

2026 EDITION
A RELOCATION GUIDE

MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY

MOVING TO MANHATTAN? START HERE.

The honest guide to how buying actually works here, what it really costs every month, and which neighborhoods fit what you can spend — written by a Manhattan agent who has lived and worked here for nearly 30 years.

FOR ANYONE MOVING TO MANHATTAN FROM THE US OR ABROAD

DEWEY MOSS · LICENSED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON
WEICHERT PROPERTIES



DEWEY MOSS

LICENSED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON
WEICHERT PROPERTIES ·
UNION SQUARE

CO-OPS · CONDOS
TOWNHOUSES · RELOCATION

WELCOME

YOU'VE BOUGHT BEFORE. THAT'S WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS.

This guide is for anyone planning a move to Manhattan from Los Angeles, Seattle, Washington DC, Chicago, New Jersey and the tri-state area, or from abroad — and for anyone buying here for the first time from a distance.

It covers how buying actually works here, what it really costs every month, and which neighborhoods fit what you can spend. The people who struggle most in Manhattan aren't first-time buyers. They're experienced buyers who assume the rules travel. They don't.

I've lived and worked in Manhattan for nearly 30 years. I'm a Licensed Real Estate Salesperson at Weichert Properties in Union Square, working across Co-Ops, condos and townhouses — buying, selling, investing, relocations, and purchases for adult children.

I'm your advisor, not a door opener. Read this in order the first time; the pages build on each other. Then keep it, and reach out when you're ready — even if that's a year out.

DEWEY MOSS

Manhattan Real Estate. Decided with Confidence.

WHY MANHATTAN IS NOT LIKE ANYWHERE ELSE

You have bought before. That is exactly why this guide exists. The people who struggle most in Manhattan are not first-time buyers — they are experienced buyers who assume the rules travel. They don't.

Here's the question I get on nearly every first call with someone moving here: *"I'm pre-approved, so I'm ready to buy, right?"* I'll say this plainly — in New York City, being approved by a lender tells you almost nothing about whether a given building will let you in.

There are two separate approvals in Manhattan, and most people arrive knowing about one of them:

1

YOUR LENDER APPROVES YOU.

Standard financials. The bank decides you can carry the loan.

That second bar is the one nobody explains. A building can ask for post-closing liquidity — often one to two years of total housing costs left in the bank **after** you close. Many boards want your total debt-to-income under roughly 28%. Some want reserves on top of that. Every building writes its own rules.

So you can be fully pre-approved, fully qualified by any national standard, and still be unable to buy the apartment you found online last night.

2

THE BUILDING APPROVES YOU.

A different set of criteria entirely, set by that building — not by the bank, and not by me.

This is exactly where buyers get into trouble. Not because they did anything wrong — because nobody had explained the rules.

What this guide gives you: how the two approvals actually work, what your money does and doesn't buy here, which neighborhoods fit which budgets, the honest surprises, and the order to do things in so you don't waste six months.

One thing to hold onto: my job isn't to tell people they can't buy. It's to make sure they're ready when they do.

COMING FROM WHERE YOU ARE — WHAT CHANGES

Read the block for where you're coming from. Then read the others — the differences are useful even when they aren't yours.

COMING FROM LOS ANGELES OR SEATTLE

You're leaving a car market for one where the car is a liability, not an asset. Parking is a separately priced luxury in a small number of buildings, not a given. Square footage is the hardest adjustment: the number that felt normal at home will feel small here. Outdoor space — a terrace, a balcony, even a usable window line — carries a real premium in Manhattan in a way it does not in California or the Pacific Northwest. And the Co-Op board process has no West Coast equivalent at all.

COMING FROM WASHINGTON DC

You already understand condo boards and monthly fees, so you're closer than most. What's new is the Co-Op — an ownership structure where you buy shares in a corporation and a board approves the buyer, not just the building rules. DC has a handful; Manhattan is built on them. Expect a longer runway and a far more involved application.

