

## Face your fears

In my two previous MAR articles, I have tried to keep my writings more focused on the business of brokerage and sales than on leadership or legislative issues. "Survival of the Fittest," was meant to challenge you to consider the changes you need to recognize and adapt to in our current business climate. "Success Breeds Success," was meant to have you recognize that you are a product of your environment and to find a way to positively influence both your office and the world you live in.

In this article titled "Face Your Fears," I want to share what I feel is one of the main issues that agents face everyday. The title comes from a saying I like which says, "Face your fears, or they will climb over your back!" What it means is that the fears we carry in our lives don't come and go based upon whether or not we want to pay attention to them. Turning our backs on them only gives them a less defended target. Fears, whether they are real or not are certainly feelings, and the only way to change feelings is with information.

Here's my take, this industry is at its hardest point in my twelve year career. What I have seen in my sales business, my management duties and in my leadership at MAR is that the same effort from a few years ago will yield a lesser result. I have seen REALTORS® who were role models to me in the past leave the business, and hometown brokerages consolidate with other offices or shut down after decades in business. More to the point, I have seen something a little scarier, and that is good agents accepting that they will sell less as part of their plan for the year. Why?

Economics aside, I will tell you that it is fear that puts us in these places in our own minds. I'm not ignorant to the economics which are a greater part of our everyday lives than they were before. I am also not immune to the fact that as much as we love and care for them, that there are some agents and offices who have been passed over by this "new normal," and found themselves unable to adapt to our challenged economy. That's business, but what I have been trying to communicate to everyone who will listen is that

this battle is all about perspective. One of the great benefits of leadership is the networking that comes with it. There is tremendous value both in talking with agents around the area and around the state to share common challenges and I suggest that you do this, but make sure that you are sharing the success stories too.

In the company I once owned, we would share each agent's income and production levels every week with the entire company at our sales meetings. While there were always a few jealous looks, the majority of the agents were inspired by what their peers were able to accomplish. It was a message that not only could it be done, but it could be done with the same tools they had in their hands. Now if you know that, and can see it, then that is information that fear cannot stand against. You have no right to feel inadequate, or to say to yourself, "I can't do that." That's your fear speaking to you. The reality is that you know that it can be done. The same thing holds true with the media. We know the stories, and we know the fear that is intertwined with the negatives, but is that newspaper, or television show really enough to eclipse what you've seen with your own two eyes? My answer would be "No." Just take a minute to look at the top 20 agents in your own MLS, or compare the top ten companies in your market in 2007 to their own production in 2006. Along with the declines, you'll see victories — in agents and in companies who have figured out how to be successful despite the market around them. That is information worth having. That is information that dispels fear.

My last piece of advice for you is to quit looking for the "bottom" of the market. What does it matter to you anyway? Is the bottom going to give you some resource to better yourself that you don't have today? I don't think so. You're just looking for some common consensus that things won't get any worse. Let someone else watch for the bottom, your job is to keep your vision toward the top.

Isn't that where you want to be? **MAR**

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by Jeff Young

West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS®