

LAUNCHING YOUR
REAL
ESTATE
CAREER
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

LAUNCHING YOUR CAREER

Chapter 2

FINDING YOUR NEXT LEVEL

Chapter 3

PASSING THE EXAM

Chapter 4

YOU PASSED THE EXAM, NOW WHAT?

Chapter 5

YOU ARE IN THE LEAD GENERATION BUSINESS

Chapter 6

PLANT BEFORE YOU GROW

Chapter 7

RETAIN THOSE CLIENTS!

Chapter 8

YOU CAN HAVE EXCUSES OR RESULTS, BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE BOTH

CHAPTER 1

LAUNCHING YOUR CAREER

You did it! You decided to become a REALTOR®! Congratulations! The next step is to pass the National and State Real Estate exams prescribed by the law of your state. This book will empower readers to do that, and much more!

I vividly remember the day I decided to become a REALTOR®, and it was an excellent decision for me. Though there were tons of bumps along the way, it has been a very fulfilling career.

My entire adult life had been an economic rollercoaster. The years 2007 to 2010 were the worst time in the history of real estate, and as a home builder, it was a financially devastating season for me. The GREAT RECESSION, millions in investment debt, and houses that no one could sell were crippling me emotionally and economically.

Almost at the end of my rope, with several million dollars of balloon payments coming due in the next few months and no means to pay them, I called my wife, Heather, and told her we needed to talk.

Looking back to that day, I still recall everything about it, even the minute details. The scenario is like a horror movie of my life playing in slow motion in my head.

I vividly remember calling my bank to check the balance in my checking account before I filled up with gas. If I purchased a full tank of gas, I would have \$187 left to my name. Understanding that food was also a necessity, I decided to fill it halfway. I still recall that I was wearing khaki pants, a red golf shirt, and brown Timberland boots.

The look on my wife Heather's face when I opened the door to my house is still in my subconscious. If you knew my wife, you would see she is amazingly beautiful in every imaginable way, plus she has piercing green eyes that can see right into your soul.

"Your dream is not for sale."

The look on my wife Heather's face when I opened the door to my house is still in my subconscious. If you knew my wife, you would see she is amazingly beautiful in every imaginable way, plus she has piercing green eyes that can see right into your soul.

On that day, those green eyes were shooting daggers. My appearance must not have belied that I was carrying the weight of the entire world, because when I walked through the door, she exclaimed, "Oh my God, you are having an affair!"

Confessing to a non-existent affair would have been much more comfortable than telling her the truth, which I began to do. The fact was, in short order, we were going to lose everything we had spent our entire lives building.

To my surprise, she wasn't as mad as I thought she was going to be. I

explained to her that I had a "real" job lined up, and we were going to exit the financial rollercoaster of real estate. Unexpectedly, she stared at me with her green eyes and uttered words that would change both of our lives forever:

"Your dream is not for sale."

She remarked that being in real estate was my calling and purpose. Real estate was all I talked about, thought about, and the only thing that interested me. She pointed out that I didn't even have any hobbies, and besides her, real estate was my only passion.

Of course, she was right, but I didn't get the point. I didn't see her point because it's impossible to see the picture when you are sitting inside the frame. What she meant was, by taking a real job, I was admitting failure and tossing all my hopes and dreams into the trash can.



It was time to become a REALTOR®. I borrowed some money from a friend for tuition and enrolled in real estate school.

Unexpectedly, while still in the pre-license school, I had my second epiphany of the month. The instructor told all of us that 85% of all real estate agents quit the business before they get through their second year. Wow! That is a scary statistic. He informed us that it was an incredibly intense, time-consuming, demanding profession, and even real estate agents who gave their very best usually failed.

Candidly, that information terrified me. I'm one of the people who give my all, no matter what I am doing. I have some considerable accomplishments in my lifetime to show for it, but despite trying my very best, I have had devastating failures as well.

The question I asked myself that day was, what if real estate was one of those times when my best wouldn't be good enough? What would I do then? If I couldn't make it in real estate sales, then what?

My conclusion was that I had to find a way to be successful. To guarantee success, I needed to find another level. I had to locate another gear. To succeed, I couldn't stop at "best," I had to change my mindset. My best could no longer be my stopping point.

The realization I had that day was "my best" was also my stumbling block. Giving my "best" is what was keeping me from finding me greatness. By never tapping my true potential, I was limiting any achievement to my "best."

More often than not, my mind had told me, I couldn't give anything else because I had already given my best.

Whenever life's situations called me to stretch myself, I would look deep inside myself and hear that little voice that said, "It's okay to quit, you have done your very best." I would quit without realizing success was right around the corner. Once you convince yourself that you have done or tried your best, you give yourself an excuse to stop. You have given yourself a way out, a reason to quit.

My new focus became to give all that it takes.

High achievers never stop achieving; when they reach their goals, they set higher ones. They never stop learning, grinding, and hustling. They never stop at their best.

Nothing steals opportunity and productivity more than the statement, "I gave it my best." It's self-justification at its worst. My best has become a justification for failing. Once you convince yourself that you gave your best, you permit yourself to quit. You have granted your brain permission to stop pursuing your passion. Believing you've done your best is self-deceit. Why? It's a simple law of nature; no one is always at his best. We all have off days. Off weeks. Off years.

By giving only your best, you agreed to be less than your design.

I encounter this challenge in the real estate business every day, month, and year. What the instructor in real estate school told me is true – 85% of the people who venture into real estate quit within two years. But why?

- Did they not try hard enough?
- Were they lazy?
- Were they not talented enough?

Most of these people exerted their best effort, and a lot of them give their best. They had the necessary tools to succeed, yet they fail 85% of the time. Their best isn't good enough. Your best isn't good enough, and it is selfish to think that it is. When you say you gave your "best," you are reflecting ONLY on how much you had to do without consideration of what it will take to achieve your goal.



The thought pattern to "always try your best" has been ingrained in you since you were a little child. You failed because you stopped at your "best." Sadly, at certain times, when you were close to getting over the hump, you quit. You stopped short of all that it takes.

When was the last time you thought about living your life the way you envisioned it? Is your life moving the way you planned or imagined it to be? Think about the dreams you had when you were young. It's not comfortable looking back at those hopes and ideas you had as a teenager, is it? Why did you fail to hit your goals? Did you even try? Didn't you strive to make a mark? What excuses have you made through the years? Did you stop at only giving your "best"? Did you miss your goals because they weren't possible, or was it simply because you didn't give all it takes?

If you want to do great things, you must give more than "your best." Instead, give all that it takes. Give all that it takes and watch the magic happen. Once you decide to be a person whose vision and goals are set with no ambiguity, when you are ready to deliver everything that is needed to attain your goals, dreams, and aspirations, you will achieve them.