COMING FROM CHICAGO

You know prewar buildings and you know assessments, which puts you ahead. What surprises Chicago buyers is the space-per-dollar gap and the fact that a building's monthly charge here can be the number that decides your budget. Also: your familiarity with condo assessments does not prepare you for a board admissions process.

COMING FROM NEW JERSEY OR THE TRI-STATE AREA

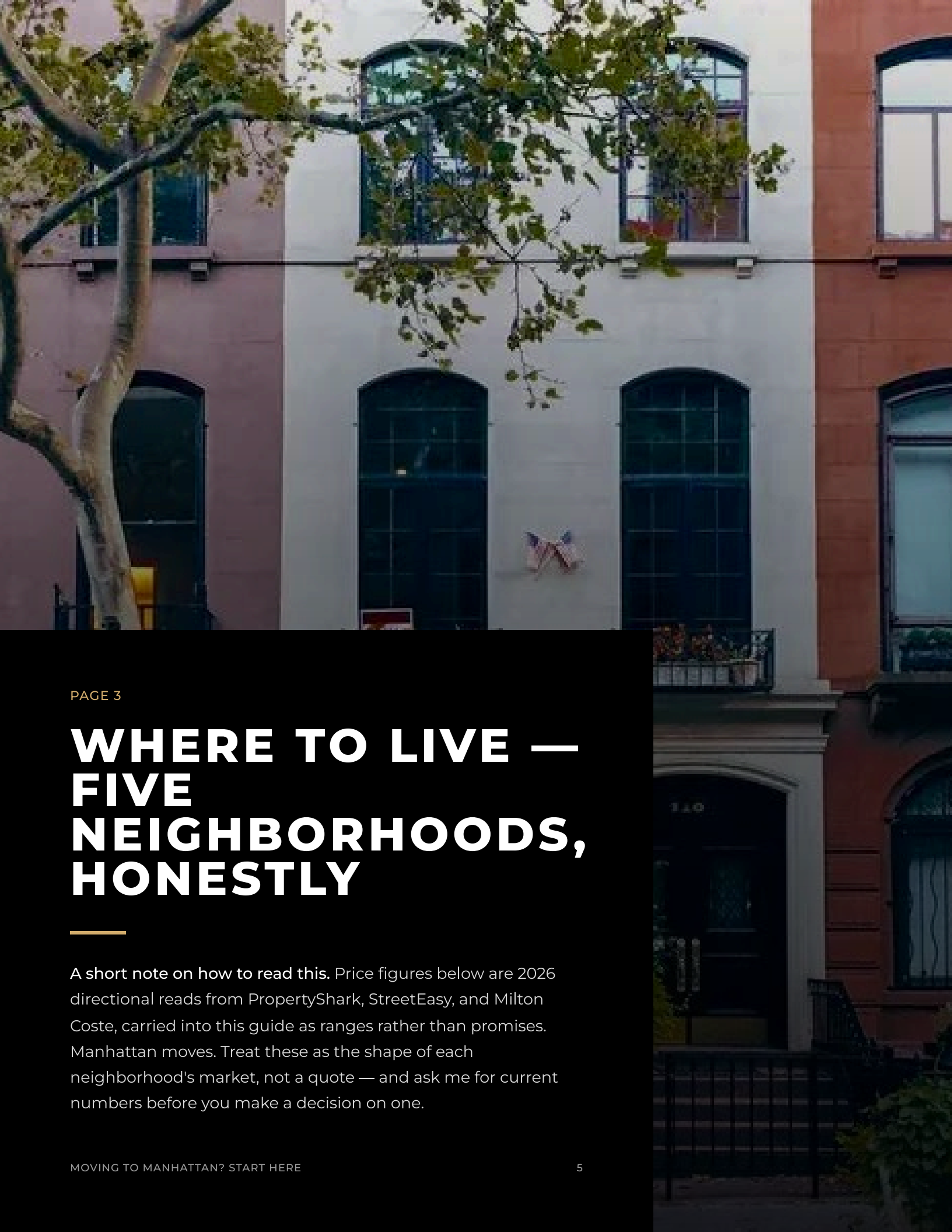
You know the region. You almost certainly don't know the buying process — they are completely different things. The biggest mental shift is where your monthly money goes: instead of a large property-tax bill on a house, you have maintenance or common charges, which cover building operations and, in a Co-Op, your share of the building's underlying mortgage and taxes. Same money, different shape, different rules.

