

GARAGE SALES

How to Negotiate

Garage sales are great places to snag a bargain, if you know how to shop. The first rule, of course, is to be nice. Honey attracts more ants than vinegar. Greet the seller cordially and be complementary of what you're looking to buy.

Here are eight more tips for snagging the best bargains at a garage sale.

1. Ask lots of questions. This shows your interest in an item, but also may help you find flaws to talk the seller down to a lower price. Some questions to consider: When did you buy it? Where did you buy it? Do you recall how much you paid? Do you have all the parts or accessories that go with it? Is it damaged? Has it ever been repaired? If you find damage or something wrong with the item, point it out gently and don't be combative. No used blender is worth a fight.

2. Bring small bills. Big bills scream big money. Only bring small bills and only keep some in your pocket, wallet or purse. Leave the rest



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in the car, with a friend or elsewhere. That way, you can honestly say that's all you had on you.

3. Let me tell you a story. If you're shopping for an item for a specific reason, like a nostalgic toy for a child or a good price on furniture for a first apartment, share that with the seller. A good enough story may just net you a discount from a sympathetic seller.

4. Volume pricing. If you've

got an armload of goodies, try talking the seller down \$5 or \$10 off the whole lot. They may bite just to get the whole thing off their hands. This may work best with things the sale has a lot of like books, clothes and kitchen utensils.

5. Shop later in the day. Sales may be more picked over at the end of the day, but the sellers may also be ready to make a deal to get their garage sale done. Be aware,

though, that you run the risk of what you're looking for being sold already. This deal may work best on big-ticket items.

6. Be reasonable. Unless you've really done your research and have a great reason, don't ask for huge discounts like 50% off. Start with a reasonable discount of 10% or thereabouts, then talk your way toward a price that's acceptable to both of you.

7. Be willing to walk away.

Just like with any negotiation, be willing to leave. You can always hit up some more sales and, if you don't find what you're looking for, come back to try the deal again.

8. Buyer beware. Watch out for fake or reproduction pieces passed off as antique or collectible. Check items carefully for damage, make sure everything works and use common sense. Most true antiques won't have a "made in China" stamp.

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Selling Strategies: Negotiating with Buyers

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SELLER TIPS

Think Ahead

Be ready to negotiate within reason with your buyers. As you put items out for sale, have in mind what your lowest possible price is, so you're not caught off guard by a surprise negotiation.

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