

**Mission Discipline / Master the Forces that Shape Success**  
To Get to Where You Want to Go.

## Mission Discipline by Al Lewis

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### Part I

#### Mission Discipline.

Have you ever seen a baby learning to walk? Of course you have.

What did you see (1) Did you see a baby that was concerned with looking good or looking bad (2) Did you see a baby afraid to fall down or avoided it in spite of falling repeatedly (3) Did you see a baby doing this secretly in a dark hallway so that others couldn't watch him fail (4) Did you see a baby not try so that it wouldn't have to live with the burden of failure should it fail (5) Did you see a baby saving her energy so that she wouldn't get tired, it is, after all, a lot of work (6) Did you see a baby avoiding pain in spite of the bumps and bruises often experienced and (7) Did you see a baby trying to do it quickly to just get it over or did you see a baby working at it endlessly hours on end, day-in and day-out, with patience and joy until accomplished?

These reservations, for a baby, would be absurd. Any baby concerned with these things would avoid walking altogether. Adults, though, use all of these abstractions of reality, mind games, you might

say, to avoid new things all the time.

According to Depak Chopra, in *A Book of Secrets*, "What people experience as obstacles in life are reflections of a decision to shut out understanding." I'd like to modify that to read "growth" in place of



understanding.

This thing called walking that a baby is impelled to learn is taken on as a "Mission" that must be accomplished at all costs in the baby's mind. The narrow minded focus to accomplish a task with unalterable aim is what in the military is called Mission Discipline.

Not long ago watching a documentary about World War II, the documentarian gave a few moments air time to the Tuskegee Airmen. This is the popular name given a group of African-American military

pilots both fighter and bomber who fought in the war. Formally, they formed the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group of the United States Army Air Forces. They were the first African-American military aviators in the

United States Armed Forces during a time when many states still practiced Jim Crow laws.

In spite of this racial discrimination they flourished, proved their bravery and played an invaluable part in the victory of the Allied Forces over the Axis Alliance, Germany and Italy, in Europe.

One flyer still alive and interviewed for the documentary commented

that their commander, Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., during preflight instruction prior to battle said that the fighter pilots were never to leave the bombers they escorted into Germany and that should one leave to pursue and shoot down even ten enemy aircraft they would be court martialed upon return; hero or not.

The flyer said the Captain emphasized that it was their mission to escort and protect at close quarters the bombers and that Mission Discipline must be adhered to at all costs.

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This reminded me of the single-minded Mission Discipline of a baby learning to walk. The difference is the same.

Another soldier gave tale of the horrific battles soldiers endured in the South Pacific as they invaded and wrested control of islands occupied by the Japanese island by island on path to Japan itself. The most infamous of course are Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima.

He told tale of the tens of thousands of soldiers felled in these invasions and with tears in his eyes said that he wanted us to know today that not a one was shot in the back; that they all fell facing forward.

#### **That is Mission Discipline.**

I am captivated by these events and stories and have been a student of these times for most of my adult life. My wife doesn't understand this and I, sometimes, have wondered why myself. I search out every bit of documentation I can find, I think, for bits and pieces not revealed in typical public-release news reels of the time put into documentaries for our viewing today. I want the in-between-the-lines stuff that tell the real story and it's hard to find but every now and then I get an eye opening tidbit.

I think I do this because I am awed by the courage of every single soldier, flyer or sailor that steps into battle facing forward, as said, knowing that this might be the day and that I compare this daily, moment by moment, even, to the battles I face such as knocking on a door to talk with a seller about selling.

The comparison is ridiculous, of course.

This humiliates me and I am

shamed by it. It's only recently I have realized that that's the undercurrent of my interest in wartime stories; it's this shame that motivates me to try to work at my peak every day.

#### **A Little Shame Goes a Long Ways.**

If they, the soldiers, flyers and sailors can do that, can't I at least do the things relative to my work in real estate, simple as they are, with a similitude of courage and discipline?

