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STORY:

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MOORE

ON THE RISE:

Ricky Russert

WHERE ARE THEY NOW:

Jenny Smith

COACHING
CORNER

Photo by Allie Santos

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Regis Lawson
 Photographer



Heather Pluard
 Writer



Alexandra Santos
 Photographer



For content contributions or to nominate a Realtor for a certain story, please email anthony.mercer@realproducersmag.com

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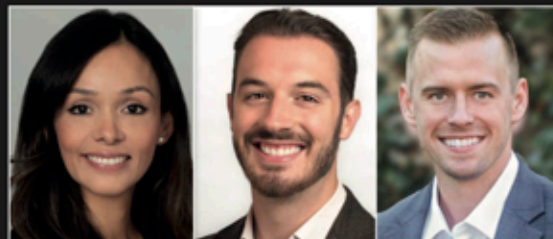
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▶ editor's note

THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE IN A PESKY MARKET



Being a REALTOR® is no easy feat. It's a world of endless phone calls, negotiations, and juggling multiple clients with grace and finesse. But amidst the chaos, one quality shines through like a guiding light—persistence. It's the tenacity that keeps realtors pushing forward when others might throw in the towel.

Imagine this: an agent tirelessly searching for the perfect property for a client, leaving no stone unturned, and going to great lengths to secure that dream home. It's the late nights spent poring over listings, the countless showings, and the refusal to settle for anything less than extraordinary. That, my friends, is the power of persistence.

In the face of setbacks and challenges, REALTORS® demonstrate an unwavering determination that

is nothing short of awe-inspiring. They navigate through complex transactions, dealing with ever-changing market conditions and demanding clients, all with a smile on their faces and a spring in their step. They refuse to let obstacles dampen their spirits or dim their vision.

Persistence is the fuel that propels realtors forward, even when the odds seem stacked against them. It's the voice in their heads whispering, "Keep going. You're closer than you think." And it's the unwavering belief that with enough effort and resilience, dreams can become reality.

So, dear readers, as you immerse yourself in these pages filled with stories of remarkable REALTORS®, let their persistence ignite a fire within you. Let their journeys remind you that setbacks

are merely stepping stones on the path to success. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and keep pushing forward, even when the road seems long and daunting.

Remember, every great achievement is born out of persistence. Whether you're a seasoned REALTOR® or someone just starting to dip their toes into the world of real estate, let this issue serve as a reminder that with determination, grit, and a dash of persistence, you can overcome any obstacle and achieve greatness.

Get ready to be inspired, dear readers, as we celebrate the unwavering spirit of the realtors who continue to defy the odds. May their stories ignite a spark within you, reminding you that persistence is the key that unlocks doors and turns dreams into reality.

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L I N D E M O O R E

▶▶ cover story

By Heather Pluard
Photos by Allie Santos

ascending beyond adversity

Standing on the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in celebration of her 40th birthday, EmpowerHome Team Atlanta Expansion Partner Linde Moore remembered all the proverbial mountains she’s climbed to get to this moment. From surviving not one but two different breast cancers to launching a team within a nationwide network, this powerhouse of a REALTOR® never lets obstacles stop her progress.

“I’m an Activator,” Linde smiles. “I consciously choose to keep moving, even when it’s hard, and I push others to do the same. One of my strengths is thinking months and years in advance when making decisions. Then, if I don’t see a way to overcome a challenge immediately, I will persevere until I do.”

A Georgia native, Linde first tapped into her infamous resilience at age 25 when her father passed away. Launched into what she calls “the after,” Linde held down three jobs to become financially independent and find her true calling. Her experiences included hospice sales, where she learned people always come first, and working with a longtime native luxury multi-family real estate developer - where she learned everything from land acquisition to development, construction, leasing and management. Then in 2013, Linde obtained her license and became a full-time REALTOR® with Keller Williams Realty First Atlanta.

“It felt good in my heart to help families find homes, and it still does,” Linde says. “I sold 27 homes in my first year as a single agent and 54 the next. Then I brought

on an assistant to help. My current Director of Operations, Lauren Woodling, joined me in 2016. She has been beside me ever since.”

