



**MODEL 55**

*Streamlined. Customized. Elevated.*

# Getting to the Emotion

## How to Use the Model Apartment as an Emotional Sales Tool in Senior Living

Informed by *The More You Know, The More You Close* by Kelly Singleton Myers



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The model apartment is not a showroom. It is a thoughtfully designed space that welcomes the prospective resident on their community visit. Every room is an opportunity to unlock an emotion, ask a question, and move a buyer closer to yes. This guide shows how to use that space deliberately, drawing on the curiosity-driven principles of Kelly Singleton Myers' *The More You Know, The More You Close*, applied specifically to the two most emotionally complex buyers in senior living: the adult child choosing assisted living for a parent, and the active senior choosing independent living for themselves.

## How to use this guide

Each section opens with the emotional truth driving that buyer – what they are really feeling but may not say out loud. Then it shows you how to use the model apartment, room by room, to surface that emotion, ask the right question, and listen for what moves the sale. Script prompts and watch-outs are included throughout.

### Section One – Assisted Living (for the adult child)

**Principle 1: Know the real buyer before you show the first room**

**Principle 2: Use the entry to relieve guilt before it becomes resistance**

**Principle 3: Let the model surface the fear – then meet it**

**Principle 4: The bathroom is your close – use it**

**Principle 5: Listen more than you talk – then ask for next steps**

### Section Two – Independent Living (for the active senior)

**Principle 1: Know their identity before you show a floorplan**

**Principle 2: Lead with the life, not the unit**

**Principle 3: Use the model to answer the question they won't ask**

**Principle 4: The kitchen is your credibility – treat it that way**

**Principle 5: Close on emotion, confirm with logic**

# Getting to the Emotion of the Adult Child



She drove over on her lunch break. She has not told her mother she is here. She is carrying guilt, fear, and love in equal measure – and she is deciding in the first eight seconds whether this place deserves any more of her time. Your job starts before she says a word.

## The emotional truth driving this buyer

The adult child is not shopping for an apartment. She is searching for relief from a weight she has been carrying for months – the weight of watching a parent decline while managing her own job, marriage, children, and guilt. She will not say any of this out loud. She will ask about pricing and square footage and the dining menu. But underneath every question is one question: Will my parent be safe, loved, and dignified here – and can I stop worrying?

Kelly Singleton Myers writes in *The More You Know, The More You Close* that the most dangerous assumption a senior living sales director can make is that the stated question is the real question. It almost never is. The more you know about what is actually driving this person – the fear, the guilt, the exhaustion – the more precisely you can use the model apartment to answer what she actually needs to hear.

### What she says

Tell me about pricing. What's included in the monthly fee?

### What she means

Is this worth the sacrifice I'm making – financially, emotionally, relationally?

### What she needs to feel

Relief. Certainty. Permission to say yes without shame.

## 1

### Know the real buyer before you show the first room

Myers: 'The more you know, the more you close.' You cannot know enough from a phone inquiry. Discovery happens in person – before the tour begins.

Before you leave the lobby, sit down. Offer water or coffee. Ask questions that have nothing to do with the community. This is not small talk – it is intelligence gathering that will change everything about how you use the next forty minutes. Myers calls this the discovery phase, and it is the most underpracticed skill in senior living sales.

## Discovery questions – use 2 or 3, never all at once

Open with:	"Tell me a little about your mom – what is she like?"
Then:	"What has the last few months been like for your family?"
If they go quiet:	"It sounds like this has been a lot to carry. How long have you been thinking about this?"
Before the tour:	"What would it mean to you – and to her – to find the right place?"

**KEY INSIGHT** What you learn in these five minutes determines which rooms you linger in, which details you point out, and which objections will surface later. A counselor who skips discovery is guessing. A counselor who does it well is guiding.

## 2

### Use the entry to relieve guilt before it becomes resistance

The first eight seconds set the emotional frame for everything that follows. Stage and narrate the entry with intention – not as a formality.

Guilt and resistance are the same emotion at different intensities. The adult child arrives feeling guilty – that she is here at all, that she is considering 'putting' her parent somewhere. If you do not address this emotion before you show a single room, it will calcify into objections you cannot overcome later.

