

The Cottage Compass

My Navigational Guide for Selling
Your Georgian Bay Cottage



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Life Unscheduled

You love the cottage and always will. Your memories are filled with the best and most carefree times.

It's where you come every summer, and it never changes—the rock, the water, the traditions, the family time—it's like going back to simpler times.

It's where the family bonds. Days are filled with great conversations, reading books and magazines, listening to music, and watching the fire burn into the early morning hours. Swimming, cliff jumping, waterskiing, and afternoon naps are part of the daily routine. Marking your height on the wall every summer is a rite of passage, along with baking brownies at midnight with all your cousins. You can shuffle a deck of cards like a pro and count by twos from your grandfather challenging you in cribbage. Table manners were perfected before you were allowed to sit with the adults for dinner. Your wardrobe consisted of a bathing suit and a towel. One of the best feelings was lying on the warm granite to warm up after a long swim.

It's a place where time stands still. A place to be outside. A place to be with family and friends. However, life changes, and it's best to move with it.



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If you're a generational cottager, you're probably familiar with sharing the cottage with your siblings and their families. Maybe you split the summer, or perhaps everyone stays together, and it's every person for themselves at dinner time. Chaos ensues, which is fun for the kids but can be tough on relationships with the in-laws. Each person is at a different stage in life, and getting everyone on the same page is a challenge. You dream of having your own place.

When it comes to the cottage, everyone contributes in their own way—some pay the bills, some work on repairs and maintenance, and others arrive with groceries. Everyone loves the place and can't bear to lose it. At some point, each family has to address how or if the cottage will be passed to the next generation. Estate planning is complex, and tough conversations are best had before your hand is forced. With today's ever-changing landscape, you need to gather as much information as possible. It's best to draw on the expertise of your real estate lawyer, investment advisor, and tax accountant to understand the best options ahead.

We all go through different stages of life, and sometimes we get pulled away from the cottage. Whether you're exploring other interests, building a career, or catering to your family's needs, you might be spending less and less time at the cottage. With a limited number of weekends, you feel guilty for not being there.



Life is short, and cottage time is even shorter

Perhaps you're the patriarch or matriarch of the family, and you've entered the stage of worrying. Well, there is no lack of things to worry about at the cottage. Did you close all the windows before you left? Are the boats tied properly if a storm comes up? Who will plug any openings with steel wool so the mice don't get in over the winter? Have you done the proper estate planning so you aren't handing over a huge headache to your kids? Can they share it without fighting?