I encourage you to acknowledge this simple fact; you can accomplish anything you dare to dream. You already have the ability. It's inside you. It is on deposit, inside of you, and the first step in exploring it is finding your next level. I learned about the next level when I was very young, and unfortunately, too naïve to understand what was happening.

Real estate is a tough career. There is no doubt about it. But, you can be successful at real estate. You can succeed. And, you will succeed once you decide your best I not good enough. If you promise yourself not to quit, this book **WILL** give you the resources to pass the real estate exam and launch your real estate career.

CHAPTER 2

FINDING YOUR NEXT LEVEL

Success is already at your doorway, and it wants to come in. It's your job to let it in. You need to be on the alert to reactivate, recharge, and rekindle those amazing talents that are inside you. You have a supply of untapped energy that has been dormant for years, and tapping that energy will awaken an inner giant that will allow you to reach your destiny.

I found my inner giant when I finally realized my "best" wasn't good enough.

Coming out of real estate school, I had extreme doubts about my future. I knew I didn't want to be part of the 85% that failed, but to be quite honest, I was afraid I would be. If I had succumbed to that fear, I have never been able to reach the heights I have achieved in this business. To overcome that fear, I had to find the next level, that level one step ahead of my "best."



THERE ARE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO QUIT



During my first year in business, I went for ten months between sales. But, I refused to quit. After a while, I found a home builder who wanted to grow his business. I developed a presale sales program, which allowed him to become the largest builder in my city. Through a disagreement with his partners, my home builder client lost his financing and couldn't build any more homes. He was out of business. I was stuck, and I didn't know what I was going to do for income, but I did know I wasn't going to throw in the towel. I didn't say, "Oh well, that is the best I can do." I kept grinding.

I met another home builder and replicated the results with the first client. Quickly, we became the number one builder in our city. Life was great again!

And, that home builder decided to retire from home building business. Two times with two different builders, we had reached the top, and I was out of a job. Admittedly, this was a time quitting would be allowed. I was snakebit. The results I had

shown would prove I had done my "best," and that could have been justification to hang it up.

But, I refused to stop. I couldn't stop, because I made a promise to myself: this time, in this business, I was going to give all that it took to be successful.

Another opportunity to quit happened in the next few months as the real estate firm I helped to create began to implode with infighting. During this time, I discovered two of the partners had been colluding against me to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars in commission from me. The firm I was so proud of was becoming a joke in my community.

Since I no longer permitted myself to quit, I used the failure of that firm as motivation to start another real estate firm from the ground up.

- I recruited clients.
- I recruited agents.
- My new firm became profitable in its second month of existence.

I was one of only 19 people in the country to receive that honor of being accepted to the National Association of REALTORS® Leadership Academy. Later, I was named REALTOR® OF THE YEAR in my region.

All of this happened after I decided not to quit at my "best."

When you finally unleash your inner strength, you will find the greatness you have always desired. Unfortunately, to reach that level, you have to tackle your biggest enemy—the enemy called self.

There is an old African proverb that says, "If there are no internal enemies, all external enemies will remain harmless." The startling truth about unleashing your giant is that the biggest enemy you have is yourself.

The biggest enemy you have is YOURSELF.

If you aren't where you want to be in life, if you don't own the material things you want to own, and your dreams seem out of reach, it has nothing to do with the world. Don't blame the world or your position in it. Don't blame the lack of opportunities or resources you have. If you aren't where you want to be in life, it has everything to do with you! You, and you alone. If you aren't where you want to be, it has everything to do with your refusal to make the appropriate sacrifice. You aren't where you want to be in life because of your unwillingness to do all that it takes.



The world needs you, your unique skills, and talents. When you unleash your giant, those seemingly impossible things will be possible.

- **No matter how useless and broken you feel right now**
- **No matter how far you have strayed from your passion**
- **No matter how time you have spent lost**


You still have what it takes to succeed.

Now, let's be crystal clear. A career in real estate is not going to be easy. If it were easy, we wouldn't have poor people with broken dreams, overweight people with crushed hopes, and books like this one would be unnecessary. If it were easy, everyone would do it.

It's not easy, because you have to stretch yourself in ways you have never considered before now. You have to take your body and mind to places you have never been to in your life. Your goals will get more substantial; your dreams will get larger; only after you begin to stretch yourself. It is the process of stretching that keeps us growing. When you are not stretching yourself to accomplish your wildest dreams, you are gradually shrinking internally. When you are not stretching yourself, you are killing your potential.

Our bodies and minds are like rubber bands. When you begin to stretch yourself to achieve giant goals, you will exhume, unwrap, and exhibit specific talents and abilities in you that you didn't know you had. Those hidden skills and expertise are the machines that will produce your highest achievements. When you pay the price for your purpose and give all that it takes, achieving success becomes inevitable. When you decide your success is inevitable, the sky becomes your doorway, not your ceiling. And when you have no limit, your dreams are not for sale.

I am here to let you in on a secret. Regardless of your intelligence level, merely going to class will not be enough to pass the exam. There is simply too much information presented in a short time frame to absorb the material. Studying the course material outside of the classroom is the ONLY way to guarantee success at the exam.



In my real estate coaching business, I coach that when you set a goal, you start with the end of the process. Your goal is to be a successful REALTOR®; my goal is to give you the plan to get there.

Let's set you up for success with the first step, PASSING YOUR REAL ESTATE EXAM.



CHAPTER 3

PASSING THE EXAMS

After many years of helping prospective REALTORS® kick off their real estate careers, I have developed this 5 point plan to pass the real estate license exam:



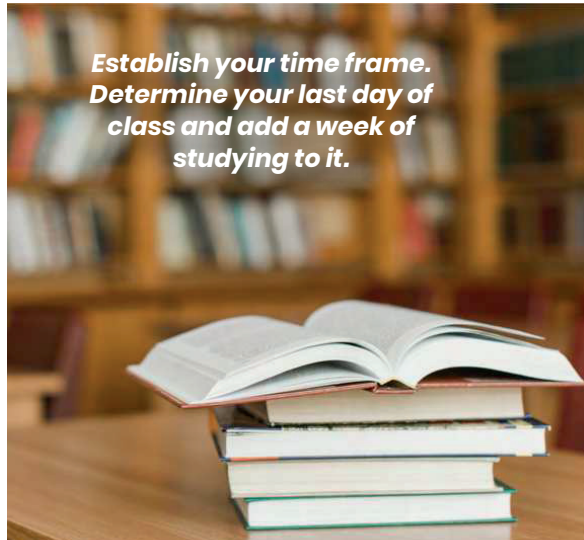
1. REALIZE WHAT YOU ARE UP AGAINST!

The real estate exam is no joke! It has a 44% pass rate, and that number is artificially high because it doesn't count the people who never take the exam. It also counts multiple tries as one attempt. After you select your school provider, you will be focusing on the extensive material that you need to know to pass the PSI exam. I am dedicated to helping you prepare for and PASS the exam! Studying outside of class is the most significant predictor of exam success we have!