### Entry & first impression

### MODEL MOMENT

#### Stage it to say:

Warm lighting, living plant, personal artwork. No medical equipment in sight. Smells clean, not clinical. Staff visible and engaged with residents.

#### Ask:

**"When you pulled up, what was your first impression?"**

#### Listen for:

Positive reactions: lean in. Hesitation: name it directly. 'A lot of families feel nervous the first time they come. That usually means they love their parent a lot.'

### What to say as you enter

**Name it:** "I want to acknowledge something. Coming here for the first time takes courage. Most families I meet have been thinking about this for a long time before they walk through that door."

**Normalize:** "Everything you're feeling right now – the uncertainty, the worry – that's what love looks like in this situation."

**Redirect:** "My job today is not to sell you anything. It's to help you figure out whether this is the right place for your mom. Can we start by you telling me more about her?"

**WATCH OUT** Do not open with a tour of the common areas, the dining room, or the amenities. Every minute you spend showing before you know is a minute you are guessing what matters to this person. Discovery first. Always.

## 3

### Let the model surface the fear – then meet it

Each room in the model triggers a specific emotional response. Know what it is before you walk in – and be ready to name it.

Myers writes that the best senior living counselors are emotionally curious – they are not just showing rooms, they are reading people. Every room in a well-staged model apartment is designed to trigger something. Your job is to know what it triggers, be present when it does, and have the language ready to meet the emotion before it becomes an objection.

## Living room

### MODEL MOMENT

#### Stage it to say:

Furniture arranged for companionship, not television. Warm lamp. A prop personal item – book, keepsake bowl. Emergency call visible but understated.

#### Ask:

**"Can you picture your mom sitting here? What would she be doing?"**

#### Listen for:

If they pause or tear up: do not fill the silence. Let the emotion land. Then: 'That moment you just imagined – that can happen here every day.'

## Bedroom

### MODEL MOMENT

#### Stage it to say:

Layered, warm bedding. Reading lamp. Small personal prop on nightstand. Walker clearance around all sides of the bed. Emergency call within reach.

#### Ask:

**"What would she bring from home that would make this feel like hers?"**

#### Listen for:

Specific answers (her quilt, her photos, her chair) signal emotional buy-in. Vague answers signal they are still in their head – slow down, ask more.

**KEY INSIGHT** Personalization questions are the most powerful questions in the model apartment. The moment a family member starts describing their parent's belongings in the room, they have mentally moved them in. Your job then is to get out of the way.

# 4

## The bathroom is your close – use it

**The bathroom triggers the adult child's deepest fear: a fall. Address it proactively, confidently, and with warmth. It is the room that most often ends hesitation.**

Most sales directors avoid leading with safety features because they do not want the tour to feel clinical. This is a mistake. The adult child is already thinking about falls, about emergencies, about the 2am phone call she dreads. Naming it first, calmly, confidently, with warmth, removes its power as an unspoken objection.

## Bathroom

### MODEL MOMENT

#### Stage it to say:

Walk-in shower, no threshold. Grab bars that look like spa hardware – brushed nickel. Coordinated bath mat, not a medical non-slip mat. Emergency pull cord accessible. Immaculate grout. Quality soap and small plant on counter.

#### Ask:

**"I want to show you something we designed specifically with safety in mind. This is where most families feel something shift. What do you notice?"**

#### Listen for:

They will name the grab bars, the shower, the pull cord. Affirm each one: 'Exactly – and here is why we made that choice.' Turn their observation into your credibility.

## How to own this room

- Lead:** "I always bring families here specifically – because I know this is where the worry lives. Can I show you what we've done?"
- On the grab bars:** "We chose brushed nickel because we believe safety should feel like quality, not like a hospital."
- On the pull cord:** "If she ever needed us in the night, one pull and someone is here within minutes. That's not a feature – that's a promise."
- Then:** "How does this compare to what you were imagining before you came?"

