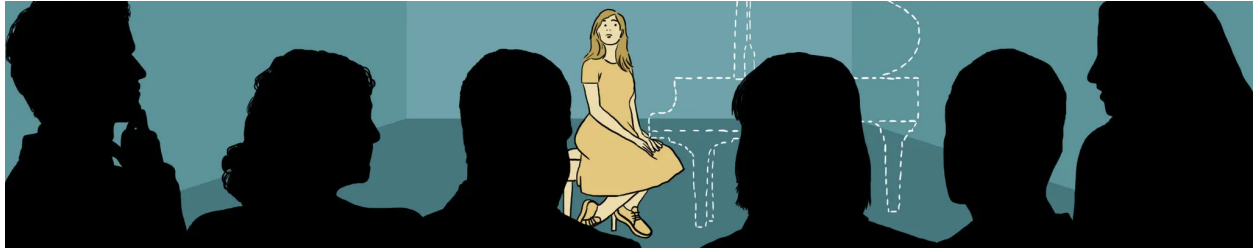


The New York Times

I Want to Buy a Co-op Now and a Piano Later. Do I Have to Tell the Board?

You should never lie to a co-op board, but you don't necessarily have to disclose future plans, either. But, ethically, is this a plan that will keep you up at night with guilt?



By [Ronda Kaysen](#)
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Q: I want to buy a co-op in New York City, partly to have space for a piano, which I don't currently own. I intend to play the piano for an hour or two a day. I don't plan to mention this detail at the co-op board interview — and since I don't own the piano yet, I wouldn't be lying if the board asked about such a thing. I'd rather be more forthcoming, but prefer not to jeopardize my chances of getting the apartment. Once I am in the building, I don't think the board could stop me from buying a piano and playing it during reasonable hours, since I wouldn't make an offer in a building that prohibits instruments. Is this a bad plan?

A: You should not lie to a co-op board at an interview, however you are not obligated to disclose future plans that may or may not come to pass.

Whatever building you choose will have rules about noise, and probably about what times you can practice instruments and for how long. Be sure to carefully read them before buying an apartment. Keep in mind that there are noise limits even within the permitted hours. “No matter what time it is, you can't create disturbances in the building,” said Steven D. Sladkus, a Manhattan real estate lawyer.

What you're asking, however, is an ethical question. Are you being dishonest by not disclosing your intentions? It is possible to deliberately mislead a person without making false statements. But omitting goals is not necessarily misleading. It's possible that you might not get the piano. It's also possible that you could take up tap dancing, or ask a roommate who plays the clarinet to move in with you, or have a child. Who knows what potentially noisy events life holds in store?

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