2. CREATE A STUDY PLAN.

There is a tremendous amount of information (500-page book) and concepts to be absorbed. Creating a study plan is essential for success on the big day! CRAMMING will not work for the real estate exam. The topics are broad, detailed, and require critical thinking on your end.

***Establish your time frame.
Determine your last day of
class and add a week of
studying to it.***



Determine the number of hours you can devote to class and time-block them on your calendar. Plan on another 40 to 60 hours of studying to be ready for the big day.

Don't spend time on what is not essential. I have a straightforward phrase that I employ every day in my life and my business. This phrase is: "Perfect is the enemy of done." Spending half your time becoming the most prominent expert on timeshares in the world, when the exam only asks three questions about timeshares, means you are trying to be perfect when done is all you need to be. Allocate your time the same way the PSI allocates the subject matter to you. As a part of their contract to administer the exam, the testing service must provide candidates with the outline and the number of questions per section. Therefore, you know exactly how much time to spend on every content section. The PSI outline is valuable information and should factor into your study plan. For instance, the concept of AGENCY is 17% of the exam; therefore, AGENCY should receive 17% of your study time.

Learn your vocabulary. Learning vocabulary words is the most crucial part of studying. When you fully understand the vocabulary words, the questions will become much more comfortable and more natural to answer.



3. TAKE AS MANY PRACTICE REAL ESTATE EXAM QUESTIONS AS YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON.

Studying just the material is usually not enough to pass! You have to get in rhythm with how PSI asks the questions. The test is multiple-choice, and you will perform MUCH better if you've been doing practice tests that mimic the real exam. You can find practice exams online or from your real estate school.



4. USE FLASHCARDS OR HANDWRITTEN NOTECARDS.

Notecards and Flashcards are two of the best tools for quick, repetitive studying leading up to an exam. If you miss a couple of definitions while reviewing your note cards, don't let it get to you. Make a pile of the vocabulary words or concepts you struggle with and look them over once more before your exam.

Another suggestion I would make is to study a few cards at a time. Starting with, say, five or ten. Once you master the information on all of those cards, you can begin to add new cards to those old ones. You will be reviewing the info you already know as you study, while only adding small bits of new information, keeping you from becoming overwhelmed. The goal of the notecards isn't to study, but to get you in rhythm to take on your real estate exam.

5. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU KNOW.

On the final day, first and foremost, you need to be calm, but also, it is vital to get a good night's sleep. It is crucial to review notes, flashcards, and vocabulary words on the morning of the exam. However, doing so under pressure can cause more harm than good.



Take this time to strengthen the areas where you are already proficient. Trying to learn a concept you have struggled with is not a good idea. Focus on what you already know, and you will do great!

WHAT TO EXPECT

After spending countless hours studying for the exam, it's time to put your knowledge in motion. Like any big test, the weeks and days leading up to the test will be daunting, especially when it comes to the Real Estate Exam. Remember, the Real Estate Exam covers a wide variety of topics ranging from terminology to state-specific regulations.

As your exam day approaches, it's essential to filter out all of the noise and advice you are getting from your friends and concentrate on **PASSING THE EXAM**.

Before we jump into our exam tips, you need to understand what you're going up against when exam day arrives.

TESTING FACILITY

Your real estate exam will take place in a secured and closely monitored test site. I recommend finding your testing location in advance so that you know how long it will take to get there on exam day.

Get there at least 30 to 60 minutes in advance to check-in; this will leave you with plenty of time to get comfortable with the surroundings.

Don't show up to the test empty-handed. You will not be allowed to use your calculator cell phone when taking the exam, but you will need some forms to check-in. Here's what you'll need to bring with you on test day:

Government ID (driver's license, or passport)

Second Form of ID with Name and Signature (CC or Voter ID Card)



REAL ESTATE EXAM LENGTH

The Real Estate Exam has two sections, one for the national part and another for the state portion. You will be allowed 80 minutes to take the state portion of the real estate exam and then 160 minutes for the National part. From the time you arrive at the test to the time you leave, you should expect the whole real estate exam process (including the National portion) to take roughly four hours.

The real estate exam will test your knowledge of real estate principles and also your ability to retain the information you absorbed during the pre-license course. The test also measures the candidate's ability to perform when the pressure is on.

Here are some of my best real estate exam tips to use before and during the test:

1 RELAX, YOU GOT THIS!

When you are confident and comfortable, test-taking is much more comfortable. Before you go into the exam room, take some time to stretch your body and release any tension or knots it may have. Stretching and clearing your mind beforehand will make you feel better while starting your real estate exam.

2 READ EACH QUESTION TWICE. AND THOROUGHLY.

One of the most significant real estate exam mistakes candidates make is hurrying through the test and not reading each question thoroughly. This is understandable considering the stress and anticipation of the day. However, the amount of time given for the exam is plenty if you're prepared. Relax and read each question carefully and twice because it is vital to make sure you fully comprehend each problem before providing an answer.

Too often, many test-takers think they understand what a question is getting at, and they answer incorrectly. The questions are not as straightforward as expected.

Be careful when the problem contains words like ALWAYS or NEVER. In the real estate world, things rarely happen ALWAYS or NEVER. When you see those words, take a deep breath, and process the question entirely. If you can find one answer that is or is not correct out of the four answers provided, then the answer is not correct. Funny answers are usually not the correct answer.

When you have no clue what the answer is, eliminate any of the answers you don't believe are correct and select the longest answer that is left. Difficult questions often force the author of the test to use more words to explain the solution.

3 DON'T LET ONE QUESTION DRAIN YOUR FOCUS

Paramount to your success is not getting tied up in knots over a single question. Too often, on tests, individuals spend several minutes on one item. This issue can be harmful to your performance, especially on timed exams. Also, by investing a lengthy amount of time, you will tend to second guess yourself. The questions can be tricky, but they are not trick questions. The correct answer is the correct answer, and it is right in front of you.

Once you've answered all other questions confidently on the first attempt, go through the test a second time and tackle the harder ones, especially the math. You don't have to worry about spending too much time on one question and missing more straightforward questions on your second go-round. Other questions further down the exam may jog your memory and help you remember the answer to the question that initially left you perplexed.

4 USE THE MARK FOR THE REVIEW BUTTON.

On your first pass through the exam, only answer the extremely easy questions, and the ones you are reasonably confident in your answer. Reviewing the exam questions will give you a sense of progress, accomplishment, and your confidence levels will automatically rise. Don't waste time on a problem in which you have no idea what the answer is. Skip questions if you don't know the answer. For example, if AGENCY is difficult for you, mark the AGENCY problems for review until after you finish your first pass through the exam. Occasionally, the answer to an earlier query is revealed in a later question.

It is especially important to save all of the math questions for the end. Math is a significant portion of the exam, and it requires accessing a different part of the brain than you have been using. Additionally, math problems, by their very nature, need more time than the other questions. If you get stuck on a math question, it could result in your stress levels rising, which could lead to you inadvertently missing a question you knew the answer to. And mark all math questions for review and do them at the end, when you aren't worried about the time.