# 5

## Listen more than you talk – then ask for next steps

**Myers:** the close is not a technique. It is the natural result of a person feeling genuinely heard, seen, and understood. Your last ten minutes make or break the sale.

After the model, resist the urge to summarize or pitch. Instead, sit down – in the model apartment if possible, or back in the lobby – and ask a single open question. Then listen. What you hear in the next three minutes will tell you exactly what stands between this family and a move-in date.

## The post-tour conversation

- Ask:** "How does this compare to what you had imagined before you came today?"
- After they answer:** "What would need to be true for this to feel like the right decision?"
- If they mention timing:** "A lot of families say they want to wait until the time is right. In your experience – what would that moment look like?"
- Before they leave:** "Would it be okay if I followed up with you in a couple of days? Not to pressure – just to answer any questions that come up when you talk to your family."

**WATCH OUT** The decision is rarely made in the car. It is made around the dinner table, in a text thread with siblings, on a second visit. Leave something behind – a printed guide, a handwritten note, a resource for families. The sale continues after they leave.

## Section Two – Independent Living

# Getting to the Emotion of the Active Senior



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She is 74, sharp, and has driven herself here without telling her children. She is not ready to need anything. She is here out of curiosity – or because someone she trusts planted a seed. She will not respond to safety features or medical framing. She will respond to identity, lifestyle, and the feeling of gaining something rather than giving something up.

### The emotional truth driving this buyer

The independent living prospect is not in crisis. She is in transition – and she is not sure she wants to be. Her identity is tied to her home, her routines, her independence. Anything that feels like a reduction – in space, in autonomy, in status – will trigger resistance. What she is actually looking for, beneath the polite questions about floorplans and fees, is evidence that her life will be as full here as it is now. Possibly fuller.

Myers writes that curiosity-driven sales is about genuinely understanding what the person in front of you values – not what you assume they value based on their age or situation. The IL prospect who seems 'not ready' is almost always ready for the right conversation. She is just not ready for a sales pitch. The difference between those two things is everything.

#### What she says

I'm just looking. I'm not sure I'm ready for this kind of move.

#### What she means

I'm afraid of what wanting this means about who I am and where I am in life.

#### What she needs to feel

Pride. Aspiration. The sense that this is a choice, not a concession.

1

### Know their identity before you show a floorplan

Myers: curiosity is the foundation of authentic connection. You can't connect with someone you have not taken the time to understand. The IL prospect will feel the difference instantly.

The IL prospect has a rich, specific life – and she wants to know that you see it. Discovery here is less about care needs and more about personality, passions, and the texture of a good week. The more specifically you understand who she is, the more precisely you can stage and narrate the model to reflect her life back to her.

### Entry & first impression

- Open with:** "Before I show you anything – tell me a little about yourself. What does a really good week look like for you right now?"
- Dig deeper:** "What do you love most about where you live now? What has gotten harder?"
- Identity question:** "What do your friends and family know you for – what's your thing?"
- The real question:** "What made you decide to come take a look today?"

**KEY INSIGHT** Her answer to 'what's your thing' is the most valuable information you will collect. If she says gardening — you walk her past the garden first. If she says cooking — the kitchen is your most important room. If she says entertaining — you set the model table for two and let her imagine Sunday dinner.

## 2

### Lead with the life, not the unit

The IL prospect does not need more square footage. She needs more life. Show her the community before you show her the apartment — desire precedes decision.

A common mistake in IL tours is leading with the model apartment. Do not. Lead with the best amenity that maps to what she told you in discovery. If she is social, take her through the dining room at a busy time. If she loves the outdoors, walk the garden path first. Create the emotional desire for the lifestyle before you show her where she would sleep.

## Setting up the lifestyle before the unit

**Before entering the model:** "I want to show you one thing before we look at the apartment — because I think it's what you'll remember most about today."

**At the key amenity:** "This is where [residents like her] spend a lot of their time. I can picture you here. Can you?"

**Transition to the unit:** "Now I want to show you where you'd come home to after an evening like that."

## WATCH OUT

If she is not slightly excited before you open the model apartment door, the apartment cannot do enough on its own. Desire must precede the room. Sequence is everything.