COMING FROM LONDON OR ABROAD

If you know leasehold and share-of-freehold, a Co-Op will feel less alien than it does to most Americans — you're buying shares plus a proprietary lease. The real differences: a board interviews and approves you personally, and offers here are not binding until contracts are signed by both sides, which changes how a negotiation feels. International buyers also face additional scrutiny on documentation and structure, which is worth planning for before you shop, not after. Financing, transfer taxes, and a mansion tax that scales with price all apply differently depending on your situation — that's a conversation, not a chart.

THE ONE THING TRUE FOR EVERYONE

Nearly every market in the United States gives you more square footage for the same money than Manhattan does. That is not a reason to be discouraged. It's a reason to change what you're optimizing for — which is what the next page is about.



PAGE 3

WHERE TO LIVE — FIVE NEIGHBORHOODS, HONESTLY

A short note on how to read this. Price figures below are 2026 directional reads from PropertyShark, StreetEasy, and Milton Coste, carried into this guide as ranges rather than promises. Manhattan moves. Treat these as the shape of each neighborhood's market, not a quote — and ask me for current numbers before you make a decision on one.

WHERE TO LIVE — FIVE NEIGHBORHOODS, HONESTLY

CHELSEA

\$2–3M

CONDO MEDIANS, ROUGHLY
PROPERTYSHARK / MILTON COSTE,
2026

Condo-heavy by Manhattan standards, with newer development along the High Line corridor and the gallery district west of Tenth Avenue. Excellent transit, heavy retail and restaurant density, and real architectural variety block to block. **The honest trade-off:** the High Line and the galleries bring constant foot traffic, which some people love and some people move away from.

WEST VILLAGE

\$1.6–1.9M

MEDIAN SALE, ROUGHLY · CO-OPS
ABOUT 61% OF INVENTORY
MILTON COSTE, MAY 2026

Low-rise prewar buildings, cobblestone streets, and the most walkable street grid in the city — because it isn't a grid. Co-Ops are about 61% of the inventory, so this is a neighborhood where the board process matters more than average. **The honest trade-off:** charm comes in old buildings. Walk-ups are common, elevators are not guaranteed, and layouts are irregular.



GREENWICH VILLAGE

Overlaps the West Village

RUNS HIGHER ON THE PRIME BLOCKS

The historic blocks around Washington Square Park — human-scale streets, a mix of prewar Co-Ops and a small number of boutique condos. Pricing overlaps the West Village and runs higher on the prime blocks. **The honest trade-off:** it's a university neighborhood, which means the streets are busy and the building stock is tightly landmarked. Renovations take longer and cost more when a landmark commission is involved.

WHERE TO LIVE — FIVE NEIGHBORHOODS, HONESTLY

UPPER WEST SIDE

\$1.2M

MEDIAN SALE, AROUND
STREETEASY, 2026

Prewar Co-Ops between Central Park and Riverside Park, with the most classic large layouts in Manhattan and the best space-per-dollar of the five. If a home office and a real dining room are on your list, this is usually where the math works first. **The honest trade-off:** the Co-Op share is high, so more buildings, more boards, more applications — and prewar means older systems and, in some buildings, no washer/dryer permitted in the unit.



UPPER EAST SIDE

\$1.4–1.6M

MEDIAN, ROUGHLY · 2026

Prewar Co-Ops near Central Park and Museum Mile, quieter streets, and a traditional building stock. Strong values on the blocks east of Lexington, where the walk to a train is longer. **The honest trade-off:** it is the most board-driven of the five. Some of the most desirable buildings also have the most demanding financial requirements in the city.

