

THE POWER OF ONE

How **UNConventional Thinking** Inspired by
ONE Purpose Creates **UNStoppable Growth**



by Kuba
Jewgieniew

The Power *of* **ONE**

HOW UNCONVENTIONAL THINKING INSPIRED BY
ONE PURPOSE CREATES UNSTOPPABLE MOVEMENT

Kuba
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*The Power of ONE: How UNconventional Thinking Inspired by ONE
Purpose Creates UNstoppable Movement*

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CHAPTER 1

UNstoppable

What Is the Power of ONE?

I make dreams come true . . . for a living.
Seriously, that's my job.

I spend my days coming up with different ways to help families get out of a home that no longer suits their needs and into their dream home that fits them like the proverbial glove.

Not only that, but I spend practically every waking minute of my life thinking up ways to help Realtors, entrepreneurs, self-starters, and business owners create a customized, picture-perfect, finely tuned dream job for themselves. I live my life—and I help other professionals live *their* lives—by Seth Godin's maxim, "Instead of wondering where your next vacation is, maybe you should set up a life you don't need to escape from."

For me and the tens of thousands of people who work alongside me in my brokerage company, real estate is

hands-down the best, most consistent, most reliable, and most fun way to “set up” that kind of life. It’s a dream job for us that positions us to make *other people’s* dreams come true. And I don’t use the term *dream* lightly. After all, homeownership has long been considered the very definition of “the American Dream”!

If all that is true (and it is), then why is it that so many real estate professionals seem to hate their jobs?

It doesn’t take long for a brand-new, rookie real estate agent to spot all the common pain points in the industry. We feel trapped in someone else’s rule book and bound by their policies. We’re forced to use our brokerage’s scripts and follow their alleged “best practices” for how to sell a house. We have to sit in a cubicle in a boring business office when we’re not out in the field. We’re representing a brand we generally don’t care about, and we believe all real estate brokerages are interchangeable—the only thing that changes is the logo on our business cards. Worst of all, we work our butts off only to have our brokerage “mess with our check,” taking a big percentage of our commission checks for themselves.

It can often feel like most real estate brokerages have figured out how to squeeze all the joy and excitement out of what *should* be the best job in the world!

I founded Realty ONE Group in 2005 to offer real estate professionals an alternative to the old, stale brokerage companies I’d grown tired of. Today, we’re a global brand with more than twenty thousand team members in over four hundred locations across the US and on five continents. We are a huge team of professionals living our dream

of helping others make *their* dreams come true . . . ONE family, ONE home at a time.

ONE is not just a number; it's our vision. It is who we are and how we conduct ourselves—ONE group united by ONE common goal: to change lives for the better. Whatever we do, we do it together. Whatever success we have, we achieve it together. Whatever challenges we have, we face them together. Because together, we do more, have more success, and overcome more challenges than any ONE of us ever could alone.

That is the Power of ONE.

I wrote this book to share with you our ONE philosophy—the cornerstone of our business model—whether you are a real estate professional looking for something different; a potential franchisee anywhere on earth who dreams of becoming their own CEO; a homeowner or soon-to-be homeowner who wants to find a better way to buy or sell a home; an entrepreneur looking to take your existing business to the next level; or an individual in any field who wants to see how putting people first creates awesome outcomes for everyONE involved. The chapters ahead will reveal how I seized on my own dreams as an entrepreneur and made them into ONE reality—and how, if you want to, you can achieve the same for your business.

Realty ONE Group is the product of my upbringing, personal ethos, previous job experiences, and entrepreneurial dreams. I didn't grow up dreaming of going into real estate. In fact, it isn't even what I did at the very start of my career. However, I *did* grow up always thinking about ways to innovate tired processes, improve people's lives, and

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make a difference in the world. That—not real estate—is my true passion and calling. So, when I eventually did get into the real estate industry, I began focusing all that entrepreneurial energy on improving the frustrations that I (and every other agent) experienced on a daily basis.

Early in my career, I frankly got fed up with the brokerages I'd worked for. I couldn't take it anymore. I loved the heart of my job as a Realtor, but I was so frustrated with the age-old processes and headaches that surrounded it that I knew I had to make a major change. The only question was, What I going to change myself . . . or was I going to change the way real estate is done?

Never one to take the well-trodden path, I chose the latter.

I changed real estate itself.

And here, in this book, I want to tell you why and how.

But first, I suppose I should answer the more immediate question: *Who?* Who was I to think I could do something as audacious as fundamentally changing how one of the world's oldest and most established industries operates?

I'm glad you asked.

Hardwired to Work Hard

As a first-generation American from an immigrant family, the value of hard work and the willingness to sacrifice short-term fun for long-term success is hardwired into my DNA. My parents, who I'll discuss more in the following chapter, were born and raised in Poland during World War II. They instilled in me the value of earning my own way

through resilience, effort, and an inviolable commitment to respecting others. They also passed on to me an unwavering respect and appreciation for freedom, especially the freedoms we enjoy here in America. Having seen firsthand in their youth the horrors that accompany a loss of personal freedoms, they would always remind us, “Once your freedom is taken away, it is nearly impossible to get it back.”

My late grandmother, whom we lovingly called *Babi*, lived with us. Her strength has always kept me grounded, even now, long after her passing.

Babi raised four children as a single mother—no small feat in 1920s and 1930s Poland. She had a kind soul and a delicate sensibility for the world, but she was also tough as nails and resilient. And wise! Oh, how the wisdom effortlessly poured out of her nonstop! I spent countless hours sitting in the kitchen talking with her about anything and everything as she prepared her perfectly scrumptious meals. The time I spent with her as a young boy gave me probably the greatest education I’ve ever received.

Babi was a master storyteller. She taught me how to not only *tell* my own story but also how to *craft* my own story by writing the tale of my life—past, present, and future—and articulating the dreams I would bring to life one day. She believed everyone should learn to become their own storyteller, always working to perfect the vision of themselves they keep in their imagination and to ultimately *live out* that vision. Babi taught me to bring out that best version of myself by living every day with gratitude and love. That’s the only way we can bring positive change into our lives and into the lives of the people around us.

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My parents were hard workers (almost to a fault), and they passed their unstoppable work ethic on to me. I started working as soon as I was able, hustling to deliver pizzas and taking other odd jobs. My goal was to earn enough to put myself through college and become the first person in my family to graduate from university. Financial necessity required me to work for someone else back then, but the entrepreneurial flame has burned brightly in my spirit for as long as I can remember. Working *for* someone else—a “boss”—never felt natural to me, and I was always coming up with new business ideas for myself. As a teenager, I began buying busted computers at yard sales, refurbishing them, and then selling them and other electronics for a profit in the early days of eBay.

Sustaining and realizing my entrepreneurial dreams wasn't easy because of my other commitments. Between sitting in school all day, studying and writing papers all night, and working part-time jobs for other people in my spare time, I didn't have as much time as I wanted to focus on my own business goals. When you're a kid and even when you're in college, you don't enjoy much control over how and where you spend most of your time. Making this even more frustrating was the fact that school—the bottomless pit that consumed most of my time—was not doing *anything* to actually prepare me for the kind of life I knew I wanted to live.

High schools and colleges seem to be almost laser-focused on teaching students how to become *good employees*. Students are taught how to follow precise learning plans, how to pass quizzes, and how to tick all the boxes to complete their graduation requirements. That education then

prepares them to join the workforce, where they follow precise corporate guidelines, pass performance reviews, and tick all the boxes to earn their next promotion. It's almost like training lab rats to run a maze: Do this, get a reward. Do that, get punished. Then, go back to your cage and do it all over again tomorrow.

No thanks.

I was never interested in learning how to become a better employee. I wanted to know how to start a business and become the employer. But that's something I had to learn outside the classroom.

Fanning the Fire in My Belly

School can't turn just *anybody* into an entrepreneur. Sure, there are skills, tips, and tricks that can be taught, but 99 percent of entrepreneurship comes down to each person's motivation, drive, passion, and creativity. It's not about how much you know or even *what* you know; more often than not, it's about having a fire in your belly that's always pushing you to do more, to go further, and to create something new.

I've always had that fire. All of us who were born with the entrepreneurial spirit burning in our bellies figure out some way to carve out the freedom and flexibility in our careers to wake up and shape each day into whatever we want it to be. Most people with an employee mindset yearn for the fun, carefree days of college. Not me. For someone like me, college was a prison. I had practically zero freedom and flexibility. I couldn't "shape my days" because they already came to me fully formed. I was at the

mercy of other people telling me what to study, where to go, what room I had to be in at what time, and what was “important.” I couldn’t achieve anything that was meaningful *to me* because I was tied up achieving things that were meaningful *to other people*.

That way of life carried over after college, too, when I began a lucrative (though short-lived) career as a financial advisor and portfolio manager. I was building wealth for young investors (and for myself), but I was chained to the same time and space restrictions that frustrated me so much in school. I was desperate to experience true freedom and flexibility, and I wanted to make a meaningful difference in people’s lives beyond the simple maintenance of their financial portfolios.

More than that, I wanted to create something new. I wanted to help people. I wanted to engage with others in a new and dynamic way. As lucrative as wealth management had been for me, I knew I couldn’t stay where I was and still accomplish the goals that literally got me out of bed every morning.

After working in finance, I switched gears and jumped over to real estate. It seemed like the perfect fit for someone like me. What could make a greater, more life-changing impact on someone than helping them realize their dream of homeownership?

It was an immediate game-changer for me. In my first eighteen months as an agent, I closed one hundred and eleven transactions with more than \$30 million in sales. I was making money; I was helping people make the biggest, most important, and most stressful purchase of their

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lives; and I finally had the freedom and flexibility I'd always craved. But I was also coming up against all the irritating pain points that every real estate agent has to deal with. While the primary job of an agent was a great fit for my entrepreneurial drive, the systems and structures *surrounding* the agent's job wasn't.

I intuitively knew there was a better, fairer way to conduct a real estate business.

I also knew I was the one who could figure it out.

I'd already found my freedom and flexibility. Now . . . it was time to create something new.

