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▶ publisher's note  
Written By **Mitch Felix**

# thank you

I'm the single biggest benefactor of *Real Producers*. It's undeniable.

I've gotten to be a part of a social network that is perhaps the most connected and influential group of real estate agents in the entire world. It's a little surreal. I'm grateful for the opportunity.

We could not do what we do without you and your participation. It's a big compliment that you believe in what we do and that it's worth your time and attention. The generosity you've shown in sharing your story makes this entire platform possible, and nearly 250 of you have taken the time to be interviewed.

Those interviews have forever deepened my understanding of the entrepreneurial spirit. They have fortified my own beliefs on how to pursue my potential. Furthermore, it's given me the language to speak about success. Knowing what to do is one thing, but teaching it is another much more valuable skill. I've seen the patterns, and I've not taken that wisdom for granted.

It's impactful to get to be surrounded by such successful people.

You're kind of a big deal.

Thank you.





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philCHEN From the Street Skate to Real Estate Sales: Continuing to Take the Leap of Faith



COVER STORY... That before I did this, I rushed out my credit cards to open my gym, and that's where I got the most training for real estate. In the fitness world, Phil learned the hard way to learn from personal trainers to become a real estate agent. "It's the same thing," Phil explains. "Fitness is an art backed by science. Real estate is an art backed by quantitative analysis. During his years as a gym owner in the San Francisco financial district, Phil was also able to (unintentionally) begin to build his real estate client database. Phil's private personal training studio catered to Fortune 500 CEOs, bankers, lawyers, and other affluent clientele. "I was just in my gym, working and hanging out," Phil says, smiling and laughing out. "Phil says, tellingly, eventually, some of Phil's clients became his business partners. "They would buy real estate, and I would manage it. I had no money back then. That's how I got my start." By 2006, Phil realized it was time to make a choice. With one foot in the fitness world and the other in the real estate world, his attention was divided. As he admits, "I was half seeing [real estate]."



Phil Chen is a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of Millbrae. Coming to Compass from EbyRoth, which he operated and ran for the better part of a decade, he gives Phil a unique perspective on the state of the local real estate market. "Compass is a unique operating freight train right now," Phil comments. Phil opened his own boutique brokerage, Schmitt, without ever working for a large brokerage, using the knowledge he accrued mainly on his own through his family's investments, observation, intuition, and experience. By 2010, he put himself on the map as a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of Millbrae. "I'm fortunate to have had three careers that I love passionate about, because really great as well as making money." Phil says motivated by staying humble and continuously striving to improve in all aspects of his work. "I'm still hungry, so watch out."

