitchen and the bathrooms. Always," Altman explains. "They want to make sure there is a fence outside and not too many stairs inside, so it's safer if they decide to have kids."

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He adds, "It's a lot of fun seeing both sides of it."

Unfortunately, couples can sometimes struggle to compromise when it comes to buying a new home. Just like all aspects of dating and maintaining a relationship, both parties must learn to give and take a bit. "You've got to find a happy medium," Altman recommends. "But if there's too much argument and they end up buying a house, there's a good chance that I'll get two more sales out of it when they divorce!"

Taking his advice a step further, he shares, "I believe that a couple should sit down and each person should come up with a list of the top five to ten things that they want in a house. Then, they can put their lists together and kind of meet halfway. As long as both sides get two to four things that they want, they can both be happy."

It may sound straightforward, but in truth, even deciding how

big of a house to buy – for either a bachelor or a couple – can be a daunting task. For a single woman, it's often tempting to plan for the future and buy a home suitable for a family.

However, Altman cautions against this plan. "Sure, she may be a wealthy girl who can afford a big house that would be great for the future, but it can be intimidating for the guy," he says. "He's going over to his girlfriend's big, beautiful house, and then he's going home to his not-so-big-and-beautiful house."

And the same challenge holds true for couples. "If you get too small of a house, you may be on top of each other. Everybody needs their space, so that can be a disaster," Altman explains. "But at the same time, if you have too big of a house, it's a different type of disaster and can lead to financial troubles or difficulty with upkeep."

For couples just moving in together, Altman believes it is best to test the waters first and move into one of their current homes. If you take things slow, there's less chance that you'll end up with a broken heart. "It's easy to buy or sell a house and not so easy to fall in love," he says.

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Some couples, though, are trying to escape from romantic ghosts, so moving into a new house is the best option. "I run into a lot of my clients who are either remarried or still living in a house from a previous relationship, and they want to sell. They want to start from scratch – you know, the new boyfriend doesn't want to be in the same house as the old guy," Altman says.

"It makes sense: they want a fresh start. They want to move on from the memories, and that's the best way to do it," he adds.

As much as Altman's learned about real estate from his clients, he's also picked up a few house-buying tips from his own experiences. When asked about buying his first house, he says one word comes to mind: scary. "I bought my first house in 2002, and it seemed like a huge amount of money, especially when you're borrowing from a bank," he shares. "The whole process is overwhelming, which is why it's so important to have the right realtor who can walk you through everything."

Since then, Altman has bought a new house every year or so. He explains, "I don't like to stay in the same place very long because I get bored. Most of the time, I'll fix something up and then sell it."

He also knows firsthand the importance of buying a house of the right size. A couple of years ago, he owned a house that was about 6,000 square feet. He says, "It ended up taking up all of my time. It was just too much."

Keeping in mind both his business and personal experiences, Altman boils down his opinion to one simple statement: "Relationships are a lot harder than owning a house!"

You can read more about Altman's real estate success on his Web site or follow him on Twitter. On Wednesday, June 6 at 9 p.m./8 p.m. CT, Altman will reunite with costars Josh Flagg and Madison Hildebrand for the premiere of season five of Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles on Bravo!