As a growth-oriented individual, Linde loves looking for ways to increase her business year-over-year while focusing on client happiness. A fortuitous meeting with her now business partner, Sarah Reynolds, helped her do both. “Sarah worked in the DC metro area leading a team started by her mother, Debbie Reynolds, and I admired all the systems she implemented to ensure success. We were both young moms leading teams, trudging forward with all of the day-to-day in life. For me, that included getting through surgery and radiation treatment after my first breast cancer diagnosis in 2019.”



“
It felt good
in my heart
to help
families find
homes, and
it still does.
”



Photo submitted by Linde while standing at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in celebration of her 40th birthday.

“

When you're used to fighting something like cancer, putting the sword down and moving past your fear is hard. I did it in baby steps.

”

In 2020, at the beginning of COVID, Linde, Sarah & Debbie Reynolds announced their partnership and the creation of EmpowerHome Team Atlanta. Today it's the #1 team in their market center and part of the #1 female-lead team in all of Keller Williams, which is in 12 different markets nationwide. Their big audacious goal is to serve 100 families a month in 100 metro locations and give back one million dollars in those communities each year.

“As we intentionally grow, we'll remain focused on delivering exceptional experiences based on a transparent, consultative, and highly-responsive level of service,” Linde says. “We've put together a brilliant team of REALTORS® who like to be belly-to-belly with clients and care about the people they are helping. Our goal is to impact others positively, and we're proud to consistently sell more homes for a higher amount of money.”

While navigating the complexities of her new business model, Linde faced her biggest life hurdle yet. Her original cancer was back, accompanied by a new type of breast cancer. She had ten surgeries in 365 days and multiple complications. Fortunately, a host of people helped her get through it.

“The Atlanta REALTOR® family supported me through this time, and I will always be grateful for the way they loved on my family and I, including meals, rides to appointments, and making sure my son, Townsend (6), had fun things to do,” Linde says. “My amazing husband, Tyler, was like a single

parent for a year while I recovered, and he never complained once. I had to learn to lean on others, and I am so thankful for all the love shown to me.”

By 2022, Linde was ready to fold back into “real life” but found it more challenging than anticipated. “When you're used to fighting something like cancer, putting the sword down and moving past your fear is hard. I did it in baby steps. First, I helped one buyer. Then, as I realized I still loved winning for clients, I helped another and then another. I was filled with joy as I inched my way back into production. Nothing can take the REALTOR® out of me.”



Today, Linde is on a mission to advance the real estate industry and protect the REALTOR®. “We don't have to be victims to the market,” she says. “We can determine our income and impact on clients and offer them more. Price is only questioned when there is a lack of value. I believe in what we do and what we offer, and I love instilling that confidence in my team.”

The EmpowerHome Team Atlanta had \$71 million in sales last year and is on track to do more in 2023. The office

plans to double the number of agents from twelve to 22. “Who you work with matters,” Linde says. “It impacts everything, so always put yourself where you can learn and grow. Success leaves clues. Talk to agents doing well and follow proven systems. You don't have to recreate the wheel to summit whatever mountain you are trying to climb. Having a positive mindset is the most important predictor of success. As Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can, or you think you can't - you're right.”