Yes I can! How dare I not, for it was for me and the faceless millions of Americans and citizens the world over of their time and yet unborn that they gave their all.

I am embittered today when I see men in their twenties and thirties and forties that dress like boys at play, paint their bodies to pretend they are outlaws, smoke, drink and take drugs as though there's no tomorrow, go unshaven, wear baseball caps to hide uncombed hair and push responsibilities like career, marriage and fatherhood so far out ahead of them that they might avoid altogether taking on the challenge and, by doing these things, take freedom and life itself for granted.

They just don't know. They're stupid and it shows all over.

Ernest Hemingway coined the phrase "Lost Generation" to define the posture (attitude, air, and mental disposition) of the post World War I generation.

The generation was "lost" in the sense that its inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world and because of its spiritual alienation from a U.S. that, under Pres. Warren G. Harding's "back to normalcy" policy, seemed to its members to be hopelessly provin-

cial, materialistic, and emotionally barren.

They floated, you might say, saw little value in normalcy and took decades to reinvent or find themselves, so to speak. I think this is happening today, but we need not participate.

At the back of item No. 7A, Top Producer Listing Under \$1/Million, in the Fellowship Library I have laid out a worksheet I call The Perfect Day Worksheet. From this an agent can plan a number of activities that can lead to listing success, something for today, something for tomorrow, and then seek to practice them with Mission Discipline.

We've all heard the old saying, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Use this teaching to your benefit; from here out, plan a perfect day for every day of the week, don't let days come and go with no plan for its use in mind whether for family, work or self, and execute the plan. This is the path to success. Activity and success are mutually arisen. By doing this you will be a model of a person that doesn't take freedom for granted and who knows how many people's lives you will change by being this?

In today's modern world, though, distractions overwhelm us. I recently took my seven year old granddaughter, Sierra, to a Pumpkin Patch activity center a few days prior to Halloween. Sitting side-by-side at one activity, cookie decorating, I saw many sets of both parents and grandparents standing behind their kids typing away on their phones and not paying a wits-end to what their kids were doing.

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How fun for the kids. One little girl, about three, was standing precariously on a bench seat eating frosting with a knife while her dad tapped away behind her. What can you do? He should be court martialed.

Of all the distractions the modern world has to offer, calls, email and texts are the worst offenders and are day killers extra ordinaire. I mean it, day killers.

Here's my advice.

When out, in the field, doing the work of real estate, always face forward without a phone in hand or car, leave it at the office, you don't need it for the next three hours because you have a plan to execute that you intend to do with Mission Discipline.

Come on! Be real! You don't need it! Focus and you will get to where you want to go.

Face forward and you do those that fell for you justice.

## **Part II** **The 100% Rule.**

We individually believe much about ourselves that contradict our true natures.

The accumulated experience of the whole population of the earth is lodged in the subconscious of each member of the human race and underscores function, like a computer's operating system, all that we do, think, hear and say; the whole race from the beginning of man's time on earth.

The beginning of time? Imagine the clutter, the baggage of false thinking we drag around day-in and day-out.

Should we be able to go back

through mind, through the clutter, to the spiritual presence of the creative force from which we evolved we'd come upon a blank disk, so to speak, again using the analogy of a computer's operating system, to a place in mind unaffected, unprogrammed, clear and free of blocks and obstacles impeding clear seeing and formative action.

Perfection is at the center of everything, but man's experience through the ages has built up a bank of discordant thinking which has been transmitted from one person to another, millions upon billions, and this discord is lodged in the form of morbid thought patterns that tend to monotonously repeat themselves over and over throughout life without our knowing.

This discordant thought passes through unconscious suggestion into the life of the individual and more or less hypnotizes all from cradle to grave. It is our job, those of us in pursuit of success, well being, power and stability through real estate to free our thought from the bondage of this programming so we can face forward in the pursuit of all that we want out of our life and work with courage and vigor and not lackadaisiasity (yes, I made up that word, but it fits.)