5 DON'T CHANGE YOUR ANSWER

The first answer that pops into your head after reading the question is usually right if your preparation has been adequate. It's a best practice to stick with the response you first chose after reading the question. It is generally counterproductive to second guess yourself and change your answer. The design of the exam is not to trick or confuse students. The exam tests students' abilities and knowledge. Most test questions have the correct answer and the most often selected incorrect answer. The answer options provided will usually include the most common wrong answer among the choices that seem logical but are ultimately false.

Once you've answered a test question, don't change your answer, even if you're unsure if you are correct. Statistically, you are much more likely to change an answer from right to wrong than from wrong to right.

6 WORK BACKWARD TO THE CORRECT ANSWER.

Eliminate wrong answers that are obviously wrong and work backward to the correct answer. You will be able to eliminate only one or two of the options every single time if you know your vocabulary. Even so, you've raised your odds of getting it right from 25% to 50–75%. That's a significant improvement!

Your command of the vocabulary words will give you a considerable edge on questions when the correct answer is not known. By working through the solutions, you will weed out the incorrect responses because you have a comprehension of that particular word or phrase.

Narrow it down to two, and if you still don't know the answer, choose the longest one.

7 THE DEVIL WE KNOW!

If you have never heard of one of the answers, don't select it. If you have been studying the material, it's unlikely to be the correct answer. Again, your vocabulary knowledge will become an asset here. If the words in the answer are utterly foreign to you, there is a high chance it's the incorrect answer.

8 THE ANSWER CAN BE A, B, C, OR D, SEVERAL TIMES IN A ROW.

If you answered three straight questions as "C," don't assume that the next question's answer can't also be "C." Multiple same letter answers can and do happen!

9 "ALL OF THE ABOVE" AND "NONE OF THE ABOVE"

When you encounter "all of the above" and "none of the above" answer choices, do not select "all of the above" if you are reasonably confident any one of the answers provided is incorrect. The same applies to "none of the above" if you have a conviction one of the answer choices is true.

If two answers are correct, then "all of the above" is the right choice.

If you read all the answers and don't have a clue what the question is asking, select the longest answer that is either b or c.

10 KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Leadership expert John Maxwell says it best, "Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude." Having a positive attitude will significantly impact your performance when taking the exam. At any time, if you feel the stress of the exam getting to you, take a break for a minute. Take some deep breaths, close your eyes, and rub your temples. Staying relaxed will allow you to dig deeper and remember what you learned.

Now you are rolling, congratulations on making it this far! Let's move to the good stuff and find out how to make a living in this crazy business!



CHAPTER 4

YOU PASSED THE EXAM... NOW WHAT?

A big surprise most prospective REALTORS® have is that real estate school is not about becoming a successful REALTOR®; it's about passing the exam. Once you earn your license, we can shift our focus to ensuring your success. Remember what I wrote earlier; every successful goal begins with the end in mind. Undoubtedly, your goal is a sell a bunch of houses, how you get there is the question.

First and foremost, let's get one thing straight. You may be telling everyone you know that you are in the real estate business, but that isn't correct. Successful REALTORS® learn this secret very early in their careers. It is okay to tell them that but, you need to learn this quickly, you are NOT in the real estate business, you are in the LEAD GENERATION business. Every single day of your life, you will wake up UNEMPLOYED. No one will hand you anything in this business. You have to earn it. Day after day, month after month, year after year. You must find ways to generate new leads for your real estate business every day!

Getting started as a REALTOR® can feel overwhelming. How do you win your first client when you have less than zero experience at selling homes? How do you generate leads when you have no client success stories to share? I believe once you start with the end in mind, determine the skills you already have and start there.

START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

The road to success begins with starting with what you have. You will never arrive at the top by wishing you were there, and you arrive at the top by making conscious steps toward making it a reality. For instance, before kindergartners learn how to read and write, they are taught to master the alphabet. They begin to learn how to form two-letter words, three-letter words, and then the longer ones; eventually, as they grow up, they learn to form sentences. As adults, not only do we remember the alphabet, we



can also arrange the letters in complex sentences, which would have been impossible when we first started – this is the exact road map of how to approach your real estate career. If you had attempted to write a book on the first day of kindergarten, it would have been impossible. As you developed your writing skills, you might have encountered a few difficulties along the way. Maybe you struggled with cursive or learning the difference in adverbs and adjectives, but those struggles were all you had to overcome. Your mind didn't revert to the time you had trouble learning how to write the letter "a." Everyone has doubts when trying something new, but true champions never let their fears kill their dreams. And real winners never wait on the "right" time to start. They just start.



Please know that there will never be a time for you to start. Waiting for that “perfect” time to start is never a good game plan – NOW is the ideal time to start. While it’s normal for people to complain and worry about the lack of money or resources, it is irresponsible to ignore what we have.

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak first started building computers in the garage of Jobs’ parents; they didn’t have ideal conditions. They didn’t have a lab. The garage was not temperature controlled, they didn’t have all the tools they needed, but they still started. A year later, they founded Apple Computers.

Remember what I said earlier: nothing is easy, but greatness is possible, and the only way to start is to hit the start button. Don’t convince yourself that you need a perfect environment or opportunity to come strolling along; success isn’t a myth or a fairytale, you will only taste success when you make the first move – when you start.

Starting with what you have is stepping out in faith. You need to possess that inner belief that you are going to achieve your dreams. The bible tells us in Matthew 17:20, “Faith can move mountains.” Your faith in yourself is a decision you make. That decision is born from the belief that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Faith is all that is required for every dreamer to migrate from being a dreamer to being a doer. You don’t need a billion-dollar idea and a million dollars in your bank account to give your real estate business a chance; faith is all you need.

The most successful people of all time did everything it took to start with whatever they had at the time. One of my favorite historical figures is Cornelius Vanderbilt. He was not a man who waited.

How was Vanderbilt able to create wealth? Partially, it was because he knew how to spot new opportunities, but he would have never found success if he didn’t hit the start button on those opportunities.

In his efforts to control the distribution of kerosene, Vanderbilt looked to create strategic partnerships with the oil refineries in every city. In 1867, he summoned a small-time oilman from Cleveland to a meeting. This oilman was on the verge of bankruptcy and eager to strike a deal. Vanderbilt proposed he would give the oilman a steep discount on transportation costs if he agreed to use only Vanderbilt's trains. Because the oilman knew that transportation costs were the most significant component in the price of kerosene, he decided to move forward and signed the agreement. By lowering his cost to transport kerosene, the oilman could reduce the amount consumers paid for kerosene, which would ultimately drive his competition out of business.