Creating a New Reality for Myself . . . and for Real Estate

I launched our revolutionary real estate brokerage firm, Realty ONE Group, in 2005 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Our company was born largely from the frustration I experienced as an agent. Real estate itself is exciting—nothing beats the feeling of matching a young family with their perfect home. The processes surrounding the real estate business, however, are . . . *complicated* . . . to say the least. There are at least a half dozen different stakeholders in every real estate transaction, and each has different—often competing—interests. And, of course, real estate in general is always at the mercy of economic shifts beyond anyone's control.

So, yes, real estate is a complicated business. It's always been a complicated business, and it will always be a complicated business. I can't change that.

I can, however, make things a lot easier for everyone involved.

In fact, through Realty ONE Group, I've done just that.

For the first couple of years, I worked like crazy, targeting the total addressable market. My goal in those days was to build the company as big and as quickly as I could. It worked, as we attracted two hundred and fifty agents in our first two years, closing \$102 million in the process. Unbelievably, we *tripled* in size the following year, despite going up against two major competitors in the Las Vegas market.

How did we grow so fast? What made hundreds of experienced agents take a chance on a brand-new brokerage startup in a market that was already completely saturated by the “big league” real estate brands?

We focused on the people, not the properties.

When we pitched the business, we spent nearly all our time getting to know the agents, listening to their frustrations, and sharing our vision for eliminating as many of those procedural problems as possible. We sold them our vision—not for how we could help them make more money but for how we could help them make their lives better.

It turned out that the industry was filled to the brim with professionals who were just as frustrated as I was—and more so—by doing things “how we've always done it.”

That sudden growth was not without new and unexpected challenges of its own. Our size went up threefold, but our expenses had gone up *fivefold*. We were growing too fast for our bootstrapping, startup mentality to keep

up with. I'll admit, this is where my lack of formal training in money management worked against me. The cash flow expenses stretched me far beyond what I was prepared for. As I result, I worked impossibly long hours trying to push back the rising tide of bills and complications. My physical health suffered. My mental and emotional health suffered. My quality of life suffered. My relationships suffered—and some important relationships were even destroyed.

Without realizing it, I had surrendered the freedom and flexibility I had spent a lifetime working toward. My own company ruled over me far more harshly than any boss I'd ever had. If something didn't change soon, Realty ONE Group would implode and likely take me out in the process.

Nearly at my breaking point, I realized I had to make some serious changes in both how I ran the company and, more importantly, how I balanced my personal life and my relentless pursuit of my entrepreneurial vision. It was time to admit my failures, pick myself up, dust myself off, and try again. But this time, I was determined to learn and grow both as an entrepreneur *and* as a human being.

Of course, I heard my fair share of "I told you sos" from real estate colleagues who had always been skeptical of what I hoped to accomplish with Realty ONE Group. That's something every high achiever (or aspiring high achiever) faces every time they face a setback, no matter how temporary.

When the brave and bold stumble, cowards rejoice—and nothing feels better to a coward than watching a champion trip up. I try to avoid spending much time with people who have a "pigeon mindset." I'd rather spend my

days soaring with other eagles, even if it means I might have farther to fall. As the late, great Jim Rohn once said, “You’re the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” If you keep too many pigeons in your flock, you’ll eventually start flying at their level—a half inch off the ground.

As I worked to rebuild myself and my company, I focused intensely on not just growing a financially sound and successful business but on growing the quality of life for every person who worked with me. I knew Realty ONE Group could be a game-changer in the industry from a process standpoint *and* from a people standpoint. My North Star shifted more toward understanding how to better connect with my team members one-to-one and one-to-many. That’s when our company culture began to evolve, leading us to the development of our core values—known collectively as “the 6C’s.” These are the six values that articulate what we see as the main purpose of our ONE mentality: EveryONE matters.

The 6 C's are:

Coolture
Coaching
Connect
Community
Care
Commission

I try to avoid spending much
time with people who have
a *"pigeon mindset."*

I'd rather spend my days
soaring with other eagles,
even if it means I might
have farther to fall.

Each value signifies a different experience that catalyzes the varied people we serve. Together, these six values serve as the six pillars of our business, making it stand strong against whatever competitive, economic, market, or personal pressures push against it.

I will carefully unpack and explain each of the 6C's throughout this book as I walk you through our industry-leading and industry-changing process. The heart of the values appears first in the list, and it's something we call *Coolture*, a combination of *cool* and *culture*. Our company *Coolture* values unity, respect, and empowerment. Our respect for our real estate pros and franchisees empowers them to take control of their own professional and personal growth and maximizes their earning potential.

Our 100 percent commission structure (with minimal flat fees for transactions, risk management, and office space) not only distinguishes us from competitors, it also ensures that our professionals earn what they deserve. Additionally, our free training and proprietary technology platform have enabled our real estate professionals and franchisees to learn and thrive by staying ahead of ever-changing market trends and economic conditions.

None of this has happened by accident. These incentives and every other factor that makes Realty ONE Group stand out from the pack of real estate brokerages have each been introduced with the highest level of intentionality. In fact, *everything* we do is intentional. This goes all the way back to the formation of the business entity, which I named Realty ONE Group. I intentionally put the word *realty* right up front. Why? Because most brokerage names almost

hide the fact that they are Realtors! The next two words, *one group*, are there to demonstrate that, though we are now thousands of franchisees strong, we are still . . . well . . . *one group*. We are ONE team that celebrates each ONE's success as the entire company's success! We even write the word *ONE* in all caps wherever it appears—and I don't just mean in the name of the company. As you no doubt have already noticed and will certainly notice throughout this book, we are serious about the word *ONE*, not because it's our brand, but because it's who we are!

I also like the fact that *ONE* starts with an *O*, or a circle. The letter, like our company, is inclusive and unified. There are no corners to hide in. We are *open* in how we operate our business, a fact that gives our team members and our family of homebuyers unparalleled confidence. People know we aren't hiding anything because we lead with authenticity. In fact, authenticity is the heart and soul of our organization. Unlike other private companies, we are very public about our staff, our financial achievements, our pride, and our community. We openly share on social media because we want our clients to know *what* to expect and that they will *receive* what they expect.

In today's business and political environment, authenticity is what people, especially young people, expect. Gone are the days when the business uniform was a power suit that expressed anonymity, conformity, and authority. Enter the days of jeans, T-shirts, and *real* interactions with *real* people.

As I'll explain throughout this book, we don't see ourselves as just a real estate company; rather, Realty ONE

Group is by design a *modern lifestyle real estate brand*. Here's what I mean: When most modern consumers think of Apple, they don't *just* think about Mac computers or the latest iPhone model. Is Apple an electronics company? Of course. But that's not what's made Apple into the brand we know today. What has made Apple unique in the crowded personal electronics market since its founding fifty years ago is the cultlike following it has always inspired in its fans. From the very beginning, Apple enthusiasts felt like they were part of something special. Even when the company was literally a day away from bankruptcy in the 1990s, there were hundreds of thousands of Apple fans who practically lived and died by the magnetic sway of its founder, Steve Jobs.

This "one of us" mentality didn't happen by accident. It was built into the fabric of the company from day one. In fact, most tech geeks will tell you the reason Apple nearly failed in the nineties was because they had fallen away from their devotion to their fan base. They had fired Steve Jobs, and successive CEOs had taken Apple further down the path of becoming "just another computer company." When Jobs came back in 1997, he took the company back to its bare-bones roots—both in its product line and in its commitment to its many champions inside and outside its walls.

Apple is the ultimate model of a *lifestyle brand*, and we've seen many others pop up and/or gain prominence over the past twenty or thirty years. My guess is you have a personal connection to Apple, Lululemon, Nike, Red Bull, The North Face, Samsung, and/or Under Armour, which are all examples of lifestyle brands that engage their fans in an intentional, personal way.

Realty ONE Group is another example.

It's who we are, not because we want to hop on the *lifestyle brand* bandwagon but because we are first and foremost committed to the people we serve, both internally and externally.

This is not a book about how to sell houses. It is, however, a book about how to succeed in real estate. Those are two very different things.

Real estate agents can *look* successful without *feeling* successful. We all know agents like that: those who make a ton of money but are miserable. Some of the most financially successful real estate agents I know have also been some of the most miserable people I've known. Sure, they're making money, but they're not fulfilled, they're not satisfied, and they don't have any sense of pride in what they're doing because they don't see the connection between how they spend their days and what difference they're making in the world. That's largely because the companies they work for aren't paying attention to this either. They're just looking at the financials and then wondering why their successful salespeople are grumbling about pesky things like company culture.

This book presents the antidote to that kind of dull, dreary existence in the world of real estate. If you're already on our team or thinking about joining us, this book will tell you everything you need to know about who we are, what matters to us, and how you can find your place. If you're in real estate but not part of the Realty ONE Group family, you'll find plenty in this book to incorporate into

We are first and foremost
committed to the people
we serve, both *internally*
and *externally*.

your own brokerage or franchise to help breathe new life into your business and your team members.

You'll see in the pages that follow that we haven't figured *everything* out yet. As I've said, real estate is and always will be a complicated business—but it's also the only business I know in which you can literally make someone's dream come true every single day. It's an exciting opportunity for all of us, and I'm honored to share with you how my team and I have tried to make an already awesome industry even better.

If you're ready to become truly UNstoppable, let's get to work.

you ARE THE *one*

- What motivates YOU?
- What are YOU looking for in your career?
- What does ONE mean to you?

CHAPTER 2

UNignorable

ONE Founder's Story

There is beauty and power in pausing—not in being idle, but in sitting back, reflecting, regrouping, and then proceeding, energized with a new perspective. Especially in the frenetic pursuit of your entrepreneurial purpose, sometimes it is important to look back in order to move forward.

Like everyone, my childhood paved a path for who I am and what I do and don't do. I was a shy child and now, as an adult, I am private about my personal life. I hesitate even here to share personal details (my editor even noticed I didn't share much about my family), but I want to shed some light on my motivations and personal philosophy and how they impact my business approach at Realty ONE Group.

So, here goes nothing.

Sometimes it is important
to *look back* in order
to *move forward*.

Humble Beginnings

My parents were refugees, born and raised in Poland during World War II. My father was seven years old when the Germans occupied Poland in 1943. He remembers seeing Jews and Poles rounded up and taken to concentration camps. In fact, he and his whole family were put on a train heading to Auschwitz. Somehow, two train cars separated, and half the transports went to Auschwitz, while the other half—which held his family—went to Germany.

When they arrived, my father's group was put in a factory in which the conditions were horrible. Plus, the bombings were relentless day and night. He recalls a time when he was standing by a factory window and a bomb landed outside, knocking him clear across to the opposite wall. Although forbidden, he and his brother went outside to beg for bread. Doors were often closed in their faces, but later, they'd occasionally find bread and sandwiches left for them outside. That is how they survived amid fear and uncertainty, nourished by a few small scraps of kindness.

There was no room for my father to dream, just daily realities to endure.

In 1945, when my father was nine, Americans brought him to a refugee camp, where conditions were considerably better and offered him more food and freedom. Fear may have dissipated, but uncertainty still prevailed. Then, he had the good fortune to have his citizenship sponsored by a farmer in Woodstock, Illinois. Maybe it was propitious that he arrived there on Christmas Eve, because this was a turning point in his life. Still, the experience was not easy;

he had to stay at the train station for three days because it was so snowy that the farmer could not pick him up. Again, there were rays of goodness. A policeman checked on him regularly and took him to a German bakery, where he received manna from heaven: bread, milk, pastry, and most importantly, kindness.

Years later, when he was living in Chicago, he was drafted by the US Army, went through basic training and medical school, and was eventually sent to serve as an Army medic in Korea. I do not pretend to know what he went through, but I do know this: he could finally dream dreams in America. He learned that anything was possible for those who believed in themselves and the decency of others, who were good human beings, who got a good education, and who worked hard.

My mother was born in 1943 inside a bunker in a tiny village of two hundred people south of Poland. Both of my parents were the eldest children of large families; my father had twelve siblings and my mother had four. She studied pediatric nursing in Krakow and ended up in Chicago in the 1970s, where she met my father and where I was born, their first and only child.

My parents are scrappy, street-smart people who worked exceedingly hard to make their way in the US. My father was an auto mechanic for decades, and both of my parents worked multiple jobs simultaneously to make ends meet. Their hard work meant long hours, so I didn't see them much. My maternal grandmother took care of me—she was my best friend, my big sister, and a mom to me. We were always together, playing games and watching TV

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shows like *Lawrence Welk* or *The Price Is Right*. My grandmother did not go out of her way to learn English, so I spoke Polish exclusively until I was five.

Although I had a sense growing up that my parents struggled with painful memories, I didn't know the extent of their suffering. I just knew my father was constantly stressed and my mother cried a lot. Their financial pressures were enormous, and they worked hard to make enough money to survive.

I have come to understand that one of my mother's biggest pain points was that people were taking advantage of her kindness. This feeling became my primary pain point, too, and entrepreneurship was a way for me to be independent and steer my own course. My mother's frustrations inspired one of my foundational values at Realty ONE Group: people are entitled to what they earn, so don't mess with their check! I was not going to take advantage of my employees like my mother's employers did. I will discuss this more later, but I mention it now to give you an idea of how my childhood shaped my business and personal dealings.

Yet, I was grateful to my parents because I understood, even as a young child, that they were doing their best to provide for and protect me. When I saw my parents on the weekends, we had a tradition of going to yard sales to get secondhand clothes and household items. I never thought poorly of that. Instead, I admired their scrappiness, and I found ways to be resourceful too. As I've mentioned, these yard sales launched my entrepreneurial projects; I bought

and refurbished old electronics and sold them on eBay for a small profit.

I also knew my parents would not give up on me because they did not give up on themselves. Thankfully, my parents are still together, alive and well today as I sit here writing this. Despite their challenges, my parents led with their hearts and with love, and they genuinely cared about other people. Underlying that care was a profound sense of respect that I still emulate today. That respect and generous spirit were evident as my mother started sponsoring family members from Poland—cousins, aunties, uncles—to come to the US and start new lives. She sponsored twelve people for citizenship during her lifetime. *Twelve people!* I am trying to uphold that legacy, and my wife and I have so far sponsored six members of her family to come here from Ukraine.

In grade school, I always strived to do my best. I never skipped school, was always on time, and tried to do the right thing and be a proper child. Looking back, I think I wanted my parents' attention; I wanted them to make more time for me. Since they were rarely home and were justifiably exhausted when they *were* home, maybe this was my way of trying to make a connection.

That said, my father and I now have the strongest bond we've ever had, and, in his eighties, he is sharing some of his life experiences and vulnerabilities with me and others. He is actively involved with my children—his grandchildren—and they tell me he shares stories about himself with them. He even agreed to film a short video about his childhood experiences during World War II.

My Quest for Freedom and Flexibility

My entrepreneurial fire was sparked in high school, and I viewed school as little more than babysitting. As a result, I was not a stellar student. I didn't see the point; school did not allow me to be creative or teach me how to make my way in the world, navigate relationships, or raise children. On the contrary, school was *preventing* me from doing and finding meaning. Although I managed to get into a good university and graduate with a bachelor's in economics, making me the first in my family to graduate from college, formal studies were a distraction from my intended purpose.

My brain operated on imagination, not random facts. I was hungry to create and pursue new conversations, new experiences, new inspirational articles, new opportunities, and new relationships. I chafed at sitting and watching, let's say, a *National Geographic* video. Instead, I wanted to be out, roaming the jungle for myself.

I could not sit still behind a desk. Not because I was fidgety but because I understood that the world is much bigger than the four walls of the classroom. I felt anxious that I would miss out if I did not put myself out there and learn firsthand in the streets rather than from books. There was an invisible breakout moment when my independence truly began. I did not want to sit idly by while my parents worked hard to make money to support me. I was motivated to do the opposite: to work hard and make money myself to ease *their* burdens.

This quest for independence and the freedom and flexibility to chart my own course continued to fuel my entrepreneurship. I worked as a delivery driver for Pizza Hut, Carl's Junior, and a local Chinese restaurant, so I was moving constantly—jumping in the car and going to new places and interacting with new people. I hunted for information and immersed myself in novelty. Remember, I'd spent my early years sitting at home with my beloved grandmother; now, new possibilities beckoned, and I welcomed them.

My purpose was and is family. As I've said, I wanted to make my own money so my parents could slow down. My heart was in creating more time for personal connections, and in doing so, to create happiness. I am consciously and purposefully doing the same for my five children today. I want to make sure their hearts and memories record that I was always there for them, that what I do every day is for them. I want to give them the gift of time together.

I have heard horror stories from other parents about their teenagers' behavior, and I am convinced the reason my family did not experience those wild teen years is simple: we stayed connected with all five of our children, gave them attention and choices, and let them chart their own courses.

To me, entrepreneurship was never about acquiring wealth to show off; it was about making money so I could give the people I love the time, means, and freedom to enjoy their lives. My business success also reflects my father's attitude: anything is possible. Working hard can make dreams happen. So, here is the lesson I learned firsthand: do not

Do not sit idle and get
caught in a drift or a
lazy river; instead, *do*
something, search, and
learn. If you do, you
won't have to sit around
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Leading Realty ONE Group, I have tried to create the sort of family environment that I wished for growing up. I want people to enjoy work and not feel exhausted by it like my parents did. So, I have created a community—a nonhierarchical place where every voice matters and people can grow, benefit from their hard work, and have fun. I genuinely want to inspire, educate, and motivate others. I want them to succeed. That is what I crave, what I thrive on. If I can do that, I am on cloud nine and looking back with a smile.

Creating a Springboard for Others' Success

I did not set out with a mission of positively impacting many people's lives beyond my own family, but I'll admit making such an impact has been a beautiful bonus. When I see the faces of Realty ONE Group team members smiling genuinely with their eyes, and when I see the good the company is doing through its nonprofit organization, I pause and reflect and am grateful. I have discovered my purpose, and I am living it!

Helping people become successful isn't just about helping them make money and build wealth for themselves—but that is indeed one of the greatest joys in

my life. I remember watching my mother's employers take advantage of her, squeezing every last drop of usefulness out of her for their benefit while paying her as little as possible. They used her as a tool for making themselves wealthy while actively preventing her from building any wealth of her own. I swore early on that I'd never do that to anyone who ever worked with me or for me.

I also vowed I'd never force myself or my team members to choose between work commitments and family commitments. I spent my entire childhood missing my parents, who were always at work, and I knew from the start of Realty ONE Group that no child would ever look at me the way I often looked at my parents' companies and bosses.

Of course, my parents did what they had to do. It is only because of their sacrifices that I've been able to accomplish what I have throughout my working lifetime. I can never thank them enough for that. They did their best in the system they were stuck in. I, however, got to create whatever system I wanted for my team members, and I committed from day one that I wouldn't require someone to abandon their family in order to become "successful" in my company. I knew they could do both, because that's exactly what I was dedicated to doing myself.

Creating a platform that prioritizes other people's freedom and flexibility requires a high level of trust—something my parents' employers didn't have. That's why my parents were always *at work*—even if they could have done parts of their jobs from our kitchen table while I played at their feet. When you don't trust your team, you assume they'll only work when "the boss" is watching them.

You know what the *benefit*
is to hiring people you can
trust? You get to *trust* the
people you hire. And you
don't have to micromanage
people you trust.

I've discovered a solution for that very complicated business problem: don't hire people you have to babysit like that.

You know what the benefit is to hiring people you can trust? You get to trust the people you hire. And you don't have to micromanage people you trust.

Realty ONE Group attracts motivated self-starters who can succeed without being overly supervised. The key people at Realty ONE Group drive the organization largely without my input, so I do not micromanage or closely monitor their activities and choices. I have created an environment where they can find their own work-life balance. That is what being a *lifestyle company* means. I know from personal experience how valuable that kind of freedom is.

I charted my own career path and founded Realty ONE Group to gain the freedom to continue to grow, and I am just as committed to providing that same freedom to the people who work with me. I strive to free them to develop professionally and create their own career trajectory. And when each person on the team is growing, the team as a whole is growing. We're becoming more successful as ONE company because we're investing in the success of *each* ONE!



I spent the early days of the business knocking on doors, trying to sell our vision and story to potential partners. I sold them our dreams and goals, and they have now become our reality! Now, people are knocking on our doors. They

tell us they've heard great things and seen on social media how people *live* our values. Our team members radiate a happiness that cannot be faked. They are not just wearing company swag or T-shirts; they are walking, talking, living, breathing advertisements, because they absolutely love what they do and, more importantly, they love where and how they do it.

That is a gift. It's a gift my parents didn't have during their working years. It's a gift *I* didn't have all those days and nights I spent with my grandmother, missing my parents who were stuck at jobs they needed but didn't love. I will always be grateful for their hard work and sacrifice which, although I didn't realize it at the time, was mostly for my benefit. But I think I'm even more grateful that the six- and seven-year-old boys and girls of my Realty ONE Group family members don't have to sit at home missing Mom and Dad all day and night like I did.

What we've built together over these past several years is giving families across the country something my own family didn't have when I was growing up: freedom and flexibility to build strong, healthy businesses of their own without having to sacrifice the very people they are building their businesses for.

If that sounds appealing to you—whether you're interested in joining Realty ONE Group or you're interested in building something new like I did—I invite you to jump into our company story with me over the next several chapters. I'm sure you'll find something in our business that you can use to take an important step in your own family and professional journey.

you ARE THE *one*

- What questions do YOU ask yourself?
- How do YOU reflect on your past and learn from it?
- If YOU could build a business that “fixes” the pain points of your past, what would it look like?

CHAPTER 3

UNlock

ONE Leadership

I *magine*. That word is magical. When people start their sentences with “*imagine*,” they have my complete, 100 percent, undivided attention.

As a young kid, I wondered about everything, about life. I would look at a roofline and think about its design; I would look at tree branches and wonder why they leaned a particular way. My way of thinking was out of sync with most of my peers, so I didn’t have many friends. I prefer interacting with people who take a stand and follow up with bold action. If they fail, they go back and rethink their position. If asked to give their opinion, they don’t simplify or equivocate, and they see the nuance in a situation.

My mindset is fueled by an entrepreneurial fire that makes me imagine new possibilities. I thrive on innovation,

and innovative ideas require bold action to create something new and different.

Realty ONE Group was conceived as the UNbrokerage with an UNconventional approach to the real estate business and our clients, the real estate professionals. The “UNbrokerage” concept is not a trite label; rather, it reflects a true desire to innovate, to change the business model to benefit friends and family.

I defined my core business principles while trying to solve the many pain points common to Realtors that I personally dealt with while working for other companies. I was a top producer and, as I’ve said before, the real estate agencies messed with my check. They didn’t value me or provide me with any support whatsoever. I made a conscious decision *not* to be like these companies and became the UNbrokerage.

Along the way, I discovered yet UNknown opportunities, and that’s how our philosophy was born: everyONE has value! EveryONE matters and everyONE has a voice! Realty ONE Group *lives* its principles; they’re not just words in a brochure. Our principles are evident in our actions, which include educational opportunities, fair compensation, and collaboration. We support each other emotionally by celebrating and publicizing everyONE’s successes!

When I launched the business, my biggest challenge was finding the right talent at the right time. As I’ve said, I became a friendly matchmaker, trying to find people who believed in our approach and vision that everyONE has value. Each and every person is a valuable and necessary

link in the chain, and each link supports all the others. This is reciprocity at its best.

I was committed to finding professionals I could trust, and I did not relish the interviewing process. I had mixed success in the early years of the business, but I was generally able to find some great people and weed out incompatible candidates. If I asked how their drive was and they replied, “Not bad”—two negative words—it signaled they were not the right fit. If the person told me they liked to label files “miscellaneous,” I worried they couldn’t effectively prioritize.

At Realty ONE Group, I have surrounded myself with people who are confident thinkers with original ideas. Those who are comfortable with their own vulnerabilities and motivated to always do better will approach whatever they do with purpose and intention.

Passion: Too Much of a Good Thing?

As a passionate entrepreneur creating a startup, I wanted to do everything and learn everything—hiring, finance, tech, marketing, etc. As the business was scaling up, I was determined to propel forward momentum and not let anything fail. So, I found myself getting too involved in project management and other nitty-gritty details. No one likes to be micromanaged, least of all me. The helicopter style wasn’t healthy for the organization, and it certainly wasn’t healthy for me. A leader who sends emails in the middle of the night or calls on weekends does not allow their talent

to flourish. Such behavior doesn't create trusting relationships, and trust is everything in leadership!

To complicate matters, I was micromanaging at the same time. I was broadly exploring and searching for novelty. It's natural for entrepreneurs to get giddy about the latest idea and think it will change the world, change lives, and become the latest Silicon Valley unicorn. I was always getting exciting new ideas from events or articles or conversations and suddenly, *that* idea would become a priority. It was great fun brainstorming with creative people, but there was a downside to generating a mountain of initiatives and acting on each one immediately. Furthermore, being inundated with too much indiscriminate information is distracting, and you make too many mistakes too quickly. And when the business cracks, so do the relationships. As I've said, it took time to find the right people and learn to delegate to them.

The Lighthouse

At any time of life, at any time in a business's life cycle, we can either be or need a lighthouse. We all need someone who will bring calm and lead us ashore when we're drowning in rocky waters. A business leader's vision is a lighthouse—it illuminates the way forward. Once onshore, we celebrate our safety and success together.

People notice when a leader, especially a visionary founder, walks into a room. They notice your energy, demeanor, body language, and other nonverbal signals. You set the tone for the moment, and it has a lasting effect.

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and success *together*.

People will naturally perk up if you enter a room with a vibrant smile and exude energy. They make a connection with you and it motivates them. Enthusiasm is contagious. (Of course, you receive a very different reaction if you enter with grim seriousness.)

One of the greatest satisfactions of leading Realty ONE Group is nurturing future leaders who will also become lighthouses. By trusting others, you gain *their* trust. By living your core values and always striving to be purposeful and do better, others naturally follow suit. Accordingly, the leader's most significant responsibilities are: (1) to define the core business and its core values and (2) to develop a disciplined approach to being true to them.

However, it is not enough for a leader to be clear on the business's vision; they also have to ensure the budget will support it. It is easy for startups to get caught up in spending more and more money and depending on outside investors. Typically, an entrepreneur will invest their own money first and then tap family and friends. But this strategy has major flaws. Your personal relationships can suffer, and your financing sources can dry up. You may become dependent on outside investors, which leads your company into a death spiral that it is unlikely to recover from.

Hitting a Brick Wall in 2017

Twelve years after creating Realty ONE Group, I hit the proverbial brick wall. I was burnt out—I wasn't having fun, my household wasn't happy, and I was making costly

mistakes. I still believed in myself, in what Realty ONE Group stood for and where we were headed. But I couldn't continue working sixteen- and eighteen-hour days glued to my computer and phone. My hypercreation mode left me no time to hang out with family and friends because I was always rushing around, stuck in the vicious cycle of my daily activities.

I hadn't yet come to the enduring understanding that my daily activities, routines, and lifestyle can and will change. I hadn't yet realized that I have the freedom to shape my day my way and to create meaningful and happy memories with anyone I choose. As long as I'm purposeful, my story will continue on a challenging yet rewarding path—one that I've chosen.

But I wasn't there yet. I was still navigating rocky waters.

At the beginning of 2017, Realty ONE Group didn't look like it did at its inception. It had been easy to massage the business model at first because we were small enough to be nimble, with a handful of employees and several hundred agents. Then, we tweaked our startup model and brought it from Nevada to Arizona, where we grew at a stunning pace. We successfully adjusted our template during the Great Recession of 2007–2009; those were actually our best years percentage-wise.

However, we made a disastrous decision by moving to California in 2010. I had lived in Orange County for more than twenty years, and thought I knew the area. But I didn't. I didn't do my research and didn't understand that Orange County was a very different market with a very

different client mentality. The real estate professionals there were not only savvy about deal-making and transactions (which we were at our company as well); they were also experienced with a higher dollar volume. So, Realty ONE Group experienced a lot of attrition and turnover over the course of a year.

Hey, I thought, there are always pitfalls and challenges in business. And challenges become opportunities. I wasn't ready to throw in the towel because I couldn't give up on myself or on the organization. So, I kept pushing and pushing, and around 2012, I started franchising. However, I didn't know anything—not a thing—about this side of the real estate business. I hired a couple of guys who had experience and looked great on paper . . . but they didn't work out. Realty ONE Group's business model differed from anything they had been involved in. They didn't know how to tell our story; they didn't know how to sell it. As you'll see, everyone's storytelling is a big part of their success at Realty ONE Group.

After years, we replaced these franchise leaders with another person experienced (on paper, at least) in franchising. This time, we didn't rely exclusively on a resume; we talked to him and decided to give him a shot. It *could* have worked out. After all, this person, like anyone new in a position, was still learning the ropes, and so were we. But I was too distracted to create a productive working relationship or a solid personal relationship. If I had, perhaps the arrangement would have worked. As it was, though, it didn't.

My takeaway was that a deal or transaction comes down to two things. First, both parties must feel like it is a good fit for them professionally and personally. Second, the timing must be right. If both of those things are in place, you're much more likely to accomplish whatever it is you're setting out to do.

But that lesson is hindsight. The business floundered for two or three years. I was unhappy and burnt out.

The nagging question running through my head was, *Is it worth it to continue running this company?* After twelve years in business, it was not about the money. I had enough money by then to raise my family and care for my elderly, retired parents. (I never let go of my childhood goal of earning enough money to help my parents and to enable my family to spend more time together.) Now that I was financially comfortable, I figured I could easily give up trying to make the business work and enjoy the success I'd had the previous twelve years.

Additionally, my beloved grandmother who had raised me passed away in 2013. She was my emotional support—my lighthouse—and the only person I trusted to talk to about difficulties. She had led a simple peasant life farming in Poland and was clever and wise. She gave me valuable guidance about my life and about business and entrepreneurship. I mourned her loss deeply.

I was adrift. I knew I needed to take a break—maybe six months just to recharge and reinvigorate myself. I thought about moving somewhere I hadn't visited, and Boston came to mind. I pondered going back to selling real estate. I traveled the world, but I wasn't mentally present enough to

enjoy the amazing places I visited. My mind remained in worry and work mode.