Doing this individually we not only can heal ourselves from the mesmeric effect of negative race thought, but also contribute to the healing of all of humanity.

This collective thought was called the collective unconscious by noted psychologist Carl Jung.

We can see this operating through other living things by just looking: animals, plants, bees and fish, for

example. They each are born with what we call "instinct" that brings them fully-functional into the environment within which they are born. Instinct can have no other way of being brought forward except by genetic memory that is transferred from parent to sibling. Inside those little genes floats memory inherent of the species, all it has been, is, and should be: instinct. Exactly how this happens we haven't yet exactly figured out, but instinct observed in an animal kingdom that doesn't include humans is proof of the matter.

We, therefore, obviously, like Jung said, share a collective memory of all that has gone before that is brought forward the same way: by means of viviparous birth programmed by the human genome.

*Sidebar / How memory is activated in each member of the human race individually, all differing from one another, is a fascinating subject not the object of this essay, but Jung has laid this out for us as well. It has something to do with what he calls "similarity and contiguity" or, actually, like begets like by means of association though he doesn't exactly put it that way. This is a fascinating study and good reading for all.*

The great divider between us, the creative specie, and the animal kingdom, the uncreative, is, I believe, derived out of function that allows creativity: limbs with digits and an opposing thumb, and a very large brain. Take these away and we, like the animal kingdom, would need to rely on unalterable instinct to survive as well.

What name we give this collective unconscious is of no accord, but how we mix, mold and manipulate it to our advantage is and essential

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to “Mastering the Forces that Shape Success.”

The practitioners of free-thinking, you and I, know that a negative condition cannot resist truth, just as darkness cannot resist light. We do not contend against negative conditions. We, instead, practice non-resistance and through awareness and intelligence purposely guide our thinking and doing. By doing this we dissolve negation and its corollary, negative action, into non-action; and, alternately, reverse-engineer race thought into purposeful desire, the fire which impels positive action.

#### **The Hundred-Percent Rule.**

Operating under race thought, I am one-hundred percent not who I want to be. By reverse-engineering race thought, I can be one-hundred percent who I want to be. I call this The Hundred-Percent Rule.

How often have we heard people say, I can't stop smoking (race thought is the underscore). How often have we heard people say, I can't stop drinking (race thought is the underscore). Okay, these are the obvious things that cause us trouble, but this applies to every addiction, profanity, discord, weakness, etc. of mankind.

The original model was perfect and predisposed to none of these things. They came along later.

This is easy to prove: first man had never even heard of a cigarette, had he? Extrapolate that a million times over.

**Application** / Let's go back in time. Imagine that when in school you were quite a runner and because of this you decided to join the track team to run the hundred-yard hurdles, an event you always admired.

You've seen races like this many times; of ten competitors per race, one runs out front of all the others; two or three run in the middle of the pack; and the rest come up arrears.

One, the front runner, sees no obstacles before him; nothing clutters his way; he smoothly strides up to the first hurdle and, though running near full speed, glides his strong leg up and over the hurdle nearly straight-legged toe first skimming the top by a mere half inch or so; bending forward and down at the waist pointing head and opposing arm forward to almost a toe touch with the forward leg, eyes down, not even looking down the track, his rear leg lifts gliding knee-first over the hurdle as he, after clearing the hurdle, in a single stride drops the lead leg down touching toe to track in a flash to run to the next hurdle. Doing this ten times without thinking, with an uncluttered mind, he out paces all others and wins the race.

Every other runner, though, to some varying degree or another from second to last in the race looks down the track before the gun and sees obstacles to overcome, some varying degree of clutter they must traverse to get to where they want to go. Some skippity-hop up to each hurdle and jump over, some run into hurdles and fall and, maybe, number's two and three in the race glide over many, but stumble before completing the race allowing #1 to take home the gold.

This is how mind-clutter operates on us. Free and clear, though, we are able face forward in all things and win just like the winning hurdler whatever the event, the competition or the race. Cluttered, we skippity-

hop around, start and stop, stumble, fall and quit.