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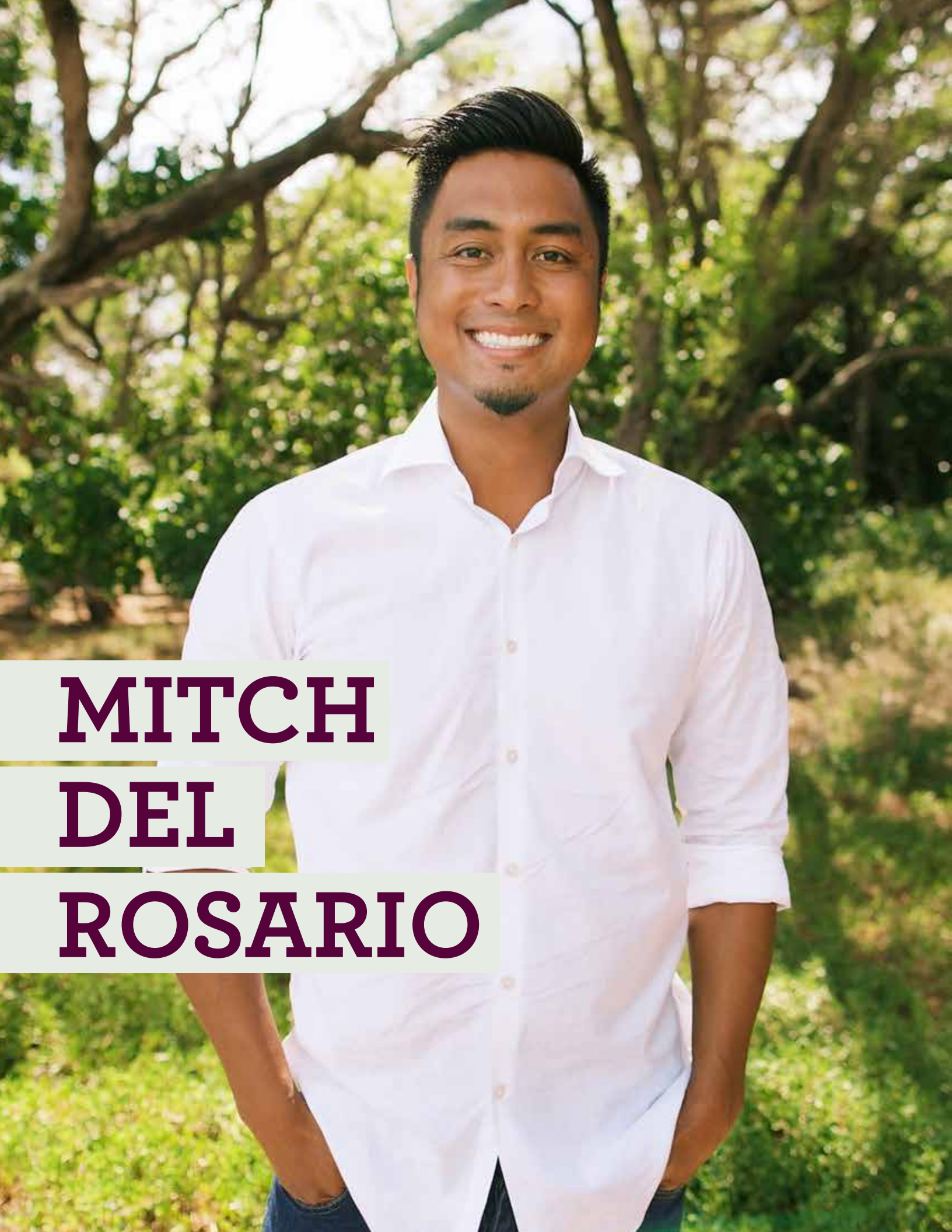
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# MITCH DEL ROSARIO



## Positive Energy in Motion

### ▶▶ star on the rise

Written by **Dave Danielson**  
Photos by unknown

Some forces are naturally occurring in the world and the universe around us...powerful forces that can help humanity. Through time, there have been formulas to attempt to explain it, technology to try to replicate it, and efforts that strain to harness it.

You know when you see that power at work in people—those who have a special spark and a seemingly boundless hunger to help others.

One prime example of that is alive and well within Mitch Del Rosario. As a real estate agent with

Paramount Realty Group (PRG), Mitch epitomizes positive energy in motion.

#### **Early Connections**

His natural, outward-facing perspective on life came through loud and clear even when he was a young child.

“I have always loved talking with people,” Mitch recalls. “There were several times, where I would go somewhere with my family, and my mom

would lose me because I had gone off and had started up a conversation with people of all ages.”

As Mitch made his way through school, he wasn’t interested in staying still. He learned and excelled, but he wanted to do it while staying in motion.

“I’ve always been a very energetic person. And that’s probably an understatement,” he laughs. “In fact, when





...

I was growing up, some members of my extended family had a group session to pray the energy away. And my teachers were frustrated with my excessive talking with the other students. My mom would often say to all of them, "There's nothing wrong with him. He just likes to make friends. Why do I need to punish him for making friends?"



**Action and Achievement**

Mitch needed a bigger stage to explore and space for his energy to set his foundations for success.

As Mitch came of age, he achieved in many areas, including tennis. As a senior at Mission San Jose High School, Mitch's talents on the tennis court were known far and wide, earning him a spot among the most highly touted players in the nation.

In time, Mitch grew, explored opportunities, and, a little over three years ago, earned his license and started his journey in the world of real estate.

"Real estate is something I feel has been a natural fit for me," he explains. "I have a real, strong passion for meeting people, working with them, and guiding them as they reach for their dreams of homeownership. It means a lot for me to know that what I'm doing is having an effect and helping others."

Each day, Mitch puts his boundless energy to work for others; the results have been impressive all the way around. In 2019, Mitch recorded 10 deals, representing over \$14 million in total volume.



“ It means a lot for me to know that what I’m doing is having an EFFECT and HELPING others. ”

**A Family Feeling**

But his definition of reaching success is more about others, rather than individual.

"For me, success is being happy with who I am and with the impact that I'm having on other people around me. I think that's the foundation of a fulfilling life."