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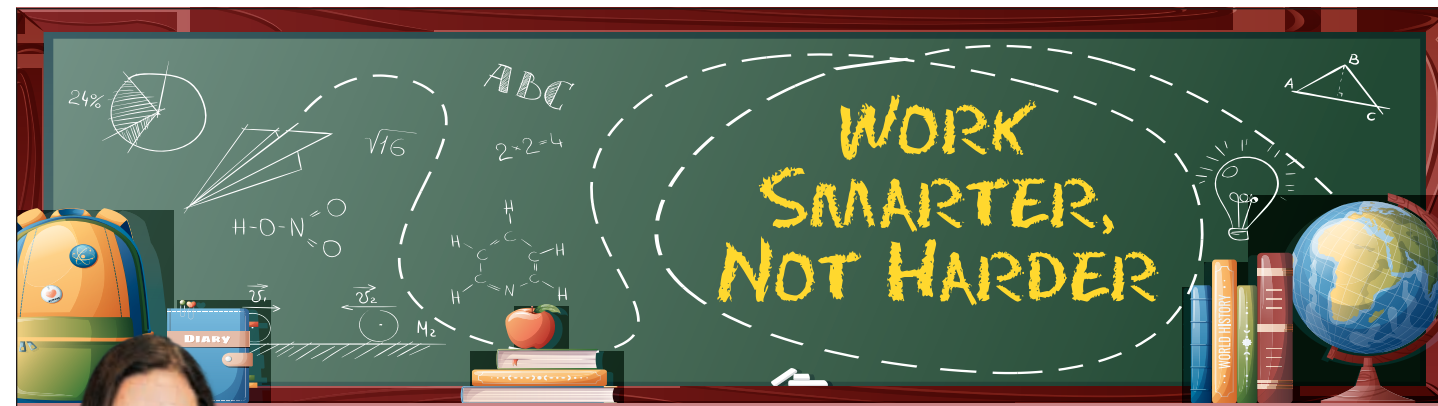


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FAQ

about Greater Atlanta Real Producers

Ever since we launched *Greater Atlanta Real Producers*, I have heard some of the same questions from many of you. I figured it would be most efficient to publish the answers here in case more of you had the same questions. Remember, my door is *always* open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be *Your* voice!

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 500 Realtors and teams that fall within the top 500 in the Greater Atlanta area. We pull MLS numbers (by closed volume) in the Atlanta market each year and we cut off the list at number 500. The list resets at the beginning of each year based on the prior year's totals and continues to update annually.

Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It's really simple — one or multiple peers have first nominated every featured agent you see. You can nominate or be nominated by other agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, and office leaders. A nomination currently looks like this: you email us at: **Anthony.Mercer@realproducersmag.com** with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain WHY you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told, perhaps they overcame extreme

obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way, etc. Once the timing is right, the next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion.

Q: What does it cost to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! This is NOT a pay-to-play model whatsoever.

Q: How can I write an article to be printed?

A: If you are interested in writing an article to contribute your ideas, experience, knowledge, expertise, or stories to the *Greater Atlanta Real Producers* community, please email us at: **Team@AtlRealProducers.com** - Even if you don't consider yourself a prolific writer, let's talk!

Q: Who are the Preferred Partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the index at the front of the magazine is an integral part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our events, and be part of our social media groups. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many agents have personally referred every single Preferred Partner you see. We won't even take a meeting with a business

that has not been vetted by one of you and is "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network not only of the best agents in the area but the best affiliates, as well, so we can all grow stronger together.

Q: How can I refer a local business to join Greater Atlanta Real Producers as a Preferred Partner?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that would like to work with more top real estate agents, please email me at: **Anthony.mercer@realproducersmag.com** or visit **AtlRealProducers.com** and introduce us! This is the only way we can grow and strengthen this community, through your referrals. It's much appreciated!



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Ricky Russert

▶ on the rise

CARVING PATHS IN
FILM AND REAL ESTATE

Photos by Regis Lawson

Ricky Russert, a man of many talents and endless perseverance, has been redefining the world of real estate since he embarked on this journey over three years ago. While most know him for his on-screen charisma and acting prowess, Russert's transition into the realm of real estate has been a remarkable tale of transformation.



Before finding his calling in the real estate market, Russert spent a staggering 18 years as a film and TV actor and producer. Not one to be confined to a single endeavor, he also dabbled in various other fields, from owning a moving company to helping run his wife Nichole's chocolate business, Nicobella. His versatile background showcases his willingness to embrace new challenges and reinvent himself, an ethos he carries into every aspect of his life.