So, I decided to put the infrastructure in place to enable myself to take an extended break. I overhauled most of the pillars of the organization, including the executive team, policies, procedures, and systems.

I made two spectacular hires to strengthen the leadership team: a Chief Operating Officer who also acted as Chief Financial Officer, and a President of Franchise Sales. I hired many other outstanding key figures within the organization and trusted them to do what they did best without my micromanagement, and I supported them wholeheartedly. Our mutual trust served us all well; these folks are still with Realty ONE Group today!

Choice is a very powerful concept, and when I chose to hit the pause button on the whirring video of my life, I was ready to do whatever was necessary to *unpause* my life at some point. I used the time to reflect on how I got where I was and what I didn't know. I was not going to play the victim; I was going to be proactive and look toward the future. What did I want, and where was I headed?

Knowing the choice was mine to transform and clarify my passionate purpose, I decided on productive ways to change my lifestyle—taking breaks, walking, disconnecting from my phone, and so on. Part of that process was continually working on decluttering my mind—the hard drive of my brain was always full—and getting rid of all the noise and unnecessary distractions.

I recently went snowboarding and felt totally at peace with myself and enjoyed the panoramic views. I thought

about all my leisure time activities—soccer, chess, billiards, swimming. I realized that I will not earn a perfect ten on everything. Some things will be a six or an eight, and that is OK. I am happy, and people think fondly of my family and me. But I do not do anything for the sake of praise. I do everything with love, everything with a purpose. And that is good enough.

I also do everything I can to honor my parents and our Polish roots. Our company headquarters in Laguna Niguel, California, is housed in a building with a big, old industrial garage appearance. Inside sits a yellow Fiat my mom had when she escaped WWII and emigrated to the US. My mom had driven this twenty-three-horsepower, two-cylinder car in her village in south Poland. And now, it is in America, the land that welcomed her and my dad.

On the wall behind the Fiat is an image of the eagle emblem of Poland, a symbol of freedom. This is a tribute to my parents and a reminder of my humble beginnings. Also on the wall is Realty ONE Group's inspirational mantra:

You have ONE life to live. ONE chance to make it meaningful, and ONE opportunity to live with no regrets. Take risks, be bold, seize the day, and lead with respect. Your circumstances will change, people will change, you will change. Be open to it, embrace it, live it.

Always keep asking what fuels your imagination and what is your mantra.



You have *ONE* life to live.
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Strong entrepreneurial leaders are agile and proactive. They are active listeners who constantly reevaluate and modify their positions while remaining true to their foundational vision and core values. Here, I share additional thoughts on what it means to be a nimble visionary leader and how leading with respect and kindness creates a winning community.

The Mad Rush of an Entrepreneur

Even though we have an irresistible passion for creating, many entrepreneurs start off with the purpose of making money. I admit I did too.

As I described earlier, I hustled as a kid delivering fast food, doing odd jobs, and refurbishing electronics for resale to earn money to relieve my parents' stress and enable them to spend more time with me. They worked multiple jobs for which they were overqualified to make ends meet when they emigrated to the US. For example, I remember cleaning houses with my mother when I was just five years old, even though she had been a pediatric nurse in Poland.

My parents and grandmother instilled in me the inviolable values of respect and earning your own way. Even more important than earning your own money was saving it! My grandmother called this "saving for the black hour"—the time of uncertainty when something unexpected pops up. She also cautioned me to avoid assuming debt and dependency.

There is a mad rush as an entrepreneur to come up with new ideas and get rich.

“Let’s do *this*!”

“No, wait, let’s do *that*!”

My imagination was boundless, and I was fearless. I started a smoothie shop, a hair salon, and an online Polish portal to honor my heritage. Like most serial entrepreneurs, I wanted to make money and move from being an employee to becoming an employer. My goal was to make my first \$1 million by age twenty-five, but I didn’t make it.

It didn’t happen until after I turned twenty-six.

Disappointing, but not the end of the world, I guess.

The big question, though, is whether hitting that goal made me happy. I kept pushing and pushing to achieve that milestone. I was anxious and wouldn’t even make time for a three-minute phone call with a friend. I had no leisure time and had given up basketball and soccer. I didn’t care about my appearance. My hair was shaggy, and I bought food and clothing at big-box stores. I did not think about eating nutritious food or wearing stylish jeans. My entrepreneurial tunnel vision left me zero time to be happy. But, if measured by dollars, I was successful.

I still had that mindset when I started Realty ONE Group. I wanted to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible. What mattered most to me was hitting a critical mass. I wanted to attract as many real estate professionals as quickly as possible and knew that the industry norm-busting, 100-percent-commission structure was highly attractive. But if a recruit wanted a better deal, I was eager to sweeten it. I hired quickly based on overly optimistic expectations of how fast the business would scale. The first year, Realty ONE Group had two hundred and

fifty agents. The second year, it tripled to seven hundred and fifty. *Whoa*, I thought, *I am on my way!*

I hired a bookkeeper to keep me organized and ensure I didn't fall behind on bills or commission checks. Within a week, she reported grim news: my growth had tripled, but my expenses had increased fivefold. That is, we were about to hit the point of spending money faster than we were making it.

She warned me that we would start losing money very quickly. I responded with the typical entrepreneur's magical thinking: "It's OK. I'll figure it out."

But clearly, I had not figured it out yet. The business was at risk financially; like many startups, we were potentially headed into a downward spiral. Further, no one involved with Realty ONE Group was truly satisfied—not me, not my agents, and not my customers. I was miserable and worried about where the organization was headed. I was not sleeping, and my family life suffered.

I realized there was power in choice, and I had been making poor choices by chasing dollars, not kindness. As I have said, I reorganized the entire company in 2006 and then again in 2017. I began asking the right question: How could I create a culture where *purpose* came before profits, where everyONE could engage in meaningful work, and everyONE could belong?

First Things First: A Solid Core

An entrepreneur's first task is defining the new venture's core values and core business. These define *who* you are,

what your market is, and *what* you do. The “how” details—how you refine and implement your culture and business model—may evolve, but the core remains unchanged. For example, when Realty ONE Group adapted our business model to embark on worldwide franchising, we stayed true to our core values and purpose—opening doors across the globe, ONE home, ONE dream, ONE life at a time.

When I first started Realty ONE Group, I didn’t yet understand the power of staying true to an unchanging core. Yes, we were committed to being fair to our professionals and inclusionary, but our core values and culture were not fully defined and communicated until eight years later. I am not alone in making these miscalculations. It is a common tendency of entrepreneurs to sprint, to hit the ground running and ignore the speed bumps. When entrepreneurs are overwhelmed with ideas and encounter inevitable speed bumps, we too quickly and easily brush aside the reality of these challenges, as I did when I told my bookkeeper that I’d “figure it out.”

No, that’s not how it works! You need to figure out your roadmap in advance. Entrepreneurs and leaders need to plan how to successfully execute their vision. Starting a business is not a sprint; it is a marathon that requires strategic planning to get to the finish line. When will you pause to breathe and drink water? Should you adjust your pace? How do you differentiate your style from your competitors?

It is also common for innovators to become distracted by random thoughts along the way and impulsively act on them: “I could create an app that . . .” or, “I should . . .” Very few of these ideas will flourish if they are not developed

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with a plan which takes into account the roadblocks as well as the pathway to achieve the dream you are envisioning.

Another distracting noise is negativity or “I can’t” thinking. You fall into the pitfall of playing the victim instead of taking responsibility and asking the essential questions: *How did I get here, and what don’t I know?* Being reflective and proactive are antidotes to feeling victimized by unexpected, yet inevitable, setbacks.

Joseph Bradley’s *Questioneering: The New Model for Innovative Leaders in the Digital Age* strongly impacted my ideas about leadership and decision-making. Bradley contends that the biggest mistake leaders make is executing *the right answers to the wrong questions*. He gives the example of how Eastman Kodak Company could have thrived instead of going bankrupt by asking and answering “high value” questions.¹

In 1999, Kodak was number one in the digital camera, film imaging, and printing space, and were focused on how to continue gaining market share. Bradley suggests that Kodak would have continued to be a dominant industry leader if they had “questioneered.” They would have succeeded, he says, if they had engineered the right question: How do we create a community where everyone gets inspired and thrives together?

Realty ONE Group addressed that high value question about community when we defined and refined our culture. Our answer: we were creating an organization of inclusion,

1. Bradley, Joseph M., *Questioneering: The New Model for Innovative Leaders in the Digital Age*, Networkling Publishing, 2018.

diversity, fairness, and acceptance. We didn't simply want a vague *sense of belonging*; we wanted the reality that *everyone belongs*. This goes against the prevailing notion that a sense of belonging stands in opposition to a corporate culture. We were committed to a culture of collaboration, not competition, throughout the organization. Further, we actively *lived* those values. Our spirit was contagious. Our professionals genuinely supported each other and had fun along the way. We still do!

Mind you, it was not fashionable or trendy at the time to respect and honor differences and celebrate everyone and their wins. Businesses boasted, "Oh, we have our own company culture; our morale is high." But what Realty ONE Group does goes much deeper.

Chasing Kindness

There is a popular saying that often adorns elementary school walls: "In a world where you can be anything . . . be kind." I think that message is just as important for business professionals as it is for schoolchildren—maybe even more so.

Kindness is putting your heart and soul and joy into your relationships. Kindness is a purposeful and meaningful attitude that generates positive behaviors: treating each other as you wish to be treated, remembering your values, and never forgetting you have the power to positively impact another person.

Even though Realty ONE Group is in the sales industry, always chasing the next transaction, we are first

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and foremost in the lifestyle business. We place the highest value on our clients—our real estate professionals and staff. We are opening doors, helping people achieve the American dream of homeownership. We strive to improve the quality of life for everyone on both sides of a real estate transaction.

The values of kindness and inclusion were impressed upon me as a young child living in Poland. I remember walking down the cobblestone streets in my small village and being overwhelmed by wonderful cooking aromas. Where did they come from? *Open doors!* Everyone kept their front doors open, and everyone and anyone was welcome to come in and enjoy a meal. This gracious hospitality came naturally and authentically, which is what Realty ONE Group is all about.