How to overcome this?

It's so easy, you won't believe it (mind clutter).

Right now, close your eyes, look inward with your mind's eye and know that there's a clean slate like an old school chalk board at the center of your being from which all thought and action emanate that's covered with scribbles, and though each mark is infinitely thin, it looks as though the scribbles are piled a mile high, one atop another on the surface of the board. The scribbles represent the clutter of race thought of the ages put there prior to your birth and since that negatively drive your unconscious thought and inhibit positive action.

The clean slate underlying the scribbles of race thought represents your unfettered soul and is the archetype or model of a perfect, clear functioning mind. To break through the clutter, to wipe the slate clean and program yourself anew for winning, look inward again and affirm inwardly this simple statement, “I choose to be free of all negative race thought and to program myself for uncluttered performance from here out in my personal life, my family life and my work life according to my goals, objectives, wants and desires.”

Your mind knows what to do with this. It also knows whether you are sincere or just fool'n. If sincere, swoosh goes the negation as though wiped away with a hot, wet rag. Positivity takes its place.

Silly? “Woe unto the non-believer” goes the saying.

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Proceed then to spell out in clear language the goals and objectives, wants and desires you wish to experience, want to experience and hope to experience. Use plain English, plain language and don't be shamed by your wishful wanting, ranting and raving however apparently self-ish for your mind doesn't see it that way. Your wishes will soon enough become wish-fulfilled experiencing.

### **Believe it or Not.**

Robert H. Schuller, founder of the Garden Grove Community Church, builder of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, and author of the national best seller, *Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking*, 1967, the Joel Osteen of his time, a man on fire, once in a small group setting I was part of he told of a time he did similarly when suffering serious doubt about his work and ministry. He told of his having a panic attack, sweating profusely, thinking that he maybe was having a heart attack and, instead of going to a hospital, he said he walked into an orange grove, the land the Cathedral is built on, and prayed inwardly to God to remove all negativity from his mind once and all forever.

He then swore to us present that he felt the most excruciating pain of his life when he felt what he knew was a finger push into the top of his head, into his brain, and scoop out some thick mushy gray stuff he interpreted as the negativity clouding his thinking and swoosh it away.

He then swore he hadn't had a negative thought since emanate from his mind, though he is able to recognize it all around (that's not the same thing), and that the Power of Possibility Thinking he preached

the world over to the benefit of millions was the result of that single inward prayer (want).

He then advised that what we would do with his testimony was up to us. His slant, I think, on the "Woe unto the non-believer" thing.

If you knew Robert H. Schuller like those of us present did at that time, there would be no doubt in mind that what he said was true; but, then, Mormons believe in the plate thing; and nearly a thousand dedicated parishioners followed preacher Jim Jones to a mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. One must be cautious about what one believes.

Whatever path one follows or practices to reprogram their mind to a state independent of the Collective Unconscious whether spiritual, practical or fantasy is beside the point. If it works for you, do it.

This is what I like to call working with intelligence and not time and money and, as I have written somewhere before, what Zen Buddhists call *Wue-Wei: Non-Doing or Doing without Doing*.

Negativity is invasive and, like a thief in the night, sneaks in when no one is home; when you aren't paying attention to what you want. So some of this may take a bit of practice and repetitive affirmation to take hold but, soon enough, the thieves of desire just quit trying and winning becomes a way of life.

That's why some hurdlers just keep going back to the Olympics, again and again, though seriously older than upstart competitors sure they can beat the old timers. Catch me if you can, they say, to the up-comers.

I wish you good luck in your endeavors.

Face forward.

### **Part III Quiet-Effectiveness.**

Quiet-effectiveness seems an oxymoron: a combination of contradictory or incongruous words.

How can one be quiet (a quality or state of being quiet, tranquil and secretive) and be effective (a quality imbued with decisive ambition, drive and overt activity that leads to success). Showiness, noticeability and stand-outness are all qualities of good personal marketing, but they definitely are not quietus.