Russert's path to becoming a REALTOR® was paved by his deep-seated affinity for homes and real estate, rooted in his upbringing as the son and grandson of carpenters. His early influences, his hardworking parents, instilled in him the value of diligence and persistence – qualities that have remained his guiding stars throughout his life. His education journey led him to Washington State University, where he honed his

skills and laid the foundation for his multifaceted career.

"My dad and mom were my pillars of inspiration," Russert shared, reflecting on his roots. "Life itself is a constant journey. As long as I could put one foot in front of the other or see in front of me, I had to keep going. Constantly reinventing myself and being open to new possibilities. I believe how you do anything is how you do everything."



“
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”

In early 2020, amidst the backdrop of global turmoil, Russert's trajectory took an unforeseen turn. The suspension of film productions prompted him to explore new avenues, and the idea of becoming a REALTOR® was sown. Encouragement from his advisors, Julian Rather and Jeremy Smith, marked the inception of his career in real estate. He swiftly obtained his license and joined Intown Advisors, where he became an integral part of their dynamic team.

"Helping others during one of their most important life decisions is what I'm passionate about right now in my business," Russert mused. His dedication to guiding clients through the exhilarating process of home buying or selling shines through his work at Engel&Völkers Atlanta. With a career volume of over \$40 million to date and a remarkable achievement as a top producer for three consecutive years, Russert's prowess in the real estate industry is undeniable.

But success hasn't come without its share of challenges. The media's portrayal of real estate as a stressful and costly venture has posed a hurdle that Russert faces head-on. "The world news can instill fear and cold feet in potential homebuyers," he acknowledged. Yet, his steadfastness and unwavering commitment to his clients have enabled him to navigate these challenges and dispel misconceptions.

Ricky Russert's involvement in real estate is not solely driven by financial gains; it's a reflection of his genuine desire to uplift others. He envisions a future where he continues to invest in the dreams of others through the avenue of real estate. "I will always invest myself into other's futures, and doing that through real estate fits me well," he affirmed.

Beyond his professional pursuits, Russert finds solace in his family and passions. Married to Nichole, who he fondly describes as the structure that upholds them, they share a penchant for food, music, and travel. Their fur baby, Mariposa, completes their harmonious household. Russert's eclectic tastes extend to his favorite books, music, and movies, reflecting his diverse interests and insatiable curiosity.

A man of purpose and compassion, Russert extends his reach to charitable endeavors, supporting causes like Special Olympics and Mercy for Animals. "Strength and resources, as well as voices, are given to those who may not have one," he articulated, explaining the motivation behind his philanthropy.

“
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”



When asked about his advice for aspiring REALTORS®, Russert's response was simple yet profound: "Listen and then respond." This ethos encapsulates his approach to both business and life, where understanding and empathy paved the way for effective communication and successful outcomes. He hopes to be remembered for his

versatility and strength, a legacy that speaks to his unyielding dedication to those around him. Ricky Russert's journey from the silver screen to the real estate market is a testament to the power of reinvention and persistence. With an unwavering commitment to his

clients and an innate ability to adapt, he continues to shape the real estate landscape while leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and homes of those he serves. As the world witnesses his multifaceted journey, Ricky Russert stands as a beacon of inspiration for all who dare to carve their paths in uncharted territories.

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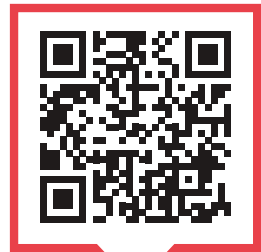


Picture This: A child goes through the cafeteria line with their classmates, and picks out their warm, healthy meal choice. As the child arrives at the register, they come to find out that their balance is too low for the lunch. The warm, delicious, (and in some cases, the child's ONLY meal of the day), is thrown into the garbage. The child is handed a cold sandwich and a water. The child only eats a few nibbles of the sandwich because they are saving it to bring home to share with their sibling for "dinner".