Kindness also entails being kind to ourselves, because our own personal happiness is important. It's OK to be selfishly happy; it is not the same as being selfish. It is like the warning you get on an airplane: in case of emergency, put the oxygen mask on yourself and *then* help your child or other passengers. The result of doing so is that individual happiness becomes collective happiness. Perhaps the most important way to be kind to yourself, then, is to surround yourself with kind people!

ONE Cares, Realty ONE Group's 501(c)(3) charity, embodies our commitment to acts of loving-kindness. We are creating a full circle of reciprocity by giving back to the communities we serve, and we are nurturing the places where we live, work, and play. In addition to raising funds, we pride ourselves on purposeful in-kind contributions.

Volunteerism is at the core of our nonprofit organization. Whether it is a blood drive, environmental initiatives, fair housing, or Realtor safety, we come together as ONE. Other organizations might donate money and be pleased with the tax write-offs, but our ethos is to give of yourself for the sake of another's smile—not just one time, but consistently.

Many-to-Many: The Power of ONE Group

At some point in our careers, we have all attended long, boring meetings. Our minds drift off and the details get lost in the haze. We are not inspired or motivated; we are disinterested. Perhaps even worse are the meetings that are held just for the sake of having a meeting. You may remember that as a student, I struggled with hour-long classes. My mind wandered. I thought about my next entrepreneurial adventure, not the next mathematics exam. I've been guilty of that same inattentiveness in business meetings . . . and I know I'm not the only one.

The longer the meeting, the more stressful sitting through it becomes and the less useful it is because we stop absorbing any meaningful information. How do leaders remedy this problem? By preparing for meetings and identifying their purpose before even stepping into the room or starting a videoconference. We as leaders must consider:

- What is the primary takeaway you want the group to grasp?
- What will bring value to everyone in the group?
- What feedback do you want to elicit?

Shorter, interactive meetings speed up critical thinking and community building, and that enables all participants to get the maximum value in the minimum time.

Group interactions are engaging, empowering, and inspiring. They rely on active participation, not passive complacency. Instead of a leader lecturing the whole group (a one-to-many dynamic), they should stimulate discussion, sitting back and actively listening to everyONE else (a many-to-many dynamic). The best ideas are generated in breakout sessions and group brainstorming. EveryONE's voice and contributions deserve to be heard and valued. And to get things done, it needs to be a community effort.

Therefore, as I've said before, not every team member is the right fit for an organization. A leader needs to identify lazily contented individuals. Those who look engaged but are actually checked out, who aren't interacting or taking action. Inauthenticity, complacency, and lack of effort are toxic to a company. It is incumbent upon the leader to have an honest conversation with someone who does not benefit the whole. These brave conversations are difficult, but in the long run, you will be trusted and respected for having them.

Do Billions Buy Happiness?

Over the past decade, I have met dozens of ultrarich, mega-wealthy people around the world. As part of my personal quest for knowledge and professional due diligence for our global growth and international franchising expansion, I

have traveled to over fifty countries, some multiple times. Some of these high-net-worth individuals were self-made, while others inherited a generational family business. Most were more monetarily successful than they had ever dreamed they would be.

Generally, these wealthy people's motivations had been money, ego, generational benefits, or the pure thrill of accumulating more and more. Many of these billionaires are in their seventies and have already received their golden parachutes.

In my conversations with them, though, I noticed a striking, universal consensus: they felt they were significantly lacking meaning in their lives. I asked each one about their approach to business, what they had expected, and where they were right now. These millionaires and billionaires told me that they were not at peace with themselves. No matter their background, ethnicity, culture, or geography, the more they got, the more cracks there were in their personal foundation. They felt restless, uncomfortably vulnerable, and lonely.

Why? These financially successful leaders admitted that in retrospect, they would have made significant life changes. I was puzzled and said things like, "But your legacy is success! People look up to you, and you have access to anyone or any place. You can travel the world and embrace your hobbies. What do you feel is missing?"

They explained that they did not care about any of these things, because their relationships had suffered. At some level, they had known their pursuit of the *next* million or billion was distancing them from family and close

friends. In the struggle between their business and their personal relationships, money won and relationships lost.

My firsthand observations are backed by extensive research on the psychology of exceedingly wealthy, successful people who have exited their businesses. The findings demonstrate that the more money these leaders have, the more depressed they become when they retire. That's why so many owners frequently try to crawl back into their former businesses to become involved again after they have exited. They are at a loss for what to do and miss a reason to get up in the morning, have a schedule, interact with people, and feel productive. But their re-entry is blocked; the business has moved on.

Metamorphosis and Maturity

Although this may seem like a cautionary tale, it is intended to inspire you to plan ahead and be purposeful, to revisit your values and shape your company's future with intentionality. Perhaps if wealthy leaders had appreciated the power of pausing and taking time to reflect and discover, to ask when is it enough, they might have realized the negative impact of their relentless climb to the top. It is good to be vulnerable and transparent and to gain strength from trusted people.

Many years ago, Bruce W. Tuckman, a psychology researcher and Ohio State University professor, formulated a model of group dynamics. He identified five self-explanatory stages of group development: forming,

storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. It is wise for leaders to understand and plan for each stage.

I am grateful that Realty ONE Group has reached the stage of an established, mature business. We are no longer embroiled in figuring everything out or chasing clients. But we are still innovating, growing, and perhaps most importantly, planning for the future.

And we continue to choose kindness and community.

you ARE THE *one*

- What is YOUR leadership style?
- How are YOU kind to YOURself?

CHAPTER 4

UNbrokerage **ONE Belief**

Wouldn't it be nice if we could go to work and feel like we matter? Not only what we *do* but also who we *are*?

Gone are the days of the 1950s black-and-white TV shows when a male breadwinner comes home after a day at the office to his stay-at-home wife, a son, a daughter, and a dog. The days when you only worked to earn a paycheck and climbed the company ladder for a larger paycheck. If you did really well, maybe you got a gold-plated watch after twenty-five years. You did your job and went home; your boss was your boss, not your friend; and dating co-workers was off-limits. It was an era of assigned roles and responsibilities and strict conformity.

Baby Boomers were explicitly told the purpose of their jobs was to work diligently and earn money, and their bosses

Wouldn't it be *nice* if
we could go to work and
feel like we *matter*?
Not only what we *do*
but also who we *are*?

were not their mommies. They were directed to find their emotional support elsewhere. There *was* a stable “elsewhere” for them: two-parent families living in the same town for decades, going to the same church or temple weekly, and socializing in same-sex bowling leagues or card games. Men went to the same taverns as their fathers, women to the same beauty parlors as their mothers.

Life was grounded by a landline, not transient with a mobile phone.

Enter the technicolor twentieth- and twenty-first-century worlds of Millennials and Gen Zs. These young people likely grew up with single, working parents who moved from house to house and town to town. Their parents frequently changed jobs and even careers.

These young people’s lives began in daycare, where it was entirely possible they would see different caregivers from month to month. Chances are these Zoomers didn’t attend church or temple regularly. What’s more, do you know a thirty-year-old who belongs to an Elks Lodge or represents the Welcome Wagon? Theirs is an era of choice, not conformity, and mobility, not stability.

As a result, Millennials and Gen Zs have had to look outside their homes, communities, and religious institutions to fulfill their emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

And where do they turn?

To their workplaces.

As I conceptualized and launched Realty ONE Group, I intuitively recognized what was most important and meaningful to my generation: We prize authenticity and honesty, and we expect our jobs to allow us to live up to these virtues.

We prize *authenticity* and *honesty*, and we expect our jobs to allow us to live up to these virtues. We seek community and connection.

We want *purposeful*, *impactful* work. Yes, we want to make money, but the size of our checks is not our primary job requirement.

We seek community and connection. We want purposeful, impactful work. Yes, we want to make money, but the size of our checks is not our primary job requirement.²

OUR CORE VALUES

The 6C's

The foundational values and beliefs of Realty ONE Group transcend generational boundaries; they reflect human needs and are encapsulated in the 6C's—Coolture, Coaching, Connect, Community, Care, and Commission. Each was created to provide value and accommodate all segments and individuals. The 6C's are a true expression of what we do and how we do it.

COOLTURE

We Value Unity and Having Fun

Coolture is the forging fire and foundation of everything, making sure everyone matters and that we cater to each of our members. It is the golden glue that creates community; even the word *Coolture* is a fusion of *cool* and *culture*. Without Coolture, there's no human connection! And

2. *Entrepreneur.com*, the publication that recently named us the number one real estate franchiser on its Franchise 500® list, validates the insights we have identified and addressed. The Gen Z workforce seeks: (1) purposeful work; (2) a healthy flexible environment; (3) a strong sense of community; (4) the ability to make an impact; and (5) living the principles of entrepreneurship and innovation.

being part of a social group—a family—is something all humans crave.

Our Coolture is rooted in the values of authenticity, camaraderie, a healthy work-life balance, and having fun. Walk into any of our offices or attend any of our team meetings, and you'll see what I mean: people are smiling! Co-workers are chatting and hanging out, even showing their team pride by wearing our gold and black T-shirts. But don't get me wrong—this relaxed atmosphere does not mean our professionals do not work hard. To the contrary, this environment motivates hard work, engagement, and genuine happiness.

The physical design of our offices reflects our Coolture. They are contemporary, bright, and inviting, not fluorescent-lit and stuffy. You'll see people having a good time—playing ping-pong, sitting at high-top tables with hot coffees or cold beers, or gathering in comfortable clusters on living room sofas. Chill zones replace cubicles. Private offices are available for our real estate professionals to rent for a nominal fee.

Ours is a culture of respect, where every voice matters and every voice is heard. Our clients are happy, too; they're impressed with the service they receive and tell their friends, which leads to repeat business and referrals. We respect and empower our real estate professionals as their own CEOs who make their own choices. This is what every generation, especially Millennials and Gen Zs, expects and deserves.

Coolture travels vertically from leaders to agents to clients. It permeates every aspect and every member of Realty ONE Group. So, how did we create a business with so

Ours is a *culture of*
respect, where every
voice *matters* and
every voice is *heard*.

much excitement and joy in a highly competitive industry like ours? By giving everyONE the sense that they are awesome. (When was the last time your boss told you that you were awesome? When was the last time they thanked you for anything?) We support and guide our team members with heart and love.