IF YOUR BUDGET REACHES FURTHER

Tribeca \$3.6–4M
Soho mid-\$3M+

CONDO MEDIANS, ROUGHLY · 2026

Tribeca and Soho are the luxury end of downtown — larger loft floorplates, more condos, fewer board hurdles, and a very different price per square foot. Worth a conversation if that's your range.

HOW TO ACTUALLY USE THIS

Don't pick a neighborhood first. Pick two or three that fit the number you can carry monthly, then let the buildings inside them narrow the list. In Manhattan the building decides more about your daily life — and about whether you can buy at all — than the neighborhood does.

WHAT EVERYONE GETS WRONG ABOUT LIVING HERE

Here's what nobody tells you about Manhattan until you're already in it. These four surprise almost everyone, and they surprise people in roughly this order.

1

THE MONTHLY NUMBER, NOT THE PRICE, DECIDES WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD

Every apartment here carries a monthly charge on top of your mortgage — maintenance in a Co-Op, common charges plus real estate taxes in a condo. It covers building staff, heat, water, insurance, reserves, and in a Co-Op your share of the building's underlying mortgage and taxes. It can be substantial, it varies enormously building to building, and it is the number that quietly sets your real budget. Two apartments at the same asking price can be thousands of dollars a month apart. I will say that again, because it's the single most expensive thing people miss: two apartments at the same price are not the same purchase.

2

SPACE, AND THE THINGS YOU THOUGHT WERE STANDARD

You will get less square footage here than the same money buys almost anywhere else in the country. And the features that are simply assumed in other markets — in-unit washer and dryer, dishwasher, garbage disposal, central air — are not guaranteed in Manhattan. In many prewar buildings a washer/dryer isn't permitted at all, and that's a building rule, not a renovation you can do later. If one of those is non-negotiable for you, say so on day one. It changes the search completely.

3

THE BUILDING CLASS IS ITS OWN PRICE LADDER

This is the axis nobody arrives knowing. Walk-ups — which in Manhattan still cost millions of dollars. Then elevator buildings. Then doorman buildings. Then new development. Then full-service luxury with a staff, a gym, and amenities. Every rung changes the price AND the monthly charge, and the jump between rungs can be larger than the jump between neighborhoods. When someone tells me their budget, my second question is which rung they're picturing — because that answer moves the search more than the neighborhood does.

4

A COUPLE OF BLOCKS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Manhattan is a city of neighborhoods on one small island. Each one has its own prices, its own sizes, its own building stock, its own pace. And the boundaries are real — two blocks east or west can change the price, the kind of building available, and the walk to a train. On a map it looks like a short distance. On the ground it's a different market.

SO, HERE'S HOW I THINK ABOUT IT

The people who do well here stop asking "what can I buy for this price" and start asking "what can I carry every month, in what kind of building, on which blocks." That's the Manhattan question.

THE MISTAKES I WATCH RELOCATING BUYERS MAKE

01

FALLING IN LOVE BEFORE YOU'RE QUALIFIED — FOR THE BUILDING

Almost everyone who calls me has already found an apartment online. Often they cannot buy it, and not for money reasons — the building doesn't permit their situation. Sort the qualification first. It is the cheapest thing you will ever do.

02

ASSUMING YOUR STRUCTURE IS ALLOWED

Buying with a parent. Buying for an adult child. Using a trust or an LLC. A guarantor. A pied-a-terre you won't live in full time. Subletting later. Buildings decide each of these independently, and the number of buildings that permit a given arrangement can be far smaller than people expect. Know your structure, then search only buildings that allow it. In that order.

03

BUDGETING THE PURCHASE PRICE AND NOTHING ELSE

See page 8. Also: closing costs here are higher and stranger than most markets, and they differ between a Co-Op and a condo. Build them in early.

04

UNDERESTIMATING THE TIMELINE

Plan on three to four months from accepted offer to closing, sometimes longer, and the board application sits in the middle of it. If you're timing a job start, a school year, or the sale of a home somewhere else, work backwards from that.