Those foundations were set in place by Mitch's supportive, loving family, including his father, Carlo, his mother, Amor, his older brother, Kurt, and his older sister, Rio. Mitch also loves spending time with his six nieces and nephews.

"One thing I'm very grateful for is that I grew up in a family that places a strong priority on being together and staying close."

In his free time, Mitch puts his creative energy to work in other ways, too—literally.

"I love creating content of all kinds," he smiles.

Again, that's another understatement of this young man's remarkable gifts. In fact, Mitch has poured himself into diverse pursuits such as spoken-word poetry, singing, songwriting, and even music production.

He also has been deeply involved in the area's Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) organization that gives a voice and a mentor to vulnerable children in the nation's legal system. Each week, one of the highlights for Mitch is spending time hanging out with his "little brother" through the organization.


This love for people is central to Mitch—and to his hopes for the future.

"One of my biggest dreams for the future is about family...finding my partner and building a future with children," he smiles.

In the meantime, that energy and genuine care for others are fully channeled into the work he does each day with clients.

"Eventually, I would love to build my own team here at Paramount. I absolutely love the culture they have created and strengthened here over time. I share the same mindset and values. PRG is like a family. So it's an exciting thing for me to think about doing whatever I can to continue to help PRG grow."


If you're looking for an example of positive energy in motion, you can find it occurring naturally—with Mitch Del Rosario.



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▶▶ 2008 stories of resilience  
Written by Zach Cohen  
Photo by Unknown

# DEBBIE ADAMO

2008 STORIES OF RESILIENCE



“You can’t just wait for the phone to ring. If you do your activities and do them well, people will always need to buy and sell homes.”

In 2008, Debbie was in her fourth year of selling real estate, but only her second year selling full-time. When the recession hit, she continued to thrive off consistent effort and a positive attitude.

“I went into the office every day, being there, seeing colleagues, and being a presence in the office,” she remembers. “I felt I wasn’t as affected [as others]. I feel that if you work hard, it will pay off.”

“We did see a lot of real estate agents leave the business because it wasn’t easy anymore,” she continues. “You have to work hard and do a good job for people, and it will come back. Your good reputation goes a long way.”

In today’s COVID-19-affected climate, Debbie has employed the same strategy: focusing on daily tasks and doing right by her clients and community.

“I feel I have kept with what has been successful for me. I continue to be a presence among my colleagues and now throughout Santa Clara County and San Benito County,” she explains. “Giving back is also key for me in my business and my life. As my mom always said, ‘What goes around, comes around.’”

Debbie describes herself as an optimistic individual. She thrives off personal interaction, and while the current restrictions have been challenging, she continues to connect with others through the resources available: Zoom meetings, Microsoft teams, writing letters and notes to clients, and social media engagement.

“Also helping colleagues,” Debbie adds. “I am known to help others in the office. We all have our own business, so why not help others to be successful? It’s not a competition. And, once again, it will come back to you!”

“If you do your activities and do them well, people will always need to buy and sell homes.”

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# Don

## KNIGHT

### REALIZING THE VISION

Each of us has a vision of the future; our goals, and aspirations are continually in focus. But the question is, are we focusing on the right things to allow us to realize those visions?

If we fear the negative we're trying to escape, our focus goes there — and so do our results. But if we relax, then speak and think positivity into the world and truly focus on our desired actions, we're much more likely to realize our desired results.

One of those who have made a successful career out of realizing positive visions for himself and others is real estate agent Don Knight, a true regional leader.

#### **Made for This**

Don seems to have been made for what he does. For a time after graduating from San Jose State, he considered life as a lawyer. Soon though, he decided on life as a real estate agent. And it seems the real estate life chose him, as well.

While attempting to pass the real estate exam, Don had started work and found a sizable client. So his broker paired him up with the woman who would become his partner.

“The broker approached Betty Lynn first about working with me, and she said no. Then they walked up to Darlene Sandusky, and she said yes. She had been in the business just six months longer than me, and she was 22 years older. I remember her saying, ‘Yeah, I’ll work with the kid.’”

Those proved to be prophetic words — ushering in a formal partnership that would last a fulfilling 20 years.

As Don recalls, “I had failed my test the first time. But I started working with Darlene, I passed the test, and we decided to become partners.”





There seemed to be a certain ring and marketability to the way their names sounded.

“So we decided not to use our last names, so we went by Don and Darlene for those 20 years,” Don remembers.