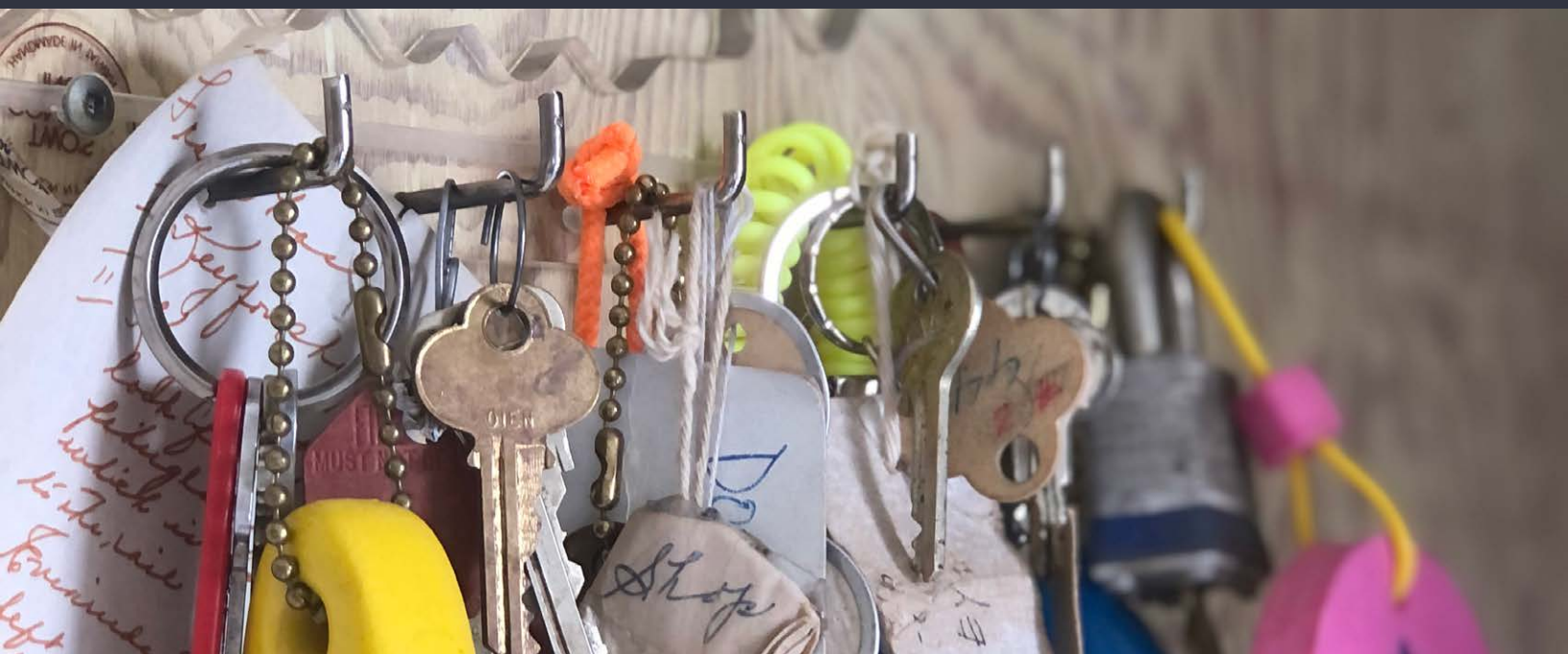
And other big life changes can happen as well...overall health and well-being and divorce sometimes come into play. Life is short, and cottage time is even shorter.

You've tried to overcome the above factors by scheduling certain weekends for each family, restocking the fridge with everyone's favourite food and drinks, addressing repairs before taking on costly replacements, tackling the tough questions around future planning, and respectfully giving each other space and time to come to their own conclusions.

The cottage is meant to provide a lifestyle for the family, not to be a bone of contention. It's meant to bring people together, not divide them.

With so many cherished memories tied to the cottage, emotions naturally run high. Deciding to sell is never taken lightly.

I understand because I've been there. As a fellow cottager, I created the Cottage Compass Guide to help people like you cut through the stress and achieve the best possible outcome.



Here's How It Works

Step 1 : Consultation

First, tell me about you and your family and how long you've been cottaging. Why are you selling, and what are your thoughts about your next adventure? Understanding your needs and expectations will help me build a solid plan for selling your cottage.

Let's walk the property and point out your favourite places. Tell me the history and 10 things you love about the cottage. Each property is unique, and what attracted you will most likely attract the next family.

We'll review some ideas for decluttering, cleaning, repairs, and general maintenance. Start thinking about items that will and won't be included in the sale.

Step 2 : Preparing the Property & Gathering Data

You only get one chance to make a first impression, so make it your best. A deep clean of the cottage and a clean sweep of the property might cost a few hundred dollars but can help get you thousands more in the sale.

Compile all the important documents. An updated survey is gold. It saves the buyer time and money and also confirms whether the property can be further developed. This type of knowledge not only reinforces market value but also further identifies the ideal buyer. Pricing is a combination of art and science, both data-driven and emotional. We'll review a comparative market analysis and determine the price point based on the sale price of similar cottages in your part of Georgian Bay.



Step 3 : List & Market

We'll review the marketing plan to create the best strategy for your cottage.

We'll schedule high-quality real estate photography, drone, and video. First impressions are important; buyers rely on pictures and videos to decide whether to view the cottage.

Typically, island sales do not follow the same highs and lows of residential properties, but you can expect a higher variance between the list price and the sale price. Again, cottage properties are unique, and each person's idea of cottaging differs. It is also a short season, so it is important to move quickly and efficiently.

