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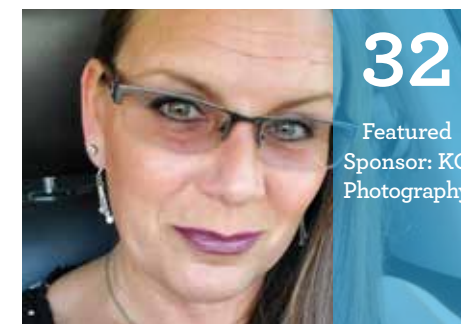
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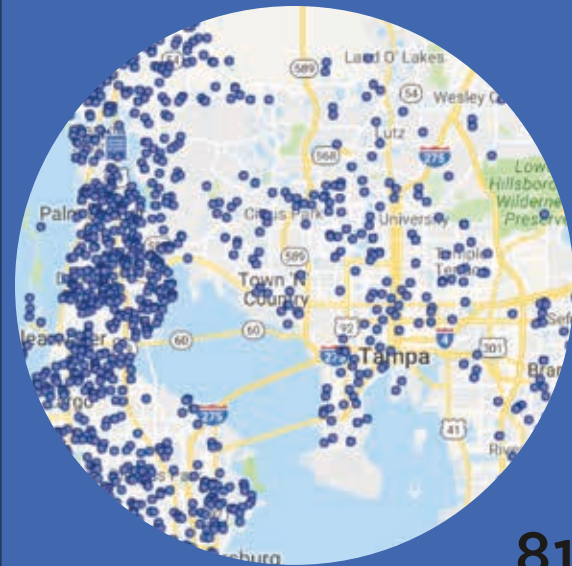
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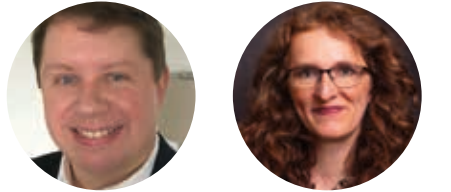


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By Dave Danielson

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# KELLY PARKS

## An Authentic Leader



**K**elly Parks has reached an impressive level of success in her 20 years in the real estate industry. In fact, she’s Team Leader of the Kelly Parks Team at MavRealty. But meeting Kelly, the thing you would probably be most impressed by is the fact that she isn’t trying to impress you.

It’s not that she doesn’t care what you think. In fact, it’s just the opposite. She does care about you. And she’s going to give you all her best — by just being herself.

### Maize-and-Blue from the Beginning

Kelly was born in Michigan and is a diehard fan of the Michigan Wolverines. When she was a little girl, her family moved to Buffalo, New York.

If you automatically think of snow, when you hear of Buffalo, you aren’t alone. In fact, that’s one of the memories Kelly has of the beautifully wintry place also. Buffalo averages more than 93 inches of snow each year.

“In the late 1970s, there was a terrible snowstorm there,” Kelly recalls. “In fact, we were snowed in up to the second story of our house. I remember my mother vowing that she would never let that happen again.”

By 1980, the family had moved to Brandon, Florida.

Fast forward. As she came of age in Brandon, Kelly would make periodic trips back to Michigan to visit family. On one of those trips, she met John Parks. As time passed, they were married and started a family.

### Real Estate Origins

Living in Michigan, Kelly had entered the real estate business in 2000 in the Jackson/Ann Arbor, Michigan, area.

Time passed, her children grew, and she flourished in her career — until 2008.

“When the market crashed in 2008, my world fell apart,” Kelly remembers. “In 2008, two of the homes I sold were under \$5,000. It was a bad time. So many people were losing their jobs. And financial pressures were pulling families apart.”

After struggling to dig out, Kelly and John made a pivotal decision.

“I couldn’t live there and do that anymore,” she says. “My mom lives in Tampa, and I had lived there before, so we decided to move back.”

### Warming to the Idea Again

As they settled in Tampa, the idea of working in real estate wasn’t on Kelly’s radar. In fact, she was purposely avoiding it.

“I was not going to go back into real estate. I was done after 12 years in the business

...

there,” she emphasizes. “I didn’t think I would ever go back into it after what we went through.”

About that time, Kelly had a chance meeting with real estate leader Tony Baroni.

“As we talked, Tony said you really need to go get your license again,” she smiles. “He gave me a little bit of inspiration, and he got me in the hands of people who convinced me that I shouldn’t let myself be done with the business.”

As she got back in the business, some things were familiar. Others were new.