To me quiet-effectiveness is just a state of being in which one knows what they want to do whether it be of a work, family or personal nature and they just go about doing it without making a lot of noise.

Persons practicing quiet-effectiveness, for example, don't rise in the morning and rush to-and-fro as though in a mad dash to beat an impending deadline; they instead rise double early to do the things required of grooming, eating, and preparation for a day's events in a relaxed manner with time to spare before stepping out.

This is easy to do.

Person's practicing quiet-effectiveness plan months, even years, ahead an effective daily plan, a plan for each day of the week that will lead to the accomplishment of their goals so that they don't have to waste time and energy doing this the night before or the first few hours of each day that they work. When the alarm rings, if they use one, they just get up and go about their business with no fuss; no fuss at all. If someone should ask what they will be doing

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today, they just say, “Oh, the same old,” and go about their business however big their doings may be.

This is easy to do.

Persons practicing quiet-effectiveness also, for example, dress for success, but they don’t dress to outshine everyone they meet. You see, they want other people to be comfortable with them so they dress for business, but in a way that they make other people feel good about the way they are dressed too. This they do for both people at work and customers and clients in the field.

Yes, I know, we’ve all read about dressing for success, that we should dress for the next job, not the one we have, that we should always dress better than our customers. There’s some truth to these things, grooming is very important, but this is not done well if your grooming draws attention to you and not solely the product or the situation.

The last time I wore a tie was the summer of 2004. I had made a presentation to list a development of nearly a hundred homes in Redlands, CA, called The Redlands Classics and a week or two after had gotten a call to take on the project.

I had a long standing tradition of dressing up a bit on “signing” day and showed up to meet with the developer, in the field, in a tie. This client had never seen me in a tie even though our business involved real estate valued in the tens-of-millions of dollars. When he saw me, he actually said, “What the ‘f--’ are you wearing a tie for.”

Fast thinking, I said, “Oh, I had business this morning in a conference room with people that all wear ties and I just left it on.” I proceeded to take it off.

Though business dress has changed toward the casual, we still wear ties today in certain settings; but I, probably, would wear a nice coat with a stiff collared shirt to wherever, but that’s just me.

The point of this is just to say that, whether a man or woman, persons practicing quiet-effectiveness pay attention to the environments within which they work and dress effectively without show.

This is easy to do.

Persons practicing quiet-effectiveness also are extraordinarily proficient at what they do.

Because they have practiced their lines, like an actor, rehearsing for long hours days on end, even the smallest points, what they want to say and what they want to do when with either buyers or sellers; and because they have read everything there is to know about their business, studied the documents, learned the language, and mastered the skills; and because they have organized and reorganized, and organized and reorganized their portfolios, one for buyers and one for sellers, over and over again, months and years on end and have spared no expense in their preparation and packaging to ensure they are always neat and clean; because they have done these things, they are able to go about their work when in the presence of either buyers or sellers without frigidity or nervousness, or forgetfulness or impediment, or force or weakness of any kind. Basically, without concern for gain or loss they just do their thing.

Though it takes a little time...

This is easy to do.

Person practicing quiet-effective-

ness, though knowledgeable about their profession and competent, are careful about projecting an air of superiority.

One of my favorite moments in a movie is when in *The Devil’s Advocate*, Milton, the Devil, suspected though yet unknown by viewers, played by Al Pacino, looks at Kevin Lomax, an aspiring Florida defense lawyer played by Keanu Reeves that he, Milton, had recently hired to work at his firm in New York and says, “Don’t get too cocky my boy. No matter how good you are don’t ever let them see you coming. That’s the gaffe my friend. You gotta keep yourself small. Innocuous. Be the little guy. You know, the nerd... the leper... shit-kickin’ surfer. Look at me. Underestimated from day one. You’d never think I was a Master of the Universe, now would ya?”

