

Interview Questions with Lisa Turner

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Why did you become a home inspector?

Because it combined all of the things I loved: solving mysteries, looking at electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems; writing reports for the buyers and sellers; helping people save money and avoid catastrophe.

You say in your book that people building a custom home can save a lot of money engaging a home inspector. Why is that? Wouldn't the builder be qualified to find problems?

Builders work hard to find problems but they are time and labor strapped. They can't be there all the time and a percentage of errors do not get caught. Some of these errors can cost the homeowner big bucks when they are in the home. Just a few structural errors can mean the potential collapse of parts of the structure, I have seen it myself. Another example I have seen is pouring the basement with the wrong slope. Later water enters the house and sits against the inside wall, doing insidious damage.

How can a homeowner builder prevent these errors?

They should hire a home inspector or independent contractor to walk the project every day there is substantial construction. It will pay for itself.

How does a home inspection save money for the buyers?

First of all, the inspector is going to find any major deal breakers. Things that might cost the buyers big bucks in repairs after they move in. Second, they can use deficiencies found in the report to get a better price. Third, buyers can use the report to understand what maintenance will be needed after they move in, knowing the lifespans left on appliances and systems.

Does it ever make sense for home sellers to get a home inspection before they put a house on the market?

Absolutely. I talk about this in the book, its so important. First, the seller can use the inspection report to understand status on the general condition of their home, reducing stress wondering if there are any deal breakers. Second, they can make repairs to the systems needing it in advance of a buyer's inspection. Third,

they can use the revised report as a marketing tool to sell the home. Typically, they can avoid paying for repairs after the buyer inspection, and typically they get more money for the home.

House Keys is quite extensive with over three hundred pages of advice. How did you find the time to write this book while working full time?

Well, I started writing home improvement and consumer articles for the local paper – The Clay County Progress – and each year I would get readers writing to me asking for an article I had written. They told me that they had saved them but after eight or nine years they couldn't locate the ones they wanted in the moment. They all suggested putting the articles together in a book with an index! It took me a couple of months to pull it together and send it to Amazon.

So you self-published it?

Yes, Amazon on demand printing makes it quite easy to do, and they do not charge anything for the service. Of course, they are getting a cut from the sales.

You mention that only 1.6 percent of all licensed home inspectors are women. Why is this?

Yes, that's right, and it's amazing. I think the reason is that women are not exposed to these kinds of careers as they are growing up. I was lucky to have male role models as I grew up, and that helped me believe that I could do what the men were doing. But without the exposure, girls don't even think about it.

Do you think that women make good inspectors? Are there drawbacks?

I think women make excellent inspectors. Women tend to be detail oriented and very conscientious. I actually trained with a female inspector! I was impressed. As for drawbacks, they are the same as for men. Crawlspace are not always fun to inspect, and none of us enjoy chasing snakes to the other side of the crawl, but it goes with the territory.

You say you love to write. What are you working on now?

I'm working on a flying adventures book that is the story of how I built an airplane in my garage in the nineteen nineties and flew it from Florida to Maine. It's turning into a sort of memoir of my life. I hope to complete and publish it in 2018.

Will you self-publish again through Amazon?

Yes, it makes sense. I hear horror stories about trying to get a publisher to buy it, and really, it's not about the money. It's about having others read it and get fired up about reaching a special goal in their own life. If just one person is influenced in this way, I will consider my work worthwhile.

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