## 3

### Use the model to answer the question she won't ask

The unspoken question of every IL prospect: 'Will I still be myself here?' Every room in the model should answer yes — specifically, not generically.

She will not ask 'Will I be able to keep hosting dinner parties?'

She will ask about parking for guests.

She will not ask 'Will I lose my sense of self?'

She will ask if she can paint the walls.

Recognize that these are the same questions and use the model to answer the real questions before she asks the practical one.

## Bedroom

MODEL MOMENT

### Stage it to say:

Layered, boutique-hotel bedding. Full-length mirror, well-lit. Organized closet showing ample storage. No clinical staging of any kind.

### Ask:

**"Most residents are surprised by the closet. What would you bring that you'd want space for?"**

### Listen for:

Specific answers signal imagination engaged. Bring up the mirror deliberately: 'We put this here intentionally — this is still your space, you still get to feel like yourself.'

## Living room

MODEL MOMENT

### Stage it to say:

Current, stylish furniture — not 'senior-oriented.' Seating arranged for conversation and entertaining. Activities calendar visible. Large windows, blinds fully open.

### Ask:

**"You mentioned you love having people over. Can you see yourself hosting here?"**

### Listen for:

If yes: 'Tell me what that would look like.' If hesitant: 'Most residents bring their own furniture — this is just one version of the space. What would you do with it?'

# 4

## The kitchen is your credibility — treat it that way

For the IL prospect, the kitchen is the room that proves whether this is a lifestyle upgrade or a lifestyle reduction. Treat it as the most important room in the tour.

The kitchen says 'you are still in control here' — or it doesn't. A poorly staged, undersized, or generic kitchen signals to the IL prospect that this community does not really understand who she is. A well-staged kitchen — immaculate, intentional, with one or two quality items on the counter — signals that her autonomy is honored here.

## Kitchen

### Stage it to say:

Spotless, staged with one intentional item — good coffee maker, cookbook, fruit bowl. Dining table set for two. Modern hardware. Full-size appliances clean inside and out.

### Ask:

**"You mentioned you still love to cook. What would be the first thing you'd make here?"**

### Listen for:

This question moves the prospect from evaluation mode to imagination mode. The moment she answers with a specific dish, she has mentally moved in.

## Kitchen conversation starters

- On cooking:** "A lot of our residents still love to cook — some barely use the dining room. This kitchen is built for that."
- On entertaining:** "The table seats four comfortably. A lot of residents have Sunday dinners with family right here."
- On freedom:** "There is no pressure to use the dining room. This is your home. You eat how you want, when you want."

# 5

## Close on emotion, confirm with logic

The IL decision is made emotionally and justified logically. Your close should follow the same sequence — never the reverse.

Myers is explicit: the close is not a technique. It is what happens when a person feels genuinely seen, heard, and understood. For the IL prospect, the close is not 'let me tell you about our pricing.' It is a single, direct question — asked after the emotion has landed — followed by silence that you do not fill.

### The emotional close for Independent Living

**After the tour:** "Could you see yourself living here?"

**Wait. Do not speak. Let the silence work.**

**If yes:** "Tell me what that would look like. What would a good Tuesday here feel like for you?"

**If hesitant:** "What would need to be different — about the space, or about where you are in your thinking — for this to feel right?"

**On timing:** "A lot of residents who are happiest here told me they wish they had come sooner — not because they needed to, but because they were missing something they didn't know existed yet."

**The ask:** "I'd love to stay in touch as you think this through. Can I reach out in a week or so — just to see where your head is?"

**KEY INSIGHT** The IL sale has an average cycle of 120 days — sometimes two years. Your job after the first tour is not to close. It is to be the most memorable, most curious, most genuinely interested person she spoke to. Follow-up that references something specific she said — her love of gardening, her Sunday dinners — is ten times more effective than any email template.

**WATCH OUT** Never let the conversation end on pricing. Price is the last thing discussed and the first thing forgotten. The emotion she felt in the kitchen, in the living room, imagining Tuesday morning coffee with a new friend — that is what she will carry home. Protect it.