COACHING

We Value People and Their Personal and Professional Development

Learning and growing go hand in hand with leading a purposeful and happy life. It's natural to disengage from your work if you are not adequately stimulated. Professionals today are hungry for access to continuing education opportunities. Remember: we've been brought up in a rapidly evolving world and embrace novelty and adaptation.

As I'll discuss at length in Chapter 7, Realty ONE Group offers a unique blend of free training, while most real estate companies charge for their training and materials. In fact, it is common for our competitors to make more money from training than from their transactions. A commitment to education is another way we're the UNBrokerage.

Additionally, we subscribe to the old adage that it is better to spend money to train people and risk that they might leave than not train them and risk that they might stay! That said, our monthly retention rate for staff is high at 97 percent. What better tribute is there?

Learning and *growing*

go hand in hand with
leading a purposeful
and happy life.

From ONE-on-ONE coaching to group meetings like our Rev Up program for new licensees, Step Up for franchise owners, Basecamp Leadership Retreat, and our annual ONE Summit, we educate for success. These experiences build a culture of teamwork and networking that goes a long way to making work *not* feel like work.

ONE University (ONE.U), our proprietary technology learning platform, is chock-full of curriculum modules to guide real estate professionals through every step of their career. Whether they're a novice or veteran agent, a broker-owner, or a franchisee, there are hundreds of resources to ensure each person succeeds on their personalized professional development journey.

We never stop in our quest to provide up-to-date, meaningful training. We're launching some exciting new ideas for advanced training, including a coaching certification track. Given the nature of these courses, we may have to charge a nominal fee. But that does not negate our commitment to free learning resources.

CONNECT

*We Value Innovation
That Connects People*

You'll see lots of people smiling when you walk into our office, but there's something you *won't* see—paper and ugly steel filing cabinets. We merge technology, marketing, and people to provide 24/7 support. Our state-of-the-art technology streamlines processes and accelerates productivity

and positive results. It *empowers* professionals but does not replace them!

People across the globe are increasingly becoming more tech savvy and accustomed to the efficiency of a digital world. They are accustomed to instantaneous communication, electronic payments, and online education. The zONE (our administrative technology) and ONE University (our educational platforms) deliver exactly that!

Innovation is an integral part of being technologically connected. We continually build on and expand our systems to keep pace with the changing needs of our professionals and the rapidly changing trends in the real estate market.

COMMUNITY

We Value Communities and Vow to Make a Global Impact

Giving back is a core value of our Coolture. It is who we are and what we do. We're opening doors for those in need, together as ONE. Vital to our purpose is to positively impact people's lives locally and across the globe.

With ONE Cares, our 501(c) charity, our real estate professionals have an opportunity to tell us what is important to them. We honor individual choices by providing a way for them to share information about an organization that's dear to their heart and request our support. If possible, we make it happen by donating resources and money and engaging in community service.

Recently, we ran a drive to benefit refugee children in Ukraine, collecting boxes of toys. The response from the greater community and the Realty ONE Group ONE family was overwhelming. Our offices were flooded with boxes and boxes of toys, and that presented a wonderful problem: How do we deliver them? We found a way!

Our efforts celebrate the diversity we cherish. They cater to a variety of interests; for example, we partner with Feeding America food banks, the Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals, the Folded Flag Foundation, Mobile Loaves and Fishes, and the Nashville-based Isaiah 117 House for the homeless.

Our environmental commitment extends well beyond our paperless offices. Our recent initiative, the *ONE Tree, ONE World* program, pledges to plant ONE tree for every closed transaction! To date, we have pledged nearly 141,000 trees in communities worldwide. Also, the safety of real estate professionals is an issue that is important to us. Our annual ONE Walk in Las Vegas, Nevada, raises awareness for REALTOR® safety and the Beverly Carter Foundation.

CARE

*We Value Relationships and
Celebrate EveryONE*

Our ethos—everyONE wins—is in our blood. We strive to amaze every member of our worldwide ONE family—agents, brokers, and owners—with an unsurpassed level of

service and support. We have 24/7 solutions and support for novices and veterans alike.

COMMISSION

We Value and Empower Real Estate Professionals

We don't mess with your check! We recognize that our agents work hard to earn their commissions, and they deserve to keep them!

Our 100 percent commission model and simple fee structure distinguishes us in the real estate industry. Brokerage firms are known to take brutal advantage of their agents. We don't. Our agents and franchisees are our primary customers, and we're invested in their success because it's all our success. We are *not* a discount brokerage that skimps on services and nickel-and-dimes agents; instead, we provide norm-busting services to our professionals.

The 100 percent commission structure is another way Realty ONE Group is responsive to the needs of Millennials and Gen Zs. We understand that many in our generation are financially behind the eight ball, saddled with enormous credit card debt and student loans. Getting a paycheck might not be the primary reason someone works, but they still need one.

Paying our professionals what they earned, fair and square, reflects our moral compass: EveryONE matters, and EveryONE deserves to be treated with respect.

Of course, Realty ONE Group wants to make money, but we are completely transparent about finances. We are 100 percent up-front with our fee structure and share the metrics achieved by our agents. Depending on each market's dynamics, we charge an average of \$100 monthly and a modest transaction fee, typically around \$200 for every \$200,000 in sales. Some of our franchisees charge a \$200 compliance fee too. So, adding it all up, let's say an agent hypothetically sells a \$400,000 house. Under our fee structure, that agent would keep \$9,400 of their \$10,000 commission.

Let's face it. In any financial transaction, including real estate deals, litigation may arise. Realty ONE Group assumes all liability if one of our real estate professionals is sued. We charge each agent an annual risk management fee of about \$1,000 to protect them from personal responsibility if a legal issue comes up.

There's another way we compensate and value our real estate professionals: they can take your listings with them if they leave. Most realty firms won't let agents do that. They'll keep an agent's listings or hold their license for ten days, seemingly punishing the person for leaving. We find that with those real estate professionals who do leave us, eight out of ten return within sixty to ninety days. Sometimes, they even bring friends from the firm they went to!

How can Realty ONE Group afford all this? We run a well-oiled, lean operation.

We don't need the typical 1:10 ratio of service staff to real estate professionals; we have a noncompeting broker in every office and about two staff people—without sacrificing

efficiency or service. Similarly, while many of our competitors have hundreds of IT developers, we have a team of no more than twenty. And we use cutting-edge technologies!

As a privately held company, we are free to decide what numbers to hit for the benefit of the business and for the good of our people. Unlike publicly traded companies, we answer to ourselves, not to Wall Street. That means we really answer directly to our agents!

The **Coolture** we embrace, the **coaching** we provide, the **connections** we facilitate, the **communities** we honor, the **care** we express through actions, and the **commission** we pay—all of these define Realty ONE Group.

Since Coolture is the lifeblood that energizes the 6C's, I will talk more about it in the next chapter.

you ARE THE *one*

- What are YOUR core values?
- What drives YOU?
- What is YOUR purpose?
- What communities are close to YOUR heart?
- How do YOU give back?

CHAPTER 5

UNtraditional

ONE Coolture

Our company culture, Coolture, is the living, beating heart of our organization, pumping nutrient-rich blood through all the arteries of the other 6C's. We fused the words *cool* with *culture* because authenticity is cool, and this defines us and our culture. It began as an expression to describe my motivation to help family and friends when I founded Realty ONE Group in 2005. While its original meaning continues to expand and evolve organically, its essence remains steadfast: *The behaviors and attitudes of our employees come from the heart and place the highest value on treating each other (and ourselves) with love and respect.* Think about how unique our ethos is in the highly competitive and largely transactional field of real estate!

Coolture is a movement of people who are free to express, to communicate, to feel, and to be accepted. When

When you express yourself
with *confidence*, knowing
that you will not be judged,
you start trends. Following
your true *passion* leads
others to follow you because
your *spirit* is contagious!

you express yourself with confidence, knowing that you will not be judged, you start trends. Following your true passion leads others to follow you because your spirit is contagious!

Coolture Is a Feeling

I have asked people in the organization to describe what Coolture means to them, and they tell me it's "in their hearts" and they "can feel it." It's a vibe that creates an atmosphere of fun, togetherness, mutual support, and family. I would add that Coolture is a sense of comfort in being ourselves, and this attitude is evident in both tangible and intangible ways.

Just look at our offices. The ultra-modern, open-plan spaces invite collaboration with their comfortable living room-style furniture and coffee bars. And look at the employees there, smiling at work! A sense of comfort is also visible in our relaxed custom-made company clothing, including Realty ONE Group T-shirts, shoes, sneakers, and backpacks.

But don't be fooled: there is much more to us than cool T-shirts. Along with our relaxed, playful spirit, we take our work seriously—*very* seriously.

What lies beneath the surface is that our Coolture creates a family, ONE family. It is evident in our desire to help others succeed and to celebrate those successes together; to honor diversity; to support learning; and to know each other's families. As a result, our individual families have become blended into our work families. Realty ONE Group professionals bring family members to the office, and we

know their names, we've celebrated their milestones, and we've seen them grow. We are a diverse group, yet all of us are comfortable with each other—as ONE.

Our annual ONE Summit epitomizes our Coolture. It's a three-day international convention for all our agents, franchisees, and leaders. We gather for networking, coaching, training, listening to inspirational speakers, and participating in interactive presentations. Perhaps most importantly, it is an opportunity for Realty ONE Group team members to socialize with like-minded professionals from all over the world. Of course, there is plenty of food, fun, and laughter at the ONE Summit. One attendee at the most recent gathering summed it up: "It feels more like a family reunion than a convention!"

Our real estate agents are independent contractors, and our broker-owners and franchisees are their own CEOs. As a result, they all have the freedom to make our Coolture their own. Yet the universal mindset is one of togetherness, the antithesis of each individual agent or office being in competition with others or in conflict with Realty ONE Group as a whole. When the real estate professionals are marketing themselves, they are also promoting the values of Realty ONE Group. The pervasive thinking is that a win for ONE is a win for the team!