“Before the crash, I had been closing 50 to 70 houses a year by myself in Michigan. I hadn’t done much with teams there. With winters there, I was able to work long crazy hours during the peak, warm months of the year and then have time for my family and other things during the winter months. There was more of a selling season there,” Kelly recalls. “As I got started here, I knew I would need a team, because it’s a constant cycle here. There is no ‘season.’”

**Team Spirit**

In the seven years since beginning her real estate career anew in Florida, Kelly has enjoyed the results of her efforts. A year and a half ago, she joined MavRealty, where she brought her extensive residential experience to work and brought her team with her.

In 2018, the teamwork paid off with a robust \$53 million in volume on 220 transactions.

Kelly has built a team of true agents.

“I’ve restructured a little bit. Everyone on the team is licensed so they can answer questions, and they can attend to client needs right away,” she says.

Her team includes Office Manager and Transaction Coordinator, Kaylee Schmidt, Operations Manager Angélique Newmann, and her daughter Kylie



Parks-Gillie, who has been a buyer’s agent a little over a year.

“Kylie got licensed two years ago when she graduated from college. She has turned out to be one of our best buyer’s agents. She has been watching me all along,” Kelly smiles.

In addition, Kelly’s team includes Michelle Strong who has specialized as a buyer’s agent for the past six years in Northern Pinellas County, Marketing Coordinator Rileigh Newmann, and three other newer buyer’s agents.

**Genuine Gratitude**

While successful in her career, her family success means the world to Kelly, with her husband, John, daughter, Kylie, her son, Jakob, who is a college football quarterback for the University of South Dakota, and her cherished stepdaughters, Hope and Jessica. She also is the proud grandmother of five grandsons.

Kelly’s free time is filled with a love of sports. She loved watching Kylie complete on collegiate volleyball. And she continues that passion by traveling to watch Jakob on the gridiron.

Giving back is Kelly’s pride, as well. She gives 30% of her commissions to the Homes for Heroes program that supports veterans, first responders, police officers and teachers.

“I want to be remembered as a nice person. I love to be loved,” she admits with a smile. “It’s important to me that people like me and that they have good things to say about me. I want people to think of me as being selfless and giving.”

Kelly knows who she is. So do her clients. As an authentic leader for her industry and community, she has the same advice for the next generation of real estate professionals.

“For newer folks, I’d say always be real. That’s one thing people have said with me. What you see is what you get,” Kelly says. “Be real and authentic. People can relate to you when you let them into your world. When you do, they’ll trust you and let you into theirs.”

“Be real and authentic. People can relate to you when you let them into your world. When you do, they’ll trust you and let you into theirs.”





# JANET MOORE

CREATING CONCIERGE CONNECTIONS

rising star 

By Dave Danielson  
Photo Credit: B. Lively Images



Wherever Janet Moore goes, she creates lasting connections that help other people with a concierge level of care.

As a Real Estate Professional with Premier Sotheby's International Realty, Janet has quickly established herself as a Rising Star in the Tampa area in just three years.

But her connections extend well beyond the borders of Florida.

#### BIG CITY BEGINNINGS

Janet was raised in New York City. In the process, she was no stranger to real estate from the start.

"My parents had Chinese restaurants in the city. My father saved up to buy

buildings in Forest Hills and Jackson Heights for rental income."

After high school, Janet went coast to coast and earned her B.A. in Business from UCLA, followed by her MBA at the prestigious Anderson School of Business at UCLA. While there, she was also a cheerleader for the UCLA Bruins basketball program.

With time, she moved back to New York and gained a wealth of real estate experience—first as a professional specializing in Manhattan sales, relocations and rentals with

his own home. And then, with the income from the restaurants, he parlayed that into residential property," she remembers. "So we owned several

Citi Habitats, followed by industry sales roles with Argo Residential and Better Homes and Gardens FH Realty. From there she moved to Dallas and worked with the Ebby Halliday brokerage and started finishing among the top 10 each month. In time, she moved to Small World Realty, where she earned Top Producer honors.

#### TAMPA FITS LIKE A GLOVE

Three years ago, Janet moved to Tampa. In 2018, she joined Premier Sotheby's.

"Ever since I moved here, I feel that I've made the perfect move and the perfect fit like a glove," she says with a smile. "I've really enjoyed my time with Premier Sotheby's in the Hyde Park area."







“It means a lot to me to be part of an organization that helps to educate minorities and help them see that they can truly become homeowners.”



•••

Janet’s exuberant nature and outgoing personality have combined with her meticulous approach to helping clients. In turn, she has built a far-reaching reputation and a wealth of connections.

“I’m a big networker, and I like to be a connector between my real estate friends in other states and countries. I work a lot of international business, and as part of that, I bring investors here,” she explains.

Janet is licensed in two states.

“After I got married, I went from New York City, to Charlotte, to Virginia, Dallas, and here,” she smiles.

**TEAM GROWTH**

Today, Janet is building on her success. In addition to a team of 12 in Dallas, she’s building a team in Tampa. But that’s just part of the story of Janet’s connections that she puts to good use on behalf of clients everywhere.

As Janet explains, “I’m also joining a team in San Francisco just to help my Chinese investors. I have friends around the world, and what I’m trying to do is to help them provide Chinese translations by being part of their team.”

Janet has her sights set on helping more and more clients. And it’s a story of success she is definitely building on. As her numbers demonstrate, she helps many people reach their dreams.

Last year in Tampa, Janet recorded \$8 million volume, with a 2019 goal of \$22 million. In fact, she ranked second in volume in her office during the first quarter of the year.

**24/7 CARE**

Janet’s concierge level of care doesn’t happen on her terms. She takes pride in providing a tireless level of service.

“If I’m awake, my phone is attached to me,” she smiles. “I need to be there to answer the calls. Because if they don’t get a hold of you right then, they may think you don’t care. I want them to feel like I’m there 24/7 That’s what makes me stand out.”



Janet has an assistant that she can forward calls to at times. But whenever she can, Janet is there on the front line, meeting the need.

“It’s about making sure that people are treated right, and that they have a knowledgeable agent who gives them the value they need, and to build that relationship. I’m not chasing after that check. It’s about the relationship, and really caring for that client.”

Part of her client concierge care involves her in-depth work with clients who are part of the U.S. EB-5 Visa program.

“EB-5 is the Visa that foreigners can purchase to get a Resident Card here in the U.S. They put some money down for a big project that an EB-5-related company is offering. Then after they get approved for that and put enough money down for that project, they come to the U.S. and buy a residential home,” Janet explains. “I meet with clients, send them listings, and I work with them to set up schools for their children, help them buy a car, and be their friend here.”

**LASTING CONNECTIONS**

When she’s not working, Janet enjoys time with her husband, who is a culinary consultant. He develops menus for companies, coordinates kitchen designs, and provides a resource for those opening their own eatery or franchise businesses.

Janet gives back in several ways, including by supporting the American Cancer Society, including the Wine, Women and Shoes event, as well as the annual Cattle Baron’s Ball. In addition, Janet serves as Board Secretary for the Asian Real Estate Association of America.

“It means a lot to me to be part of an organization that helps to educate minorities and help them see that they can truly become homeowners,” she emphasizes.

From the moment she makes an initial connection, to the closing, Janet puts all of herself into taking care of her clients — just like a concierge.

As Janet says, “I can sleep well at night knowing that I’ve gone all out to make sure everything is done for them.”



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# People Buy With Their HEARTS Not Their Heads

By Jon Cheplak

The biggest obstacle we have today with the consumer is they are expecting you to answer their questions with some kind of sales pitch. They are on guard before you even engage with them. This is why they love the internet; the control they have over the interaction and the buffer it provides them. We are in the world of scripted answers and sales dialogues. Everyone is competing to have the most clever answer. It's everywhere as we are all competing for eyeballs and engagement. We have put the consumer in a diluted space of information overload slowing our personal sales experience or putting a cap on it, when a simple shift in language patterns could get the attention of the consumer and have them choose you over everyone else.

## EMOTIONAL DECISIONS ARE MADE BY SELF DISCOVERY

People buy with their hearts not their heads which means we are playing in an emotional space. It is an emotional decision and these decisions are made by "self-discovery" using an internal decisioning process instead of relying on external decisioning; the overused process of convincing and selling creating a feeling of regret, questioning, and buyers

remorse. When someone makes a decision internally they will tell others, defend it, and champion it.

## BE A STEWARD OF THE MARKETING PROCESS

To differentiate in today's information overload age we must step away from the masses and their continual "talking at" the consumer and become the person asking the right questions..."talking with the consumer" and being a steward of the marketing process. Most marketing advice provided to sales people and businesses today is ineffective. The days of "selling" the consumer into a decision are antiquated. We must move to crossover - the discovery of the consumers greatest need and our delivery of that through a process of questions.

Here is the form and structure that engages the consumer, gets them

into your funnel, and moves them through a discovery and choice process that feels good vs. one that feels manipulative.