### Priceless Partnership

Don admits he has a competitive side. And he remembers the way he and Darlene gave all they could to successfully launch their new partnership.

“I learned early if you don’t have a listing, you’re unemployed. So we door-knocked, we got on the phone, we did expired listings, and we did open houses. I found open houses are the best way to get a listing. People think you’re there to meet buyers. But my philosophy is you’re there to meet sellers,” Don explains. “Because when a seller decides they’re going to become a seller, the first thing they do is go to open houses to literally look at the inventory, look at their competition. And they’re there to interview.”

The listings did come for Don and Darlene. In fact, at one point, they had 38 listings. The accolades also came. Client by client, Don and Darlene earned the number one ranking at Coldwell Banker.

In time, a pivotal opportunity arose. Their manager, Carol Burnett, moved across the street to Alain Pinel. Don and Darlene were among those who followed her.

About 10 years ago, Darlene retired, and Don went out on his own. In the process, while Don’s top-producing ways continued, his approach changed.

“It’s taken a long time, but I don’t compete anymore with others, just myself,” he says. “When you make that switch from always going upstream because you’re competing with others, and you make the switch and go downstream, it’s easy.”

### Positive Focus

Each day, Don begins with meditation, gratitude, and writing out the things he’s happy for, along with the things he wants to achieve. At that point, he gives it over to what he calls “Source,” God and the universe.

As Don explains, “If you ask, it’s given, and then it’s our job to receive it. I do believe there’s action. But when you’re totally in tune to what you

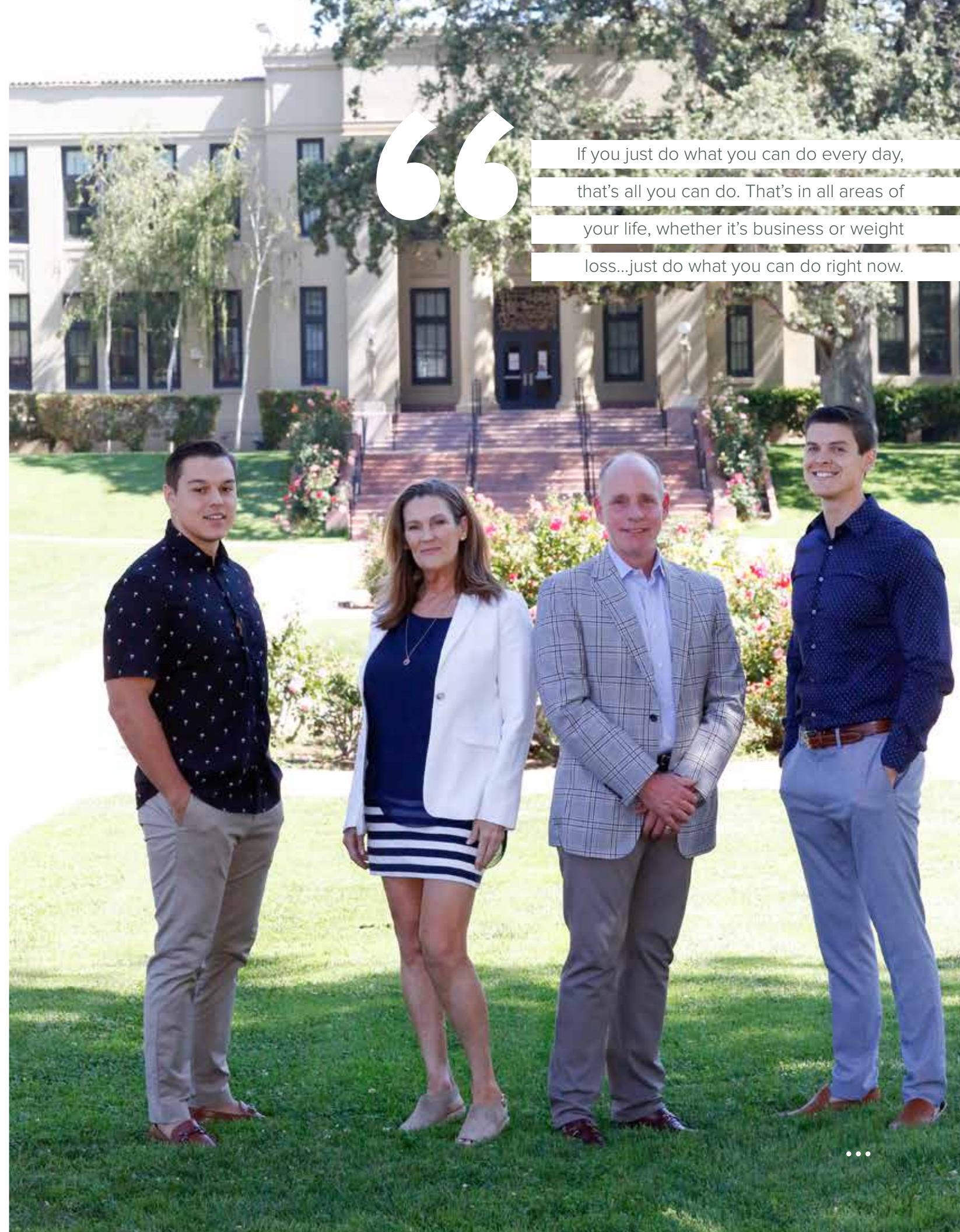
want and tune into Source, then the action works.”

