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## Is It O.K. to Cheat on My Broker?

*When a real estate agent can't find you the perfect place, it may be time to move on. Then again, the problem could be you.*



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**Q: I live in the West Village and am in the market to buy an apartment. I have been working with a real estate broker for the past couple months. I have, at this point, seen every listing in my price range, with no luck. I can't help but wonder if another broker at another agency might know of a pocket listing that my current agent doesn't have access to. Is it O.K. to reach out to other brokers, or is this bad real estate etiquette?**

**A:** Nothing is inherently wrong with switching brokers, but it might not help you reach your goal. There are only so many listings available in any given price range. If your broker has shown you all that exists, a new broker won't be able to uncover more. Instead, you may just waste your time looking at the same places twice.

"Another broker might come out of the gate with more energy, but they'll be showing the same listings and learning what you like and don't like all over again" said Joshua D. Arcus, the president of the Siderow Organization's residential and commercial divisions.

Is it possible that your broker is unaware of some hidden gems? Perhaps. But such finds are few and far between. Pocket listings — apartments that are sold before they are listed on the market — only represent a handful of New York sales and generally happen among properties that sell for \$3 million and up, according to Mr. Arcus. Your broker may not be suggesting a pocket listing because there aren't any in your price range.

Instead, you could be running into a problem common among buyers: You don't like what's available at the price you're willing to pay. "Either the buyer's expectations are out of line with the market, or the broker just doesn't get what the buyer's looking for," said Patrick V. Lilly, an associate broker with CORE.

Before you dump your broker, have a conversation. Ask why it's been so hard to find an apartment, and what can be done going forward to make a deal happen. No doubt your broker would like to see a sale happen, too. Ask about off-market listings.

If the conversation leaves you feeling that you have different visions, then you might need to move on. But you may find that the problem isn't your broker — it's the New York housing market.