The persona of the consumer drives the story. You have to ask the right questions to discover this. The story drives the progress. The progress drives the dialogue. The person laser-focused on the consumer and implements this process is seen and experienced as the most competent and relevant one to deliver on the consumers' needs or solve their problem. Sales is in direct proportion to how much value you give the consumer based on their specific persona, not how well you sell them.

## THE 95/5 RULE OF MARKETING

Are you relevant or irrelevant?

The single most important step in marketing is first, understanding and knowing your audience. In its simplest breakdown, at any given time only 5% of your audience is in the consideration phase. A time in their journey where a conversation or reference to buying or selling is relevant and something they would engage in. 95% of your audience is indifferent...and yet we continue to run the "One Size Fits All" Marketing Message at them in Mass...

Only to turn someone who was indifferent to annoyed, creating the condition where agents are having to exhaust massive human resources and effort along with endless marketing dollars to find a customer.

If we know that 95% of our audience where there is the biggest opportunity by pure numbers is indifferent, we need to simply focus our messaging to "Meet Them Where They Are At". Instead of the typical, outdated carpet bombing marketing message of, "Are you ready to buy real estate?"

Think about this, everyone wants to

buy, no one wants to be sold and the last thing anyone wants is a sales rap run at them when buying or selling is nowhere on their radar.

Remember the 3 most important subjects to the consumer, Me, Myself and I.

Let the masses burn through their lists and complain about bad leads while you accommodate the space and time the consumer is in with messaging that connects to create psychological and emotional bonds. A message that connects with them in their communities, their daily lives, and interests so that when they decide to buy or sell...

You have made deposits in the business relationship equity account, built trust and their next natural step is to choose you.

Take a look at your current sales,

marketing, prospecting, and lead nurturing process. How does it compare and align to the principles I have shared with you today?

Remember this, to win you need to simply BE DIFFERENT, NOT BETTER.

**Jon Cheplak brings over 31 years of practical, applied real estate experience as a successful agent and an executive that led a multi-office, tri-state real estate company. He has spent the last 17 years as a speaker, coach, and strategic leadership consultant to Top Agents, Teams and Brokers focused on operating a highly successful real estate business. Jon is the CEO and Creator of a human resource management software for real estate companies, a video editing, hosting, and marketing software, and an author in numerous publications. Jon is also the author of a self-improvement book, "Interrupt The Pattern."**



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# MATTHIEU BENOOT



» agent feature

## Outlook of Opportunity



Written by  
Dave Danielson



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Carol Walker/Thomas  
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As Matthieu explains, “Every problem is an opportunity. You just have to figure out what that opportunity is.”

### Deep Real Estate Roots

Today, Matthieu and his father, Geert, head Benoot Realty. Matthieu definitely has a big-picture spirit of resilience when it comes to real estate. That may be because he literally grew up in the business.

“I’m the fifth generation in my family in real estate, so I really haven’t ever known anything else besides that,” he smiles.

Benoot and his family moved to the U.S. from Belgium. Growing up, he had outstanding examples to learn from. And he only needed to look at the generations before him for guidance.

“I remember hearing my grandfather and father talking about real estate. That was usually the primary topic of conversation,” Matthieu recalls. “My father still does a lot of work in real estate overseas.”

### Land of Opportunity

While Matthieu’s family had a long tradition of success in Belgium, they couldn’t pass up the opportunity to move to the U.S.

“There were two big reasons why we moved to Florida,” he explains. “One was the weather. And the other was the fact that the opportunity in the USA for success is much greater. So my father, my mother, Catherine, and my younger brother, Clement, decided to move here.”

Growing up, Matthieu had studied at a French-speaking boarding school.

“We moved here from Belgium when I was 15. And when we moved here, I didn’t know any English. It was a really tough adjustment at first.”

One of the challenges that turned into an opportunity right away was Matthieu’s exposure to the business early on.

“When we moved here, my dad had me help manage his rentals from the time I was 15 here in Florida. I definitely made my share of mistakes, but I started learning right away.”

### Paving His Path

In 2011, Matthieu earned his license. While the times were definitely turbulent economically in the wake of the financial crisis, they didn’t deter Matthieu.

“When the market was down, we went overseas to find people that wanted to invest in property in the USA. The response was great!”

While the underlying principles of the business are the same, there are some striking contrasts between real estate in Europe and the U.S.