One thing Don is careful to acknowledge is that success is a process.

“If you just do what you can do every day, that’s all you can do. That’s in all areas of your life, whether it’s business or weight loss...just do what you can do right now,” Don emphasizes. “And if you’ve done all you can do, that’s all you can do. Do it again tomorrow, and do it again the next day, and eventually, it will happen,”

Don believes events work out the way they’re meant to. As an example, he was involved in a large listing. A substantial price was set, and an offer was in play for the full listing price.

“I presented the offer, and they were kind of silent. And I said, ‘Well, we should think about this. Let’s talk tomorrow.’ And I repeated to myself, ‘What’s best for all will happen. What’s best for all will happen. And I was so excited.’”



If you just do what you can do every day, that’s all you can do. That’s in all areas of your life, whether it’s business or weight loss...just do what you can do right now.





...

The next day, his listing client called and broke the bad news. They couldn't bring themselves to sell after all. Don's natural first instinct was to be upset.

As he says, "But then I remembered 'what's best for all will happen.' And I had to accept that this outcome may not have been the best for me, but it was best for them."

Being positive can also mean carefully avoiding the negative.

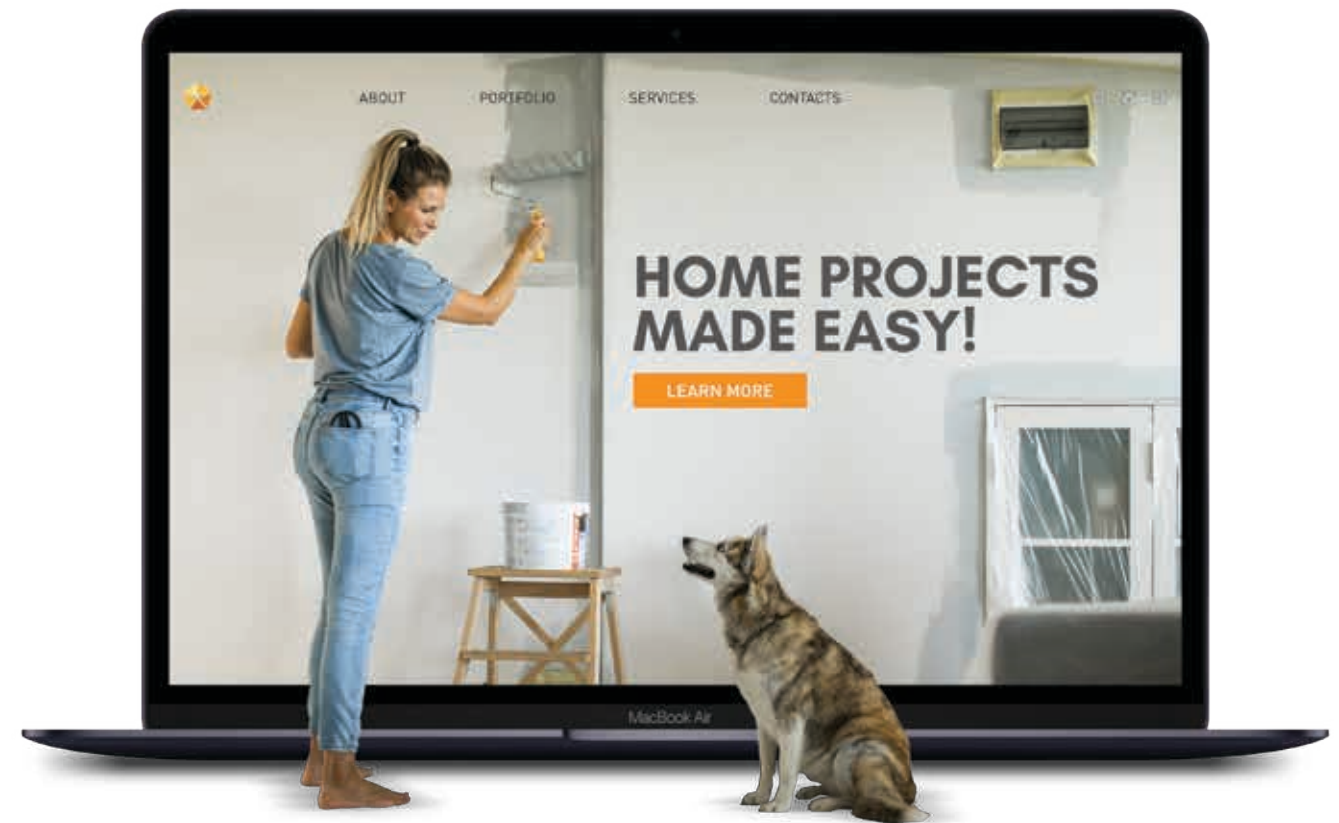
"We often have that hang up. I have it sometimes in my own life where you focus on what is," Don explains. "It could be a lack of money or a lack of relationship or a lack of whatever. And we sometimes focus so much on what we don't have to the point where we just get more of it."