There was only one problem. The agreement stated that the oilman would produce and ship 60 trainloads of kerosene daily, but, unfortunately, he only had enough capacity to produce 30 trainloads. The oilman knew he wouldn't be able to meet the target, but he hoped the discount he enjoyed would put him ahead of his competitors, and that would result in more kerosene sold, which would help him to increase production. The oilman understood what it meant to leverage opportunities and never said he couldn't fulfill his part of the agreement. Even though he was only producing half the amount of kerosene needed to fill the Vanderbilt trains, he was determined to deliver. He didn't wait for the perfect moment to come; he created the perfect moment and made it happen. Due to the low price of kerosene, even non-wealthy Americans were able to illuminate their homes at night, which increased the demand. A generation of children without access to schools, that worked in the fields during the day, learned to read and write at night because of the affordability of kerosene. The increased sales enabled the oilman to keep his deal intact with Vanderbilt. The contract was a breakthrough for the oilman, whose name was John D. Rockefeller.

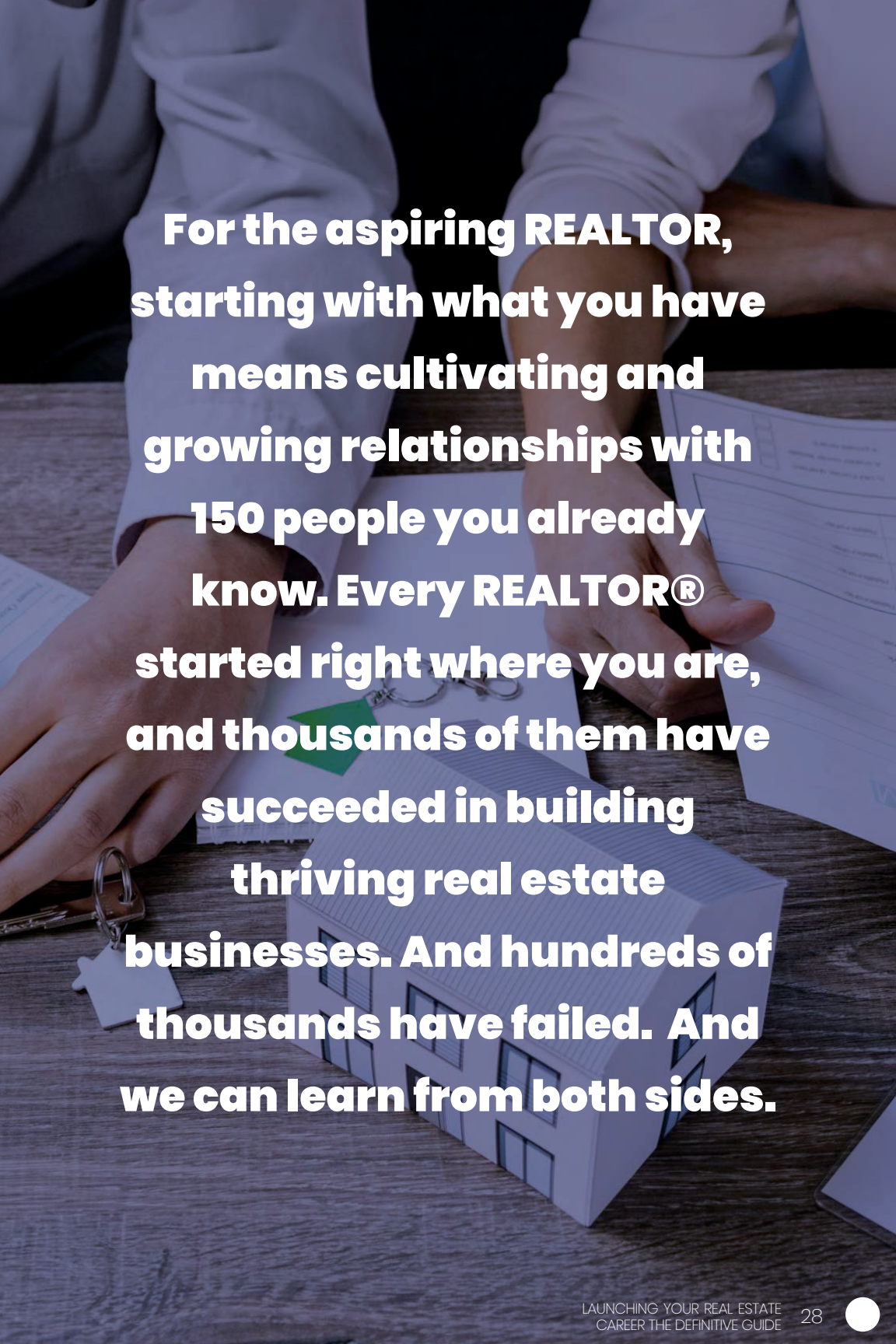
Rockefeller, born 42 years after Vanderbilt, was the son of a con man. As he was growing up, his family moved several times and finally settled in Ohio, where he got his first job as an assistant bookkeeper at age 16. By the time he was 20, Rockefeller had been in numerous business partnerships, including a produce shipping business. At 22, he started an oil refinery with funds he borrowed from his dad (\$4000).

The deal with Vanderbilt propelled Rockefeller to the top of the oil business. And like Vanderbilt, Rockefeller didn't rest on his laurels. He didn't stop at his "best." He kept pushing forward. He knew kerosene explosions were frequent, so he set off to standardize its production. Standardization made a safer, less volatile product. His kerosene would be produced the right way, and more importantly, the same way, every single time, in every refinery he owned. The growth in the importance of kerosene saw his sales continue to skyrocket, and Rockefeller would use those profits to buy up his competitors. At 33, Rockefeller became the largest producer of refined kerosene in the country,

controlling more than 90% of the North American Oil Supply. Rockefeller's company would eventually choose a name based on his genius of standardizing the production of kerosene. His company, Standard Oil, became the most dominant force in economic history.

At the time of his death in 1937, Rockefeller's fortune would be the equivalent of 25 billion dollars in 2019. As a percentage of GDP, John D. Rockefeller's net worth when he died makes him the wealthiest person in American history.

Vanderbilt and Rockefeller share a similar story: they both saw opportunities and hit the start button. They both got stuck along the way, but they never gave up. Shipping merchandise by ferry was going to be replaced by railroads, and Vanderbilt needed to join the trend. While Rockefeller was in the produce shipping business, profits soared during the Civil War, but with the war coming to an end, his company would soon shrink. He was stuck. Their decision to switch to railroads and oil refineries was born out of seeing opportunities for new growth and hitting the start button. They started with what they had.

A person in a white shirt is working at a desk. In the foreground, there is a white model of a house with a gabled roof and several windows. To the left of the house model, there are keys with a white house-shaped tag. The person's hands are visible, one holding a pen and the other resting on a document. The background shows more papers and the person's arms. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a blueish tint.