05

TRUSTING THE PHOTOS

A listing photo is a movie trailer. It cannot show you the light at 4pm, the airshaft outside the bedroom window, the noise from the avenue, or the state of the building's finances. If you're buying from another city, you need someone physically walking those apartments and telling you the truth about them.

06

IGNORING THE BUILDING ITSELF

A perfect apartment inside a poorly-run building is not a perfect apartment. I will say that again. Reserves, the underlying mortgage, upcoming assessments, litigation, how the board actually operates — that's due diligence, and it matters as much as the unit.

07

BEING SURPRISED BY HOW PERSONAL IT GETS

A board package is extensive and genuinely invasive. Tax returns, bank statements, reference letters, an interview. It feels like a lot because it is a lot. It's the building doing its own version of due diligence on you — and knowing that in advance is most of what makes it bearable.

WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

6–12

MONTHS OUT

Decide what you're optimizing for — space, light, a specific commute, a specific kind of building — because you will not get all of it. Shortlist two or three neighborhoods from pages 6–7. Start a conversation with a lender who actually does New York City Co-Op and condo lending; it is not the same as lending elsewhere. If you can, visit once and walk the neighborhoods at the hour you'd actually be living in them.

3–6

MONTHS OUT

Get properly pre-approved — and then, separately, get honest about the board picture: what you'll have left after closing, what your debt-to-income looks like, what documentation you can produce. Set your real monthly number, not just your purchase price. If a home elsewhere has to sell, start that now; the two timelines have to be managed together.

1–3

MONTHS OUT

Tour, in person or virtually. Make offers — and know that here, an accepted offer is not binding until both sides sign contracts, which changes how you negotiate and how fast you move. Attorneys handle contracts in New York, so you'll want one lined up. If it's a Co-Op, the board package begins the moment contracts are signed, and it is a project.

THE FINAL STRETCH

Board review and, in most Co-Ops, an interview. Then the closing itself. Then the practical layer nobody plans for: building move-in rules. Most Manhattan buildings restrict moving to weekday business hours, require a certificate of insurance from your movers, and take a deposit. Ask about this before you book a truck.

A NOTE ON HOW WE SHOW PROPERTIES

At my brokerage, before showing you a property we do not require identification, we do not require you to sign an exclusive brokerage agreement, and we do not require a mortgage pre-approval or proof of funds. You can start looking. The rigor comes later, where it belongs.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Evan Meister relocated from the West Coast and bought a condo on the Upper East Side. What he named afterward wasn't the search — it was the part that scares people:

"Dewey's thoroughness and steady guidance gave us confidence, especially when walking us through the board application and ensuring nothing was overlooked. He truly set the bar high for what we expect from a realtor."

Kurt was buying from outside the United States, which adds a layer to nearly every step:

"As a person based outside of the US, I relied heavily on his ability to simplify a complex process. His knowledge of the city is exhaustive, covering everything from neighborhood vibes to the fine print of building logistics and price negotiations. Dewey is a true local expert who makes the impossible feel easy."

And Herman B., who had bought and sold in multiple states before New York:

"I've bought and sold properties in multiple states, but nothing prepared me for buying in New York City. There were all sorts of extra forms and steps, and I had no idea what any of them were or how to approach the process, but Dewey did."

WHAT THOSE THREE HAVE IN COMMON

None of them lived here when they started. All of them were competent, experienced people who were wrong about one specific thing — how this market works. That is the normal case, not the embarrassing one.



THE RELOCATION CHECKLIST

6-12 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Decide what you're optimizing for — space, light, a commute, a kind of building.
- ☐ Shortlist two or three neighborhoods that fit the number you can carry monthly.
- ☐ Start a conversation with a lender who actually does New York City Co-Op and condo lending.
- ☐ Visit once and walk the neighborhoods at the hour you'd actually be living in them.