Through time, Don has learned to keep his focus on the positive and realizing the vision that he and his clients share.

As he shares, "Even in the Bible it says, the first step is 'Ask,' the second is 'It's Given' and the third is 'It's Received.'"



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# Carey Gorgolinski

WITH LAWYERS TITLE

## Stepping Into the Present

“We’re on this ride, and there is no stepping off because you’re on the escalator.”

When Carey Gorgolinski launched her career in the title business in the mid-’80s, the industry was a world apart from the present.

“I came into the business in the mid-’80s, when title and escrow were more like working for Bank of America,” Carey remembers. “It had a very specific feel as to how the interactions would go in our office and within the community. It was very insular in a lot of ways.”

Still, Carey instantly knew she would enjoy the business. She thrives off of communication; the relational part of her work was still required to create and sustain success.

“It kept me going through those years knowing there would be something bigger possible,” Carey says.

Seven years into her career, things began to shift. It all started with a transformation in Carey’s personal life: the birth of her first son.

“I started a family of my own, and the world of relationship and the importance of that took on a new level for me,” Carey explains. “I became aware that that is the heart and soul of this industry: building trust, building credibility, and building relationships. That is my calling.”

In college, Carey studied organizational psychology. She never quite knew how her studies would fit into her professional life, but as she got deeper into her work in title, her educational background came into focus.

“I am fascinated with how people work together organizationally and community-wide to create something better than we can create individually,” Carey says. “When I step into any

given day, it’s always filtered through my genuine priorities. Who needs to be taken care of, what needs to be taken care of, and where can I have the biggest impact to make that happen?”

### True Value

All these years later, Carey continues to be most drawn to the individuals in the real estate industry who recognize the gravity of their position. She believes that real estate agents have a critical role in helping people find a home (or sell a home). Their role is both technical and emotional, and it takes a special quality of commitment to truly serve.

When seeking clients and partners, Carey begins with personal connection.

“First of all, I want to know about you. I need to sit with you and find out, what are the things that brought you to real estate? What are your goals? People have very different reasons for coming into real estate,” she explains.

Carey has found that, especially in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, real estate agents are mainly seeking a profession, not a part-time gig. They want to be an ally in helping their clients through transition. They have genuine aspirations to help individuals and families build wealth and protect their future.

“It’s very complex,” Carey says. “[My goal is to discover] what really matters most to people and what their ‘why’ is.”

### Ready to Shift with the Times

Recent times have been dominated by COVID-19 and shelter-in-place. Carey’s professional life isn’t the only thing that has been in transition; her personal life has changed, too.

“Having my 25-year-old and my 20-year-old son both at home with me has been awesome and crazy all at the same time,” Carey smiles. “They are big, and big eaters. I spend a lot of time cooking and talking with them, and a lot gets revealed in those moments.”

In getting to spend so much time with her two sons, Carey has gained deeper insight into the inner workings of the millennial outlook.