Step 4 : Sell

Selling is a dynamic process from listing to marketing to closing. Communication will be a priority with timely updates and relevant feedback.

Your family has created many memories here, so expect emotions to run high. Rely on facts and my insights as guidance, but know when you receive an offer it's your decision to make. Be confident in the transaction, and know that we'll navigate the obstacles before they become hurdles.

Selling a cottage can take one or two seasons, so it's important to continue discussing expectations, strategies, and timelines.

Once you've received the offer, we'll review it and consult with your lawyer.



Step 5 : Clear Conditions & Celebrate

Now that we have an agreement, it's time to address the conditions.

Be prepared to allow the buyer reasonable access to your cottage for inspections. They might schedule home inspectors, general contractors, and/or septic and well specialists to come in and provide a point of view.

If any documents/reports were required in the accepted offer, it's time to provide the buyer with them.

Appraisals, although not always done, are conducted as a result of the buyer's lender verifying that the market value of the cottage supports the contract price.

Once conditions are waived, your offer is firm, and you're almost at the finish line :) One final walk-through before the closing date to ensure everything is in order, and once the lawyer confirms close on the specified date, you can celebrate. Congratulations on the sale of your cottage!

Thank you for your stewardship of Georgian Bay, best of luck on your next adventure, and hopefully, our paths cross again.



Here is what happens when you follow our method

Now that the cottage is sold, you can breathe a sigh of relief. While it may bring mixed emotions, the stress relief is undeniable. You can now refocus on your family's needs and what matters most to you. With time, any tensions that arose can mend. Your life is simplified, giving you the opportunity to organize your home and plan for the future.

What's next? Perhaps a summer in Tuscany or an Arctic expedition. The sky is the limit, and you welcome the change.



Here is what my clients are saying:

"I instantly felt comfortable with you, Courtney, and felt I could trust you in selling the cottage." - **Giselle**

"My husband and I had the opportunity and good fortune to have Courtney as our agent. We knew of her work through word of mouth and she had a listing near us. Courtney was exceptional when we had questions. She was prompt to reply to emails and texts. She had all the answers or knew where to find them. Appointments were kept promptly. Courtney was super professional while being easy-going and fun to deal with. Dan and I would refer her to anyone looking to buy or sell." - **JoAnne & Dan**



A 3rd Generation & Lifelong Georgian Bay Cottager

My Story...

I'm Courtney Murgatroyd, a 3rd generation and lifelong Georgian Bay island cottager, and I'm here to help. My grandfather bought the cottage in 1945 from an American family from Detroit, Michigan. My dad and his sister spent summers on the bay, and my sister and I had the good fortune to do the same.

I have experienced the absolute joys of having an island cottage, and I also know the firsthand frustration of forgetting the maple syrup for the morning pancakes.

I have gotten up many times in the middle of the night to close windows as a storm started to blow in. I know to secure boats and water toys before nightfall to keep parents worry-free and kids happy.

I have enjoyed many sunsets and the odd sunrise. Sometimes it's just safer to wait for dawn before boating home.

I have participated in regattas. Gunnel bobbing is a real skill, as is swimming in a straight line. I have eaten my fair share of s'mores, dirt, and sand. Skinny-dipping before bed is completely underrated, as is waking up at 3 or 4 am to see the Northern Lights.

I have fallen out of the hammock too many times to count. I have stubbed my toe on the same rock year after year, and I still jump to high heaven when I see a snake. I have logged hundreds of hours on the dock and have the weathered skin and laugh lines to prove it. I'll take cliff jumping and tubing over fishing any day.

I'm happiest at the cottage. Whether I'm lounging on the dock or driving my boat full throttle across the Bay, I'll have a smile on my face.





If you're ready to make a move, let's connect.

We'll discuss your situation and determine if the Cottage Compass Method is a fit for you. We'll also answer any questions you have about the process and the real estate market.





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Thank you for the opportunity
& your trust,

See you on the bay,

Courtney

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