3-6 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Get properly pre-approved — then get honest about the board picture: post-closing liquidity, debt-to-income, documentation.
- ☐ Know your buying structure, and search only buildings that allow it.
- ☐ Set your real monthly number, not just your purchase price — and build in closing costs.
- ☐ Start the sale of a home elsewhere now, if one has to sell.

1-3 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Tour, in person or virtually — with someone physically walking the apartments.
- ☐ Line up a New York real estate attorney before you make offers.
- ☐ Review the building itself: reserves, underlying mortgage, assessments, litigation, the board.
- ☐ Begin the board package the moment contracts are signed.

THE FINAL STRETCH

- ☐ Prepare for the board interview.
- ☐ Ask about move-in rules — weekday hours, movers' certificate of insurance, deposit — before you book a truck.

HOW DEWEY HELPS NEXT

So, what's the lesson? Moving to Manhattan is not really a search problem. It's a qualification problem, a building problem, and a timing problem — and then, at the end, a search.

Here's what I do. I qualify you against both standards, not one: what a lender will approve, and what a building will approve. Then I match your actual buying structure — whether that's you alone, you and a partner, a parent involved, a trust, an LLC, or a pied-a-terre — to the buildings that permit it, before anyone falls in love with an apartment. Then we look, with a clear picture of what your monthly number really is.

I work across Co-Ops, condos, and townhouses in Manhattan — buying, selling, investing, relocations, and purchases for adult children — and I handle Co-Op board applications personally, start to finish. Not a team member. Me. I've done this remotely many times: virtual tours, walking apartments on your behalf, and coordinating with everyone involved while you're still living somewhere else.

I'm your advisor, not a door opener. Before residential, I worked at CB Richard Ellis on some of the largest commercial sales in Manhattan, and before that I was a creative director in advertising and a performer — which is a long way of saying I'm comfortable with both the numbers and the story. Let's look at the data together. The decision is always still yours.

Nearly 30 years in Manhattan. Top salesperson in my Weichert Properties office, and Weichert Top 300 nationally in 2025.

Reach out whenever you're ready. If you're a year out, that's a fine time to start a conversation.



WHERE TO FIND ME

WEBSITE

deweymossrealestate.com

EMAIL

dewey@deweymossrealestate.com

YOUTUBE

youtube.com/@deweymossrealestate
where I answer these questions every week

INSTAGRAM

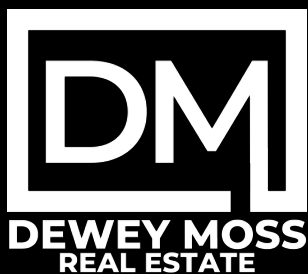
instagram.com/deweymossrealestate

FACEBOOK

facebook.com/deweymossrealestate

LINKEDIN

linkedin.com/in/deweymoss



Manhattan Real Estate.
Decided with Confidence.

DEWEY MOSS

LICENSED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON
WEICHERT PROPERTIES · UNION SQUARE, MANHATTAN
NY LIC. #10401350036

917.301.4639

dewey@deweymossrealestate.com

deweymossrealestate.com

FIND ME

[youtube.com/@deweymossrealestate](https://www.youtube.com/@deweymossrealestate)

[instagram.com/deweymossrealestate](https://www.instagram.com/deweymossrealestate)

[facebook.com/deweymossrealestate](https://www.facebook.com/deweymossrealestate)

[linkedin.com/in/deweymoss](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deweymoss)

CO-OPS · CONDOS

TOWNHOUSES · RELOCATION

Weichert.com

© 2026 Weichert®. Weichert® is a federally registered trademark owned by Weichert Co. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. *Each Weichert® franchised office is independently owned and operated.* If your home is currently listed with a real estate broker, this is not intended to be a solicitation of the listing. **Equal Housing Opportunity.**

Price ranges on page 3 are directional 2026 reads from PropertyShark, StreetEasy, and Milton Coste, presented as ranges and labelled as such in the text.

DEWEY MOSS, LICENSED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON | WEICHERT PROPERTIES | NY
LIC. #10401350036



REBNY
Real Estate Board of New York