Milton goes around town in Levi’s, a sloppy shirt, soft shoes, and something like a loose corduroy coat even though he owns and runs the biggest law firm in New York with clients the world over and, of course, is a Master of the Universe as well. The writer carefully wrote “a” master as opposed to “the” master.

This, though from a movie dealing strictly with fantasy, is the ultimate expression of quiet-effectiveness.

Never let them see you coming and, then, after you leave with both the contract and the money however big the deal, let them say to themselves, “How’d that happen?”

Seek to be the best real estate agent that ever lived if that’s what you want, or just good enough to

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make a few bucks; one aim is not more important than another.

Either way, never let them see you coming... This is easy to do.

Persons practicing quiet-effectiveness never see failure as failure but as the positive feedback they need to change something about the way they practice their trade; listing and selling in our case.

Rats, even, are very proficient at this. Not only is it their Dharma to give their all in laboratory research, the fodder of technicians seeking to cure all ills, but also are they intellectual exemplars serving as models of typical or standard behavior research done by psychologists that believe they can extrapolate what they learn from rats (rat behavior) to humans. Maybe?

Psychologists have devised thousands of experiments to explore this, but the most common to all is the rat in a maze test to project learning curves that may apply to humans as well.

A rat, as you know, is put into a large square maze at one corner and a reward such as a piece of cheese at the opposite corner. There is only one path that will lead to the reward and it is the object of the test to see how fast a rat can learn to get to it on the first, second, third attempts and so forth.

The rats struggle to get through to the reward the first time, do it quicker the second time, and from then on do it with ease to the point of never even making a mistake however difficult the maze.

The blocks, dead ends, unsuitable passages, etc. are not seen by rats as obstructions or failure, but instead as benchmarks for altering course

and determining behavior that will get them to where they want to go.

Not a one that knows there is cheese at the end of the maze ever gives up the search and in place of trying turns to activities focused on stress-relief like TV and reruns of *Everybody Loves Raymond*.

Don't you just hate being outdone by a rat?

We too should not see blocks, dead ends, unsuitable passages and the like as obstructions or failure to get to where we want to go, but instead as the positive feedback we need to do like the lowly rat, to use them as benchmarks for altering course and determining behavior that will get us to where we want to go quickly with ease.

There are only so many things a seller can ask, say or object to when talking about selling; and there are only so many things a buyer can ask, say or object to when talking about buying.

If in a buying or selling situation you come across a question or block that you are not prepared to deal with and the buying/selling thing falls apart with this prospect because of that, well, I know you get it?

Go back to your desk, think it through, and build into either your portfolio or strategy an answer or tactic that will overcome this the next time out.

Though common sense advice, I know that you cannot and will not do this if you don't have the time and energy to do it because of habitual activities that just prevent it from happening.

**Try This** / Look over the things you do with your time and energy anew, with an eye and ear to see if

they are solely stress-relieving or goal-achieving and, possibly, to decide to eliminate one or another habitual-activity that blocks your goal-oriented career growth by the amount of time and energy it takes just to do it.

See what you come up with. The list might be longer than you imagined possible.

Life itself, maybe, is a maze and we just have to decide to work smart to get to the cheese, but that's the hard part: deciding to work smart.

You have heard me say or have read in one or more of my writings that it is our goal in The Real Estate Fellowship to work with intelligence and not time and money.

This is easy to do if we work with quiet-effectiveness in all things we do and do the things we do with Mission Discipline.

And, of course, if we...

Face Forward.

#### **Part IV Application. The Comeback.**

Once, about five years into my career, I listed a sixty unit condominium development in Santa Ana, called Brandonberry.

It was quite a score, an experience proving to myself and others that I could market to an unknown builder, make contact, present a self-developed sales and marketing program outdoing the competition, which was intense, and close.

Its relative value was approximately \$24/Million. If my take were just 1%, that would be a take-home sales fee of approximately \$240,000.

You can see what I mean by it being quite a score.