“Here in the U.S., we have inspection periods and due diligence, and when the deal is agreed to, it’s not really done yet,” Matthieu acknowledges. “In Europe, once the deal is made, there is no backing out. It is just cut and dry. Here in the U.S., you have air essen-

“ EVERY PROBLEM IS AN OPPORTUNITY. YOU JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THAT OPPORTUNITY IS. ”



...

tially until after the inspection period and then things can still fall apart.”

Matthieu tracks the changes in the business brought on by technology.

“The real estate business is changing. And we’re adjusting within our bro-

kerage to keep up with evolving technology, as well as changes in the business itself,” he points out.

“Real estate is becoming more and more automated. These are things that will change major parts of the business. But again, that means there is an opportunity. And with that comes success. I think success is being able to move in and out with the waves — to be able to deal with it.”

**Complementing Each Other**

Besides Matthieu and Geert, Benoot Realty has six other agents.

“We’re not a brokerage with hundreds of agents. When we have an agent who wants to come join us, I sit down and talk with them. If I feel they could be a

fit, we bring the new agent and have them meet with the rest of the team. If there’s one of our agents who votes no, we don’t bring them on. We are very selective. As a result, we select team members who complement each other. So we don’t have internal competition. We all have something different and special that we bring, and we help each other. I take real pride in my agents.”

When he’s not working, you’ll likely find Matthieu enjoying time with his family either on or in the water spearfishing or paddle boarding. “Pretty much, anything with water and the beach,” Matthieu laughs.

Matthieu and his girlfriend also enjoy giving back with an organization called Purple Dot Yoga Project.

“It’s a nonprofit that helps women and children who have been domestically abused. We help them find housing and set them up with food and clothing and the basic necessities. And then the organization also has people who work with them and talk with them through yoga.”

**Sharing His Vision**

Whether giving back in the community, working with clients, or supporting the members of his team, Matthieu’s efforts assist people who have a need — people who, with his help, gain a new perspective and who see and realize new opportunities in the midst of challenge.

“For me, real estate isn’t a job, it’s a lifestyle.”



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By Dave Danielson



Kris Gehl



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As Owner of KG Photography, Kris has been in the industry for 10 years, with a reputation for reliability and quality.

### Pursuing Her Passion

Kris first got her professional start in corporate America. After serving as an office manager in a large corporate finance

company, her job was eliminated when the economic downturn hit in the late 2000s.

About the same time, she got married. To compound the issue with the financial times, her wedding photographer lost about half of the photos from her big day.

It would have been easy to spend a long time having a bad reaction to the events of the time. But that isn't what Kris did.

As Kris thought about her next steps, she was struck by the passion she always had for photography.





“Now that MLS has finally approved virtual staging, this provides another great option. It really allows for a full picture of what the house would look like with different types of furniture, wall colors and more,” she says.

#### Proactive Planning and Service

While photography and imaging technology has come a long way, Kris says that clients can naturally still have questions about whether a property is ready to be photographed and shown. So, with that in mind, for a relatively low fee, she offers her “House Ready for Pictures” review.

“It’s an hour-long consultation where I basically walkthrough with a checklist with ideas of what they can do with furniture, pictures and the space,” Kris says. “Our goal is to really emphasize and showcase the property in its best light to maximize its potential.”

When she’s not working, Kris enjoys a variety of activities. But her heart belongs to her three-year-old nephew, who she visits in the Chicago area whenever she can.



“One of my big things is I want them to know that they’re working with an honest and trustworthy person. When I say I’m going to be there, I will be there ... and they will know that they’ll get their pictures either the same day or within 24 hours,” she emphasizes. “I want them to know they can count on me. If I say I’m going to do something, I do it. I really want to be remembered for that.”

Kris is a certified stager and decorator, which gives her a different perspective on making each property picture perfect. As Kris helps clients capture properties in their best light, she feels thankful.

“I have a lot of gratitude for what I do, and I am very thankful for every opportunity that I get. With every shoot that I do, I always send good Juju to the house,” she smiles. “When I’m there, I like making people feel at ease. Many people are upset because they have to leave the house. It can be a difficult time. So I try to put them into a better mood.”

Looking to the future, Kris takes pride in the results she has helped her real estate partners and their clients achieve ... with an ongoing focus on professionalism.

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“It has always been something I loved. So I thought I’m just going to jump into it,” she recalls. “So I started off with taking pictures of families and small weddings and other things like that.”

That was 2009. It wasn’t long before the real estate industry came knocking on her door.

“Shortly after I started, I was referred to a model subdivision that was being built, and they asked me to come and take pictures of the neighborhood,” Kris remembers. “And that’s kind of how I started really getting into the real estate part of it.”