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▶▶ where are they now

Jenny Smith

Soaring Higher

In the ever-changing landscape of the real estate industry, some stars continue to shine brighter with each passing year. Jenny Smith, a prominent figure in the local real estate market and the driving force behind Jenny Smith and Associates at Keller Williams, is a prime example of this upward trajectory. Since her original feature as a Rising Star in Atlanta Real Producers, Jenny's career has not only maintained its momentum but soared to even greater heights.

"Since being featured as a 'Rising Star,' my career has continued to soar," she states with unwavering confidence. With a client-focused approach and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Jenny has expanded her client base and established a thriving team of 12 agents and four support staff. Her deep expertise in the local real estate market has positioned her as a trusted advisor, equipped to navigate market trends and offer valuable guidance to her clients.

Jenny's passion for her work goes hand in hand with her dedication to empowering others.

"Currently, my passion lies in utilizing video marketing to educate and empower clients throughout their real estate journey," Jenny shares. Her innovative approach involves creating informative videos that address clients' concerns, simplify complex concepts, and offer practical advice. Through these videos, she not only builds trust but also ensures that her clients are well-informed and confident in their decisions.

Beyond her professional achievements, Jenny's personal life has also experienced heartwarming additions. "We're now proud grandparents to two adorable grandkids, Josephine and Miles," Jenny reveals with a smile. These young additions have reminded Jenny and her husband, Chad, of the importance of creating a secure and fulfilling future for their loved ones.

Looking ahead, Jenny's aspirations remain steadfast. "In the next five years, I envision expanding my presence in the local real estate market," she states. Leading a successful team renowned for outstanding client satisfaction is a top goal, and Jenny plans to actively contribute to the growth and development of the real estate community through mentoring and speaking engagements.

Jenny's success story is underpinned by her exceptional ability to build trust and foster connections. "One of my real estate superpowers is building trust with my clients," Jenny affirms. Her knack for understanding her clients' unique goals and aspirations, coupled with her commitment to delivering tailored solutions, sets her apart in a crowded market.

As an industry trailblazer, Jenny's advice to up-and-coming realtors is straightforward yet invaluable. "To make it to the top in real estate, you gotta have a killer work ethic, a hunger for continuous learning, and the knack for building real connections," she advises. Embracing change and adopting an adaptable mindset, in Jenny's view, are pivotal for staying ahead of the curve.

In a world where success is often measured by more than just professional accomplishments, Jenny Smith is a beacon of balance. Whether she's negotiating a deal, mentoring a new agent, or spending cherished moments with her family, she exemplifies the essence of a true real estate maven who understands that true fulfillment transcends the boundaries of business.

And as she gazes out from her back porch, engaged in heartfelt conversations with her husband and basking in the joy of her grandchildren's laughter, Jenny Smith embodies the essence of a life well-lived—one where passion, dedication, and connection intersect harmoniously.



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What I learned at the feet of JOHN MAXWELL

Submitted by **Christy Belt Grossman**, CEO and owner of Ops Boss Coaching™

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to personally speak in front of, and then to learn from, John Maxwell. I found his wisdom invaluable in my business and trust you will as well.

First, John spoke to us about “Leadershift”. He said, “Difficult times separate the players & pretenders.” We can all relate to that in Today’s Real Estate Market. John then shared 6 Lessons to adapt and succeed. (You’ll find them in my notes below.)

Secondly, I had the (nerve-wracking!) pleasure of being one of the main speakers at the event John keynoted. He arrived 2 hours early. Which meant he was unexpectedly in the front row as I spoke. (Good thing I had a long dress on, so you couldn’t see my knees shaking!)

Following my talk, John sat me down next to him, pulled his cell phone out and scrolled through the screenshots he took of my slides. “THAT was REALLY good. This part here was excellent. And this part here - well I am going to put that in my next book. I won’t give you royalties, but I’ll give you credit.” (LOL!)

John may say that to many people, AND I took this as a great encouragement that the message of leadership empowerment we deliver at Ops Boss® Coaching is worthy and needed. The talk that day was for Mega Agents. The Title was “How To Build An Operational Powerhouse” and the topic was actually about the evolution every agent must make from “Superstar Salesperson” to “Brilliant Business Boss” to “Lifegiving Leader”.