**For the aspiring REALTOR,
starting with what you have
means cultivating and
growing relationships with
150 people you already
know. Every REALTOR®
started right where you are,
and thousands of them have
succeeded in building
thriving real estate
businesses. And hundreds of
thousands have failed. And
we can learn from both sides.**



CHAPTER 5

YOU ARE IN THE LEAD GENERATION BUSINESS

Before we discuss tactics, there's one crucial thing you need to know about leads: The very best ones aren't internet leads purchased from companies like Zillow. The best leads come as referrals from people with whom you've developed meaningful relationships. Nurturing these relationships will generate repeat and referral business. Referral business accounts for 89% of all real estate transactions.

START WITH PEOPLE YOU ALREADY KNOW; THAT'S WHERE THE MONEY IS

Call every person you know who likes you and let them know you are beginning a new career as a real estate agent. Tell family members, friends, former colleagues, and your dog groomer. Tell everyone. Being a secret agent is not the way to run a real estate business.

Keep in mind that while your MVP list of friends and family may trust you as a human, they may already have a go-to REALTOR®. And it's even possible they trust you enough to be a friend, but not enough to trust you with the largest financial transaction of their lifetime. It's going to take a little while for them to trust you as a REALTOR®—it may take months or even years. Be patient with your "pre-real estate" relationships. Don't be pushy.





MEET NEW PEOPLE.

You need to grow your network; make it your mission to meet new people. Don't hide behind a computer screen—get off TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter and get out the door! Get face-to-face with people every day. My real estate coach, Leigh Brown, is the most requested real estate speaker in the world, and she sums up this philosophy very succinctly: “Real estate is done in the missionary position, belly to belly, and face to face.”

Volunteering in your community is a great way to get started. Here are a few ideas:

- Join or create a Meetup group
- Join a networking group
- Talk to your neighbors
- Take your dog for a walk in the park
- Join a fitness center
- Take a class
- Talk to strangers

One of the REALTORS® I coach is named Jessica Jarvis. Jessica is a full-time college student and a full-time REALTOR®. She is going to be a rock star in this business for a long time. Her challenge in getting started was her age (21), and she didn't have a big network of people. We overcame her network problem with MeetMe. If you haven't used MeetMe before, YOU SHOULD. MeetMe is a website that helps you connect to new people nearby who share your interests and want to hang out! It's fun, friendly, and free! Jessica is a life long fan of any sports team from Boston. But, she lives in Tennessee, the home of Tennessee Volunteer football, Tennessee Lady Vols Basketball, and the Tennessee Volunteer Football Spring Practice. I encouraged her to start a MeetMe with New England Patriot and Boston Red Sox fans. She organized the whole group. They began meeting in the month of June. They met every other Tuesday at a local restaurant/bar. Jessica would get there early and decorate the room with Red Sox paraphernalia. The first meeting only had Jessica and me. I was there for moral support. But something very cool happened. A couple of people who were already at the bar came over because they were Red Sox fans, even though they

were not on Jessica's MeetUp list. By the end of the night, it was clear that Jessica and the couple would be life long friends. That couple invited another couple the next time they met, and six people from Jessica's MeetMe showed up. By the time football season started in September, they were regularly getting 20 to 30 people every other Tuesday. They added a second meeting time during football season to watch the Patriots and consistently had 30 people come out to watch those games. Not everyone gets to come to every meeting, but her list keeps growing. The last time I checked, Jessica had over 100 people in her Boston "network." In the first year of the existence of the network, Jessica sold six homes directly to people in the group, eight homes to people referred to her by that group, and two people referred to her from the eight people who were referrals in the first place. 16 HOMES! Without being sales"y," just her friendly self, Jessica sold 16 homes. Sixteen homes because she took the time to do something she already loved to do: talk about Tom Brady and Roger Clemens. And the topping on the cake? Jessica introduced a girl and guy in the group to each other. They began dating and are engaged to be married next year. I can't predict if the marriage will last, but I can guarantee you, Jessica will be their REALTOR® for life.



Let people know you're a REALTOR®, but put the focus on building a relationship with people in your sphere.

Approach your friends and family with an open heart and a genuine interest in getting to know them better. Once there is enough trust, these old friends will gladly refer you to their friends or even use you to buy or sell their own homes. They may also become a raving fan.

CHAPTER 6

PLANT BEFORE YOUR GROW

In the Southeast United States, one of the most popular summertime foods is sweet yellow corn on the cob. Sinking your teeth into a perfectly ripened ear of corn is one of the greatest pleasures you will ever have. To grow corn, you need land that gets a full day of sun and topsoil that drains well. Farmers spend weeks fertilizing and tilling their soil to get the perfect conditions for corn growth. And when it is time to plant, they plant corn seeds in well-cultivated dirt. But, where do these corn seeds originate? Well, they come from corn.

Have you ever thought about that? Why till the ground and put in corn seeds when you are sure that what you will get back is still going to be corn? Why not keep the corn you have instead of spending so much time and effort planting corn? Why hustle for corn when you already have corn?

The answer, of course, is growth. To get more corn, the farmer realizes that he has to use his leftover corn to create seeds to create more corn. The farmer needs to grow; he needs a silo full of corn, and what he has right now isn't enough, so he starts with what he has to create more.

When you are overly optimistic or disillusioned about life, it becomes easy to leave your dreams at a conceptual stage without trying to bring them to life. People tend to think all that is needed is the perfect combination of time and resources, so they undervalue the skills they have accumulated. They dump their collective experiences in the trash can in the belief that resources outweigh experiences. How else would you gain experience if not by actually doing it yourself? You can't sit on the couch in your living room, eating popcorn, watching Netflix, and expect an experience to happen out of the blue. It begins by creating an experience and starting with what you have. There will never be enough time to

accomplish all that you want to do. Conversely, there will never be a better time to start. We have no control over time, but we choose to have control of how we spend it. Waiting for your entire life for the perfect moment will leave you wasting the entirety of your life, gathering the things you believe you need. And your dreams will still be dreams. Waiting is a killer of dreams.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME ONLY EXISTS IN THE LIFETIME OF THE OPPORTUNITY

Rockefeller knew the deal with Vanderbilt was the opportunity of a lifetime. He also realized that the opportunity of a lifetime only exists within the lifetime of the opportunity. Rockefeller struck the deal quickly before Vanderbilt was able to talk to any of the other 17 oil refiners in Cleveland, many of whom were much more economically viable than Rockefeller. Without Rockefeller's willingness to strike a deal with Vanderbilt, Standard Oil would not exist, and the revolution needed for the standardization of kerosene would have been decades later. Without the standardization and lower prices of kerosene,

an entire generation of kids would not have learned how to read and write.

Rockefeller's dream of changing the world wasn't just a hope, and your dreams shouldn't be either. Dreams are weapons that can disrupt how humanity sees and embraces life. Your vision can serve as the next tool for revolution.