That was just the start.

“On top of that, through one of my networking groups, I met a REALTOR®, and soon I was taking pictures at Coldwell Banker. So I really got to know the business. I was really becoming an industry photographer.”

With an eye for detail and a knack for creativity, Kris quickly realized she enjoyed providing helpful tips to clients to help them more effectively

prepare their homes with decorating and presentation tips.

#### Delivering the Latest with a Personal Touch

Through the past 10 years, Kris has steadily grown her business success. Last year, she had a large opportunity with a vacation rental company.

As Kris explains, “I found out about the opportunity through one of my real estate agent partners, and the company hired me to photograph 140 of their vacation rentals. That was a huge thing for me.”

Kris takes pride in offering a blend between her personal service, meticulous eye for detail, and value-added technology to get a better picture of a home’s potential.

One of the tools she offers clients is Matterport photography.

“Matterport is a 360-degree virtual photography system that I use that really provides an actual walkthrough of the property — plus, it also gives you a dollhouse floor plan of the house,” she explains. “It lets clients



see what the actual floor plan of a house is, and that just gives people such a great perspective on what the property has to offer ... even down to all of those little nooks and crannies.”

As Kris says, the technology augments the staging process, which can be so valuable for those viewing prospective homes to buy.





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# 3 SAFETY TACTICS FOR SHOWINGS



By Christian Bear

## REAL ESTATE AGENTS ARE PRIME TARGETS FOR CRIMES OF OPPORTUNITIES

**EVERY DAY:** They meet strangers in unknown locations. I believe the real estate industry has not addressed the violent murders such as Ashley Oakland and Beverly Carter because they do not know how to respond, and agents have not demanded a safer workplace. The industry needs to step up now and bring awareness and tactics training to agents before more lives are taken. In 2013 alone, 63 real estate professionals were killed on the job, with 25 being homicides. We do not know the true number of real estate agent crimes due to the poor reporting procedures set in place currently. In a recent study, approximately 40 percent of real estate agents said they were in a situation where they feared for their safety. It alarms me that over 50 percent in the study said their brokerage did not have any safety measures or training in place.

I teach real estate agents around the nation how to become SWAT (Showing With Awareness and Tactics) agents with practical day-to-day techniques that can be applied to any situation with or without clients present. I am determined to eliminate the crimes of innocent men and women who are just doing their job to help strangers live the American Dream.

### Three Showing Tactic Tips:

#### 1. Always start outside the home.

We should never enter a unknown structure without first making sure there is no forced entry, unsecured doors or windows, or anything that is out of the ordinary. Highly trained Law Enforcement Officers never enter a structure without back-up under these circumstances; why should you?

#### 2. Setting up your escape.

I train agents to set up multiple escapes within 60 seconds of breaching the front door. This is one of the most crucial elements of survival. In an intense situation, your body will go into fight or flight. If you are not trained in hand-to-hand combat or have not been in many physical altercations, the body’s first response will be flight – get away from the person trying to hurt you. Tunnel vision will occur and your fine motor skills will be limited, and even trying to unlock

a door could be impossible. If the exit you entered from is blocked or not possible to reach, and you are looking for a new escape, it is too late. Here is a simple plan to set up three escape exits:

- 1: Front door. Leave the front door open after entering the home. If there are no pets, there is no reason to shut this door.
- 2: Patio doors. Proceed directly to the patio doors, and open them all the way. If with a client, make a simple statement about how great the patio, pool or yard is.
- 3: Garage doors. Move to the interior garage door, opening it and the main exterior door. Most homes these day have an automatic garage door opener, and it only takes a push of a button.

You have now created for yourself three exits in different locations in the home for escape.

#### 3. Plus one rule.

Most people do not want to be caught in the middle of a crime. Simple statements could keep a criminal from acting if they believe their plan could be compromised.

Examples: “I am sorry, but there is another showing scheduled while we are here; they might be popping in at any minute.”

“My partner is showing a client right down the street and might stop by to meet you.”

Criminals do not like to be surprised – they like to do the surprising.

Fear of the unknown in a criminal’s mind could deter them from proceeding with their intentions of hurting you.

Stay vigilant.

**Bio:** Christian Bear is a real estate agent with over \$300 million in career sales. Before real estate, he spent 13 years as a Law Enforcement Officer, including 10 years as an FDLE Instructor, four years of U.S. Marshal Special Operations, and over 1,000 violent criminal apprehensions and interviews over his career.

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