(I’d love to bring that talk to YOUR office or region, followed by our “10 Secrets of a Mega EA” class. I passionately know it will help you recruit, retain and grow your productivity. Let’s chat!)

Now, here are my personal “Cliff Notes”:

WHAT I LEARNED AT THE FEET OF JOHN MAXWELL:

- Add value to leaders who multiply value to others.
- Am I going to wing it or work for it?
- Difficult times separate the players & pretenders.

LEADERSHIFT

1. Continually learn, unlearn and relearn. (This is a circular cycle)

- What worked then does not work now.
- Leaders see MORE than others see BEFORE others see it.
- Managers don’t want change in the business, Leaders see the need for change.
- HBR Study: You only apply what you learn for the next 5 years. Therefore you must constantly be learning.
- The top 3 competencies in business today: Adaptability, Learning Agility, Communication Skills

The Cycle of Success

1. Test - Try lots of new things. This keeps you continually on The edge and that is what allows you to see things before others do
2. Fail - If you test a lot, you’ll fail a lot. If you fail a lot, you’ll learn a lot. In order to increase your failure rate, increase your testing rate (BOOM!)
3. Learn - Failure is your greatest teacher. The fruit of failing is learning. The value of learning results in improving.
4. Improve - Ask how the learning can improve your business and your life. Then take action. Don’t re-enter until you improve. Otherwise you are the stupid guy banging his head against the ceiling saying “just keep getting up”.
5. Re-Enter. Get back in the game. Take action, Your tendency is to freeze. You have to take action to stay in the game. When you re-enter after improvement, you cycle UP (versus cycling circularly). Then you start back at testing, but are leveled up.

Then Rinse and Repeat

2. Value yesterday, but live in today.

- We over exaggerate yesterday, overestimate tomorrow and we undervalue today.
- Whatever you're doing has to be the best you can do TODAY.
- "My favorite book is the one I am writing now."
- John's next book will be "High Road Leadership".
- When I don't fall in love with what I am doing right now, I don't do my best.
- When you don't want to do it any more, you're not any good at it. And you might as well quit because you already have.

3. Rely on speed, thrive on timing.

- Act on what you see before others see it and act.
- Get started first.
- The fastest person doesn't always win the race. It's the person who starts first.
- What can you do differently to set yourself apart? (If they stop, then start. If they start, then stop.)

4. Live in today, but think about tomorrow.

- Because the future arrives unannounced.
- Go into the room and think like the client will think, not like you will think. Talk about and ask about what is important to THEM.
- Nightmare = Big Dream + Bad Team
- It's not the dream that determines your success, it's your team.

Action Attraction

- We overestimate belief and underestimate action.
- Example: "if you believe, you can achieve".
- We even write songs about it. "I believe I can fly".
- No you can't! That's BS!
- You need clarity about what you want and who you want to do it with. But that's not enough.
- You need to take action. There's no action attraction without action.

5. Move forward courageously in the midst of uncertainty.

- Don't freeze.
- Life expands or shrinks in proportion to our courage.
- Fear or faith. In difficult times we follow the one that is the strongest. (Note to self - Work on your faith so it becomes a reflex. Faith comes through taking action.)
- If you find out you can't do something (ex during Covid), what Can you do?
- Everything worthwhile is uphill. You can't have uphill hopes and downhill habits.
- "Waiting for the storm to pass" is a downhill habit.

6. Realize that today's best will not meet tomorrow's challenge.

- (Note to self: This requires CANI. Constant Never Ending Improvement.)
- You have to keep changing to get better.
 - Go where you've never gone, do what you've never done.



Christy Belt Grossman is Founder & CEO of Ops Boss® Coaching. Prior to that, Christy was COO of one of the nation's first teams with \$1 Billion in sales. Ops Boss® Coaching is the premier provider of education, coaching & community ESPECIALLY for real estate operations professionals who we call Ops Bosses®! www.OpsBossCoaching.com.

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