Fundamental to John Maxwell's leadership philosophy is a straightforward concept, "Leadership is Influence, influence is leadership." Maxwell goes on to write, "to influence someone; you must add value." What a simple concept! To lead people, we have to influence them. To influence them, you must add value.

As a REALTOR®, we have to develop ways of adding value to the relationships first, before we can ask for the sale. Your goal is for your clients to seek you out whenever they have real estate needs. But that doesn't happen by magic. You need to work to grow your relationships to keep those clients.





GET TO KNOW YOUR FRIENDS ON A DEEPER LEVEL

Your ability to obtain clients is determined by the relationship that you establish with them from day one. Clients want to feel that they're being looked after, which is why frequent communication is a must. If you regularly touch base with your clients while they work with you, the transition into keeping in touch after the deal closes becomes smoother and more natural.

But if you want to retain your clients, the conversations that you have with them must extend beyond merely professional. You must get to know your clients by asking them about their families and interests.

Being social creatures, humans prefer to do business with people they not only respect but also enjoy being around. Therefore, you must make sure that before you close the deal, you've fostered a personal relationship with your clients.



SEND THANK YOU LETTERS

When a REALTOR® sends clients thank - you notes after the sale, it signals that they care. Some agents like to send thank you or house warming gifts after closing. While a gift does go that extra mile in showing your gratitude, you don't need to buy clients' loyalty.

Sending a thank-you note is not merely a polite gesture; it's the first step in opening the door to a more lasting relationship. In a world that revolves around electronic communication, a handwritten note tells clients that your relationship is not just about business; it's personal. And people are loyal to those with whom they've developed intimate relationships.



REACH OUT FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

As you get to know your clients, be sure to make a note of their birthdays and anniversaries. Although many agents send out holiday cards to retain their clients, sending messages on special occasions is much more effective.

People receive so many holiday cards from vendors that they often go unnoticed. However, when clients receive a card on their birthday or anniversary, it's considered more personal and thoughtful. Birthday and anniversary letters communicate a level of familiarity and fondness that goes beyond the average agent-client relationship.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

For those who feel more uncomfortable reaching out often, social media is a great way to keep in touch. Social media has become a beneficial tool for advertising yourself and your services, but using these platforms to cultivate and preserve relationships with clients is easy.

You don't have to have an established presence to use social media to engage your clients. By connecting with clients, you can keep up with their lives and share their experiences. All it takes is a click of a "Like" button or an encouraging comment here or there.

ESTABLISH AN EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Although it is less personal, creating an email list for clients does wonders for retaining them. Through email marketing, you can regularly remind former clients about your services and provide them with useful content that piques their interest and helps them navigate the world of homeownership.

The best part of email marketing is that it can all be automated so that you can stay in touch with all of your clients at the same time. With the right email service provider, like MailChimp, Constant Contact, or GetResponse, you can create quality newsletters and streamline your communication, giving you time to close more deals and focus on the more challenging aspects of your business.

So, instead of running around trying to find new business, spend some time concentrating on the connections you've already made. By keeping up with clients after the sale, you'll demonstrate that you are the kind of agent who cares. All clients want to find the type of REALTOR® who puts their clients' needs ahead of their own.

You can be that agent. Just continue building the relationships you have with your clients and show them that they still matter to you even after you've received your commission check. Remember, in the real estate business, people talk, and your success will often be determined by what they have to say about you.



CHAPTER 7

RETAIN THOSE CLIENTS!

The decision to buy or sell a home is not a decision taken lightly. When clients choose to work with you, they're choosing to entrust you with what is likely their most significant investment. That is why trust needs to be the epicenter of any good agent-client relationship.



By retaining relationships with clients even after a sale, you demonstrate that you are someone who cares about the wellbeing of those with whom you work. Of course, retaining relationships with your former clients helps to build their trust. But it also encourages future clients to trust you.

Remember, there are many individuals out there who are still skeptical of real estate agents because they assume agents are mercenary and only in it for the commission. But when potential clients see the relationships that you've established and maintained with people you're no longer working with, individuals you no longer have a vested interest in, they'll implicitly understand that you see people as more than just dollar signs.



Beyond the transaction, we are also there to help them make sound financial choices – whether it's to refinance when rates are low, cash out of their investment when the market is high, or help find a property to grow their wealth – we are trusted advisors beyond the life of the one deal. If REALTORS® did their job by staying in touch with clients, Angie's List would never exist because they would come to us for every vendor need they have. If REALTORS® did their jobs, Facebook wouldn't be full of people asking for recommendations for a plumber, stylist, or dog groomer.

When you're able to nurture lasting relationships with your clients, you establish a reputation for being the go-to resource for all of their present and future real estate needs. In the real estate business, your reputation is the key to your success. And building that level of trust with your clients has long-term effects when it comes to growing your business.

RETAINING CLIENTS ENCOURAGES REPEAT BUSINESS

Although some people buy only one home in their lifetime, the majority choose to buy a new home at various stages of their life. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, only 33% of the homes sold in 2018 were purchased by first-time buyers, which means that 67% of buyers had the potential to be repeat customers.

If you don't retain your clients after-sales, you're likely to leave money on the table. Failing to keep up with your previous clients gives them a reason to seek out another agent. And we all know there are plenty of agents to go around. It takes a knowledgeable and professional REALTOR® who truly puts the needs of their clients first. That is whom you should aspire to be.

As a REALTOR®, you need to play the long game. Retaining clients is all about planning for your professional future. Overlooking your previous clients is like handing them over to your competition. Just think about how much easier it is to retain clients than to find new ones. Developing relationships with your clients outside of a specific transaction saves you time and money. With loyal clients, there's far less networking and marketing needed to sustain your business.

RETAINING CLIENTS MOTIVATES REFERRALS

Even if your clients never sell their home, they still know others who will. And you want to be a name that they not only remember but speak of glowingly.

The National Association of REALTORS® reports that in 2018, 41% of buyers purchased a home with an agent who was referred to them by a friend or family member. And 63% of sellers chose agents whom they had either worked with previously or had heard about from someone they knew.





Clients not only tend to move after so many years, but they can refer you to other homebuyers. Referrals have your lowest cost of acquisition. It beats Zillow leads, cold calling, or anything else. Having third party validation is vital.

As mentioned, people want to work with REALTORS® they trust. When people don't have a frame of reference in the real estate world, they rely on the recommendations of the people they know.

By retaining clients and consistently reaching out to them, you build their confidence in you and exponentially increase the chances that they will tell their neighbors, friends, and relatives to enlist your services.

During my real estate career, I have a core group of folks that are my advocates and raving fans. Any opportunity they get, they will spread my name to others and support my business. 100% of my business is from maintaining relationships with a core group of valuable friends.