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My strong point in all this was sales, marketing was a skill set I was still developing. The developer hired me specifically for the development and management of an onsite sales team and not marketing, for which he had already hired a high-profile advertising agency.

I had completed the sale of a number of nearby projects up to this time, but not the hundreds that would follow over the next thirty-five years or so but, still, I was a little young and raw though organized, confident and assertive.

One part of my structured sales program was that in addition to my possibly working with sales agents onsite that I already knew and had experienced success with, was that I would advertise in the open market for agents seeking a new opportunity that were at a place in their lives and careers where they only needed a fortuitous opportunity to excel in sales. I had some defined methodology for determining this; can't remember what that was, now.

I advised that I, generally, would meet and talk with up to fifty new agents during the interview process, which was true, and that I would select three to handle initial grand opening sales at the project. I assured him that I would put a top team onsite.

So, to work I went, doing exactly as promised. I have to admit, though, that in spite of going through the paces, meeting new people that responded to my ad by the dozens, interviewing and so forth, that I was predisposed to working with three agents I already knew. This skewed my judgment and, though I selected a few for callback if needed, I decided to work with the known quantity, so to speak.

I had, during this process, met a man about twice my age, a really old fella (a little younger than I am now), that advised me straight-away that he could sell those homes and that I should hire him. He came to the interview dressed casually in dungarees and a sweater or something and I didn't think too much of him; this was, after all, the three-piece suit era. His name was Mike. I advised Mike that I had already selected a staff and thanked him for coming in.

We, my staff and I, set up the sales office in preparation for a grand opening about three weeks out, practiced our routines and readied ourselves for a professional sales effort every way imaginable and expected.

The advertising agency, B.J. Stewart Advertising, Inc., did a great job developing onsite brochures, sales literature, pre-sale marketing, grand opening marketing, etc. and pulled in approximately four-hundred buyer groups our first weekend open. We couldn't hardly see through them, the crowd was so thick.

It was a great time in the market and we proceeded to write-up none the whole weekend. Not a one. We didn't write-up one single sale. Absolutely zero.

I was very chagrined, but I have to tell you, the builder, also a Mike, Mike Janes, was a real cool head. He didn't admonish me in any way. He just said, "Let's see how things develop," and pretty much left it at that; but you gotta know, in builder sales there's no room for failure, the writing, even after only one weekend, was on the wall.

That same week, the other Mike, the old guy, came by my office unan-

nounced and asked how things were going. I said not too well. He advised again that he could sell those homes and that I should hire him. I thanked him for coming in.

I acted fast. I let one of the three I started with go, and hired a new agent selected from among the fifty or so interviews I conducted. I advised the builder of this, he seemed satisfied, and we proceeded to our second weekend. Traffic the second weekend fell dramatically to about two hundred groups of visitor/buyers.

We, again, proceeded to write-up none the whole weekend. Not a one. Absolutely zero.

Still to this day I am impressed by the professional demeanor and cool head of the builder. He didn't express panic of any kind nor threaten to fire me, but the undercurrent of that was surely there.

I acted fast again, I let the remaining two agents of the first three hired go and replaced them with another two selected from the fifty or so agents I interviewed. Now with three new agents onsite, each fired up to prove themselves up to the task and lots of be-backs dropping in, I was sure we'd see sales. The builder approved.

Again, Mike, the old guy, came by my office unannounced and asked how things were going. I said not too well. He advised that he could sell those homes and that I should hire him. He was dressed better this time, a woolen suit and tie. I thanked him for coming in.

Open for sales three weeks now, traffic dropped again to about a hundred visitor/buyers. I do not say this in judgment of the advertising campaign though it may sound like

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that. I say it in jest, sarcastically suggesting that this still is an overwhelming number of buyers to work with and that, because of this, success should be guaranteed.

We finally achieved our first sale. One out of 700 visitor/buyers.

This was not acceptable and, finally, the builder said he was going to have to make a change if more didn't start happening. I was in complete agreement.