“The millennial mindset is so very different,” she says. “I haven’t had the luxury until shelter-in-place to really see it and feel it – how it lives and breathes in the real world and in a pressured situation.”

Carey has gleaned invaluable insight into how much technology can help her clients.

“Technology can greatly assist some of my favorite agents, who are well into their 70s, who are killing it and taking care of people second-to-none for decades...[I appreciate] the reach of the help that technology can provide to an agent to be more functional on the practical side, the lead generation side.”

In today’s market climate, agents are coming to understand that leveraging technology is a requirement. Carey doesn’t believe that’s a negative – quite the opposite. She’s witnessing how technology is being woven into business interactions in a powerfully connected and convenient fashion.

“We better embrace [technology] because there is a chasm of space and time where it is required from consumers before they feel safe again in this COVID transition – before they want people coming into their homes again,” Carey reminds us. “I believe it can happen and will happen in ways that still allow and demand the quality, the integrity, the trustworthiness, and the skill be front and center.”

“Relationship makes the difference. The impressions and the ability to stay connected to people the way they want to be connected with is a game-changer.”



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cover story

Photos by Hyunah Jang  
Written by Zach Cohen



# ALANA CORSO

Experience Lives Here

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•••

“I’ve always been fascinated with houses. This is something I am passionate about. Homes, and connecting people to homes. I think to have a career that is rich, you have to be passionate about what you are doing.”

After graduating from college at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Alana Corso’s professional trajectory led her into wealth management. She had interned with an international investment company during her college years, and she was able to parlay her success there into a full-time position.

“I started in 2000 when everyone thought Y2K was going to happen. I was in the heart of the financial business,” Alana reflects. She eventually moved into a role as a relationship manager, where she helped clients manage their portfolios.

For over a decade, Alana solidified her career in the financial sector. In the meantime, she got married, started a family, and was struggling to find balance.

“I was chronically tired. I had two kids at the time. We were looking to change our house, move to a bigger house, and at the time, I was referred to a real estate agent,” Alana recalls. That real estate agent was Bob Bredel, who not only help Alana buy her next home, but would eventually become her mentor.

### REAL ESTATE: IT’S IN HER BLOOD

Alana’s mother was a residential architect and contractor; as a result, she was surrounded by all things real estate from an early age. “I grew up going to construction sites and looking at houses constantly,” Alana explains.

When Alana met Bob, her passion for real estate was awakened. “I always joked that real estate is mom porn,” she quips.

“My real estate agent, Bob, posted a blog article that he was looking for an assistant,” Alana continues. “I responded, and we talked about me being his assistant. In that conversation, we discovered I was overly qualified, so he encouraged me to get my real estate license and keep the conversation going.”

In 2012, Alana got her license. She went on to join Bob as a buyer’s agent and subsequently began to build her own book of business.

### WORKING WITH PASSION

“I didn’t have a passion for stock markets and financial markets,” Alana admits. “I liked them, but I wasn’t passionate about it. I loved my clients, I loved the relationships, but there was no excitement to me to talk about stocks and bonds. But I love houses. I’ve always loved houses.”

Alana has been able to bring her knowledge from the financial industry into her work in real estate, becoming an expert in helping her clients build investment portfolios and manage their wealth. “Wealth accumulation is hard. It doesn’t come easily,” she explains.” By combining her experience in wealth management with her expertise in real estate, Alana is primely positioned to guide her clients towards the most beneficial outcome.

Today, Alana is the Managing Broker and Co-Founding Partner at Dwell Realtors, which she and Bob helped to open in 2015 along with Laura Bertolacci, Tatum Clarke, and Joyce Romeo.

“Along with several other top-producing agents in our area, we decided to leave traditional real estate brokerage offices and create our own unique boutique brokerage. Since we opened our doors in 2015, we have consistently ranked as one of the top brokerages in San Carlos. Tech-savvy, transparent, and client-minded, we truly live by our motto, Experience Lives Here,” Alana says.

“We’re all ‘can-doers.’ Positive believers. We have similar mindsets.” Alana understands the importance of surrounding herself with honest, hard-working, and likeminded individuals. “When you surround

yourself with good people, it’s all worth it,” she smiles.

### SEEKING BALANCE

Alana realizes that while one of the reasons she originally got into real estate was a desire for more balance in her life – it’s a never-ending challenge to actualize that balance.