CHAPTER 8

YOU CAN HAVE EXCUSES OR RESULTS, BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE BOTH

My weight-loss journey has been a lifetime challenge. After my son was born, while looking in the mirror, I decided that, once and for all, change had to happen. I decided to make two lists in the notes section of my phone. The first list contained the 20 things I wanted out of my life. The other list had the 20 things I knew about myself that would keep me from getting there. Isn't it wild that to achieve your goals, you have to create new habits, but you also have to get rid of harmful ones? Once I had my lists, I decided to attack both lists with all that it took. I was going to change everything on the second list, and I wouldn't stop until everything on the first list came to fruition. That very day, I hit the start button on my life. No more going through life looking at the backup camera. I decided not to have any regrets about where my life was currently, and I was no longer going to beat myself up over past mistakes. My sole focus became changing my old ways and getting healthy.

In the first 90 days, the weight came off rapidly. I was gradually training myself to eat healthily and to make it a habit. I began by eliminating empty liquid calories and transitioning to water. Then, I started removing excess carbs from my diet. I stopped ordering things I knew I had a weakness for, like French fries and pizza, and only allowed myself to have them while on vacation.

And then, I plateaued. I was stuck. Stuck in the same place I had been 100's of times before. In the past, when I would get frustrated, I ate out of anger. This time, though, I was determined to fight through it. With each plateau, I would refocus and move forward. I refused to feel bad for myself.

The next phase was to implement exercise. I decide to purchase an elliptical machine. I realize some people have had great results with an elliptical machine. But, it did ZERO for me. Mainly because I never used it. I joke because the machine was symbolic of my life. I had the right intentions. I wanted to live life the right way, but I just didn't do it. No matter how much I wanted to, I wouldn't get on that machine.



That evening, I told Heather I was throwing in the towel on exercise. It was at that moment that Heather asked me a question that changed my thinking. She asked, "Why do REALTORS® pay you hundreds of dollars per hour to teach them how to sell real estate?" I gave her an answer she had heard many times, and I said, "Their office mates are friends but also competitors. And, in some cases, their broker is also their competitor. They don't know where to turn to for advice." She exclaimed, "EXACTLY! When people are sick, they go to a doctor, when they are in legal trouble, they go to a lawyer, and when real estate agents need to sell more homes, they come to you. Everyone needs a coach, why don't you have one for fitness?" BRILLIANT!

Heather introduced me to a personal trainer named Ginny. Ginny and I got off to a very rocky start. It took me weeks to get on her schedule. She kept dodging me every chance she had. When we finally got together for our first session, she sat me down and told me she was a no-nonsense kind of trainer, and if I wasn't serious about training, she wouldn't be willing to train me. She didn't want me to hurt her reputation! Can you believe that? Wow!

The unmitigated gall of this woman! During our first meeting, she had me perform a vigorous workout she called a “warmup.” Next, we went through a fitness assessment. My “assessment” was not good at all. I was only able to do seven push-ups on my knees, 17 jumping jacks, and 0 sit-ups. The scheduled hour-long session lasted almost 17 minutes. I was exhausted! I didn’t find her to be very enjoyable to be around, and I am sure I didn’t give off warm and fuzzy feelings either. I didn’t think either of us would show up for our next session. I decided to go just to spite Ginny. And sure enough, she showed up, too. We started working out three times a week. Ginny is a hardcore trainer, and I love her style. If I told her that an exercise was challenging, her response was always, “SO?” If I tried to skip a workout or didn’t follow my diet plan, she was quick to remind me that I can have excuses or results, but I couldn’t have both. We soon moved to 4 days a week, and within a couple of months, I was exercising seven times a week under her watchful eye.



Exercise and weighing every morning became my new addictions. I didn’t always see the weight loss I wanted, but I didn’t beat myself up about it, either. I kept looking out the front windshield, not the rearview mirror. My life was changing for the better with every pound that disappeared. I was embracing results, not excuses.

The most inspiring moment is not the moment of idea creation; the most inspirational moment is that instant you are bold enough to start. You will never have a better time to start. Launching your career today is the best you can do because time wasted can never be regained.

Are you ready to start your real estate career? If so, I have a 30 Day Challenge that I guarantee you will get your business launched in a way other new REALTORS® could only have in their wildest dreams.



30 DAY CHALLENGE

1. Pick a real estate school.

I am kind of fond of my school, TENNESSEEREALESTATEACADEMY.COM. Check it out.

2. Start the journey by enrolling in the pre-license class. Check your state regulations to see what classes you need to have to be eligible for the exam.

3. Make a list of everyone you know. Put that list in one place: a notebook, an excel sheet, a legal pad, it doesn't matter. What does matter is getting that list compiled. Once the list is complete, go back through and start collecting information on each name like a phone number, email address, and birth dates. The more info, the better. Your goal in this challenge is to get 150 names.

4. Study and pass the exam

5. Start calling everyone on your list to let them know about your new career.

Start now with what you have, challenge yourself to do better than your "best," get out of your comfort zone, and I will see you at the top.

Eric Kistner

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Writing a book is harder than I thought and more rewarding than I could have ever imagined. I have to start by thanking, my awesome wife, Heather. She allowed me to stay cooped up in my office while she kept my mini-me out of my hair so I could write and edit; she was as important to this book getting done as I was. Thank you so much, dear.

None of this would have been possible without one of my best friends, Karen Gibson. From reading early drafts to giving me advice on the cover, she has been there for me every step of the way. She has stood by me during every struggle and all my successes. That is true friendship.

I want to thank God most of all because without God; I wouldn't be able to do any of this.

Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

ERIC KISTNER

About the author

Eric Kistner lives and breathes real estate. Managing Broker at Bridge Pointe Real Estate, Eric is also a licensed instructor, contractor, and auctioneer. When not closing deals or making 'errand' runs for his favorite banana pudding, Eric also dons the hats of business coach, consultant, and therapist for real estate entrepreneurs.

Eric's experience, expertise, and penchant to share his unique perspective on the real estate business is manifested in his soon to be Best Seller, "Launching Your Real Estate Career."

A graduate of King University with a degree in Economics and Political Science, Eric was bestowed with the prestigious REALTOR® of the Year award by the Northeast Tennessee Association of REALTORS®. A Certified John Maxwell Business Coach and Leigh Brown Real Estate Coach, Eric also holds certifications as a Distance Education Instructor, CRS, GRI, ePRO, NCC, RCC, CDEI, and a few other acronyms he occasionally forgets.

Eric disconnects from the real estate world only to spend time with his wife, Dr. Heather Kistner, and their son Cash.



A "Blueprint" for anyone who wants to succeed in real estate.

You will discover secrets to pass the daunting real estate license exam and golden nuggets of wisdom to attract clients. "*Launching Your Real Estate Career*" is a veritable 'how to' guide to using one's network to generate a plethora of leads. This book will handhold you from being a real estate dreamer to a doer.

Full of learnings taught by real-world experiences and expensive career blunders, this book will also teach you what not to do to avoid sabotaging your career as a real estate agent. It's THE must-have book for real estate entrepreneurs who want to hit the ground running.



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