Then, again, Mike, the old guy, came by my office unannounced and asked how things were going. I said not too well, but added, "When can you start?"

In a panic, I let one of the other three go. I felt bad about doing this so quickly, but just said I had no choice, and replaced that agent with Mike.

When Mike showed up to the project for his first day onsite mid-week prior to his first weekend, I was there to greet him and to go through the setup process. I was pleasantly surprised to see him groomed kind of like the fastidious British butler, Mr. French, played by Sebastian Cabot on the mid-sixties TV show *Family Affair*. He was smooth, really smooth.

He paid attention to everything I said and at day's end, I cut him loose with probably a forbearance of resignation. He said, "Don't worry, Al, I can sell these homes."

Mike sold a house his first day on the project, a Thursday, and one-or-more every day for twenty-seven days in a row before he went a day without a new sale. About a week into his sales, I let one of the other agents, who had not yet had a sale, go.

Then, about three weeks into Mike's sales I let the one remaining agent from before Mike go, leaving only Mike. With only one agent at the helm, the project was a fast-sale success.

Was I a good sales manager and did I live up to doing what I said I would do? I think so, but it was by Mike's comeback persistence that I was able to make it seem as though I had something to do with the project's success. Really, it was all Mike.

I call this The 3-2-1 Brandonberry Story. I tell it at some point or another to every builder I meet and it has gotten me a lot of work. Builders with long on the market dead-in-the-water projects, my turnaround target, often have had only one agent or sales team overseeing sales since opening, sometimes a year or more before our meeting.

They see right off the value of working with a sales manager that moves snippity-snap to make things happen, always putting them first and the needs of a project ahead of broker/agent relationships based on loyalty and prior history however good or fantastic. This is why, also, a project's listing broker must never take on its sales him or herself. How likely are they to fire themselves snippity-snap if sales don't add up like they should?

Relative to new home sales, urgency must nullify loyalty; the only history that counts is something stretching back, maybe, three weeks or so.

**The Comeback** / While telling The 3-2-1 Brandonberry Story to a builder it's probable that I might suggest obliquely that I had a bit more to do with selecting Mike for

the job, culled from thousands of interviews, than I actually did, but that's beside the point; for our purposes here, I'm calling this story The Comeback.

**The Crossover** / Our clients, our sellers, cannot take advantage of our combined experience, yours and mine; our seasoned sales programs; our fantastic methodologies; our over the top structures and strategies; our international marketing; our sale by auction program; our onsite stick-to-it sales effort; etc. if you do not do as Mike and from their perspective comeback to make it happen irrespective of whether you are invited to do this or not.

You, like Mike, are the game changer. You are the decider of who will get to benefit by what you have to offer or not and you do this by going back or not after a first, initial contact per *The Power of One* and *The Wealth Agenda: The 50/50/50 for Fifty Plan*.

Make the decision. Be the comeback guy (or woman).

Futures depend on it.

### **In Closing.**

Both Mikes, the old guy and the builder, were standout examples for an upstart broker as to how to work with *Quiet Effectiveness* and *Mission Discipline*. I have tried to follow their example.

Facing forward I have come to know that there are no such things as obstacles or blocks or competition standing in the way of my getting to where I want to go, only cooperation in harmony with expanding experience according to my goals; there's meaning and path to be found in all.

All else is argument of error.

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As John Lennon said in the enigmatic song, I Am the Walrus, "I am the egg, man."

The reason both the song and the phrase are enigmatic (difficult to interpret or understand) to virtually all the world over is because it is hard to grasp the pause and, then, emphasis on the word "egg."

"I am the egg man" means nothing except maybe the name of the man that delivers milk and eggs Saturday morning, but "I am the egg, man" means everything.

We are the creator of our experience, the egg from which all arises.

"Goo goo g'joob," crazy, man.

Just because publishers omit the comma, all you need to do is ponder the song for forty-five years to get the message loud and clear.

Face forward.

Best Wishes.



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