“It’s hard. I think balance is really hard. I don’t have enough of it in my life,” she admits. “It affects my relationships – my marriage, with my kids, my friends. When you are highly successful and busy, it’s great, but you need to have that balance in there.”

Alana is slowly learning to delegate work to free up time for the most critical tasks – mainly, taking personal care of her clients. She recently hired a remote assistant, and thus far, it’s been a big help. “It’s about learning what you can delegate out and leverage. I’m finding myself doing tasks I could very easily delegate out to somebody,” Alana explains. “Balance is figuring out what you can’t do yourself, then finding people that can complement and support your business to grow so you can have that balance to spend time with your kids, friends, spouses, and yourself.”

Alana recognizes that by achieving a better balance in her life, she will have the opportunity to experience more joy.

“I have to learn what to say no to. That’s important.”

### A COMMUNITY STAPLE

Alana keeps herself deeply involved in the San Carlos community. With three children in the school systems, she has long been associated with the San Carlos Education Foundation, a 501(3)(c) non-profit that supports public schools. In 2019, she served her second year as President.

“[The San Carlos Education Foundation was] created 25 years ago to bridge the gap between what the state provides and what kids need to get a well-rounded education,” Alana explains. “It’s a good way to give back. With three kids at three different schools, I couldn’t get involved at each PTA.”

Alana is also a Girl Scouts troop leader for both of her daughter’s Girl Scouts troops. As a former Girl Scout herself, Alana believes strongly in building

“When you surround yourself with GOOD PEOPLE, it’s all worth it.”

young woman leaders, guiding them to advocate for themselves, and teaching them to be proud of who they are on the inside.

“You have to be able to find your own voice and what works for you. You have to learn your authentic self,” Alana explains. She understands that authenticity and genuine confidence are assets that will be beneficial for her daughters in all parts of their lives.

“Even when I look at productive real estate agents, those are all people who are true to themselves and their authentic voices.”

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» what's different



# the theory of

# EVOLUTION

We reached out to the Partners of Silicon Valley Real Producers and asked them for their wisdom on what they are doing and how they are doing it. Cindy Gorman, the Founder of Gorman Interiors, shares her thoughts below.

### What's happening?

Business is booming! Everyone is home so scheduling client meetings with contractors to get estimates and work done is so much easier! We are designing office areas in the home and making family rooms and outdoor living areas more functional and beautiful!

### How are you doing business in this environment?

Gorman Interiors is scheduling Zoom meetings/consultation. We have a meet and greet and identify what the scope of the project is online or via phone. Then follow up with an on-site visit to measure the space and take photos. Then it is back to Zoom meeting for our idea boards and presentations. This process is working so well! We wrap up the selections in person at the home to see the fabrics and finishes before orders are placed. And yes, one more visit on delivery day, so exciting! The amount of time in the client's home is minimal if that is the client wish. Since all COVID precautions are taken while present, if the client wants to linger longer with the designer in their home or outside, I am happy to do so.

### What's different?

I'm not spending an hour on the road, to and from the clients' homes five to eight times or the duration of the project! We are saving fuel and time. I am more willing to take on design projects that are farther away, knowing that most of our meetings will be via Zoom.

### What's valuable for agents to know?

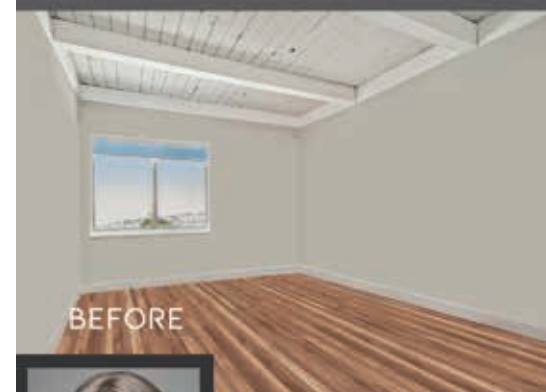
Gorman Interiors offers the following services:

1. Paint color consultations (before selling or after purchase)
2. Furniture layout to improve function and appeal (before selling or after purchase)
3. Stage or decorate a home using the client's furniture and add new accents (before selling or after purchase)
4. Buyer consultations (before purchase or after purchase)
5. Design development for any space indoors or outdoors (after purchase)
6. Shopping trip with a designer (after purchase)
7. Agents live in homes too! I can help you create a living space, home office or quiet zone in your own home for YOU to enjoy 24/7.

Looking forward to working with you or your friends or clients...  
*Cindy K. Gorman*



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