Coolture Is a Verb

We take action to live our Coolture; it is a verb, not a noun! So, there is a good reason we describe ourselves as "A Modern Real Estate Lifestyle Brand": we are *living* our

We are a *diverse*
group, yet all of us are
comfortable with
each other—as ONE.

belief that everyONE matters. This is reflected in how we treat and support each other by offering intensive coaching and training, state-of-the-art technology resources, 24/7 help, and of course, the 100 percent commission.

Coolture also translates into action through the extensive social action initiatives I've described elsewhere. It is in our DNA to work to address concerns about the environment, Realtor safety, veterans, the homeless population, and other significant issues. We care about our organization ONE Cares.

It is also in our blood to have fun together! Many of our broker-owners have monthly group events to socialize outside the office. Whether it's going to a café or bar, having a picnic, or golfing, we like *doing* activities together. Sometimes, we even invite the entire neighborhood to join us. And as I've discussed, we also have many large-scale events, such as the ONE Summit I've described, like our Basecamp Leadership Retreat for broker-owners.

Cool + Culture + Action = Attraction

Our spirit is palpable, and Coolture drives our growth. People are *attracted* to our brand and *attached* by our Coolture. Today, we already have eighteen thousand professionals in four hundred locations in forty-nine states. We are in fourteen countries across five continents and counting. Unlike other companies, neither recruiting nor retention is currently a problem for us. Potential real estate professionals are knocking on our front doors, and current team members are not knocking down the exit doors.

Those who work with us buy into the Coolture and believe in our vision. Our employees become informal recruiters. Word of mouth and social media have driven enormous growth—growth that continues at a dizzyingly rapid pace.

The Realty ONE Group language—our Coolture—is spoken all over the world!

Onboarding someone new is not a matter of filling out paperwork or handing out an employee manual. Rather, we personally reach out to the new team members to offer any needed support. We invite them to community events and ensure they know they've found a home where they can thrive. In other words, we welcome our real estate professionals with open arms, living our purpose of opening doors across the globe—ONE home, ONE dream, ONE life at a time.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not slow us down, and we didn't use it as an excuse to become detached. Instead, we harnessed the power of videoconferencing to connect, connect, connect! We implemented a program called the Broker Minute to service our clients, the real estate professionals. (It was more like Broker 60 Minutes because we went with the flow and spent a lot more than a minute in this virtual gathering!) We also adapted what we had done in person to the realities of remote meetings. We built a great tool for recruiting and coaching with our website, www.wakinguptowin.com, which is still running today.

Realty ONE Group also harnessed and embraced the power of Zoom as a way to create Community—another C—not just with our own agents but also with outsiders in our industry. For example, we convened a Zoom panel with

representatives from other real estate agencies—both big and boutique—to discuss how to navigate the challenging impacts of COVID-19. The well-being of the entire real estate industry as well as our Realty ONE Group people was of the highest importance.

Since Coolture is our heart, we perform regular cardiac health checkups. We stop to reflect and measure our fitness. Then, we prescribe new ways to improve our health. The Realty ONE Group continually challenges itself to do even better, communicate better, use technology and social media more widely and effectively, ramp up brand ambassador programs, and create Coolture 2.0, then 3.0. We won't stop there; we intend to keep on going!

you ARE THE *one*

- How do **YOU** connect with others?
- What is **YOUR** ideal work-life balance?
- How is Coolture important to **YOU**?

CHAPTER 6

UNconditional ONE Purpose

Realty ONE Group proudly and publicly declares our philosophy and raison d'être, our purpose for being, in our manifesto:

You have ONE life to live. ONE chance to make it meaningful. ONE opportunity to live with no regrets. Take risks, be bold, seize the day, and lead with respect. Your circumstances will change, people will change, you will change. Be open to it, embrace it, live it. EveryONE matters and everyONE has a voice.

This message is not a set of platitudes, nor is it a typical banner plastered on an office wall. It is our Coolture. It is in our DNA. It is how we live and work.

To capture our identity and be transparent about what we do, we have assembled an awesome in-house design and

marketing team, led by a corporate brand manager and a creative director. They have experience in graphic design, websites, digital projects, and print media. The team's role is to create a branding experience that reflects our commitment to being a modern lifestyle company.

Our visuals are bold and dynamic. Real estate is boring, but our brand is not! It changes and grows organically. Take a look at our website—it bursts with movement and our dynamic team colors, gold and black. The photos you see are *real* people, and they are smiling for a reason: they believe in Realty ONE Group's manifesto. The posts you see on social media are real too. We work hard and celebrate our successes together.

Other real estate companies use stock photos showing “sold” on a For Sale sign or agents giving buyers keys in front of a house. Not us. We are not pushing transactions. Instead, we are helping people make their dreams of homeownership or franchise ownership come true. Our approach clearly distinguishes us from other Realtors who do not think about what their customers need or want. Instead, they focus on how the agents and customers can make money for the agency.

We understand the power of storytelling—how it can be felt subconsciously—and we pay attention to the smallest details to tell the story of our ONE family and our uniqueness in the industry. We also understand the power of social media and are creative in maximizing its impact and leveraging current trends.

Our design and marketing choices make our concepts engaging, like our company. They are inviting and say,

“Hey, come be a part of this authentic experience.” The number of new professionals and franchisees we attract worldwide, their financial success and genuine feelings of satisfaction, and our growing business volume and profitability are a testament to how our manifesto comes alive.

The training I discuss in this book also reflects our goal of giving people value and not wasting their time. Our professionals tell me repeatedly that, beyond the vast content and resources, our training is valuable because it is highly personalized. It has the feel of an interactive conversation in a living room, rather than a passive PowerPoint presentation in a giant lecture hall. We connect people by innovating, educating, and using cutting-edge technology.

In keeping with our belief that everyONE has a voice, we listen. We are approachable and welcome input from our real estate professionals. As a result, they are comfortable coming to us to brainstorm ideas together. We have implemented franchisees’ suggestions and their ideas have been tremendously successful.

The Power of Presence

One major role of our design and marketing team is to plan our annual events. They do a great job capturing our unique spirit and Coolture. We have three major annual events: the National Association of Realtors® (NAR) meeting, our Basecamp, and ONE Summit. I’ll discuss our international ONE Summit in more detail later. First, I’ll describe our participation in the NAR conference, because that is where you can really see how different we are from

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that *everyONE* has a
voice, we listen. We are
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the competition. It is where the power of ONE, the power of Coolture, shines.

When you think about large national conferences like NAR, you probably visualize a huge impersonal convention space filled with cookie-cutter little booths staffed by company employees. You imagine horizontal tables with plastic cloths and free candy or cheap plastic key chains. Maybe there are balloons and a few easels displaying a welcome sign and the agency's logo or slogan. Or you might see a large company that spent millions on a booth but only has a couple staff members there, and even they look bored. What you do not see is people wandering around and engaging there. We do things differently—*very* differently—by creating *experiences* for attendees, rather than stale, stiff, and still booths that seem better suited for corporate pictures than a live event.

Our guests at NAR are wowed by our 40' x 40' space that's decked out with a 360 degree camera, large monitors playing videos detailing our growth, a corner with fun activities, and a big interactive game like a claw machine in the middle. There's also a ONE Store, where folks can shop for cool Realty ONE Group-branded items. Our area attracts hordes of people who spot us and our representatives, stop, and say, "Wow!" They are genuinely interacting with our Coolture!

Our salespeople are open and personable, welcoming visitors and answering questions. We give them extra love and attention. Every year, NAR takes place in a different city, and it draws in agents and others from our network from around the state. We have fun!

It is not unusual for real estate companies to back out of conferences at the last minute if there is any minor inconvenience. That is antithetical to the way Realty ONE Group operates. One year, the NAR convention was in Orlando, Florida. Just a couple of days before it started, a major hurricane was barreling directly there, aimed to hit Orlando and the surrounding areas. Many companies decided not to attend the gathering. Our people were determined to be there. To show we could handle the challenge, to show we were resilient, to show we would not give up. Our team spent two days rescheduling our flights, doing everything possible to attend the meeting. We had people in Florida who did not have a role at the conference but volunteered to help. They came and staffed the booth for at least a day!

This teamwork is an example of our agility, our pride, our desire not to miss an opportunity, and our passion for engagement. The level of excitement is truly amazing. We are not competing with other companies; we are competing with ourselves, always wanting to go to the max, to improve constantly.

Our commitment to charitable activities and giving back to the community is evident at our events, corporate offices, and franchises. Every year, we dedicate an area in our NAR booth to the Beverly Carter Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by her family to raise awareness of realtor safety. Beverly was murdered while showing a house, and we have always supported this worthy organization.

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with other companies;
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to *improve* constantly.

Your Team Deserves Your Very Best, Too

In addition to our involvement in the NAR event, we meticulously plan every detail for our company's annual events. About three thousand members of our network attend our annual ONE Summit. Where better to live our sense of fun than a vast hotel, resort, or casino? Each year has a different flair, with motivational talks, breakout sessions, and lots of socializing. This is also an opportunity for me to meet everyone affiliated with Realty ONE Group and personally thank them.

Our leadership retreat for broker-owners, Basecamp, takes place in a different city each year and draws at least three hundred people. Wherever our host city is, we do research to find a local organization to support. Communities welcome us and our business, and we truly want to give back to them in impactful and meaningful ways.

When Basecamp was in Nashville, Tennessee, our corporate brand manager suggested we contact a friend of his who was active in the child foster care community. This was the beginning of our long-standing support of Isaiah 117 House, a nonprofit organization that provides housing and supplies for children who have been placed in Child Protective Services (CPS) and await foster care. These children generally arrive at CPS with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. Isaiah 117 House takes them in and gives each one their own room with a clean bed, clean clothes, school supplies, and other comforts and necessities. Foster care parents must demonstrate the financial capacity to care for children and the ability to provide supplies like a

full pantry of nonperishables, blankets, diapers, and formula. We have adopted their cause!

One year at Basecamp, we organized a team-building event with pallets of supplies for foster care homes. Teams of fifteen were asked to build a structure with the supplies to represent our culture, their dream house, or something related to either. The creativity was extraordinary, and we sent enough supplies to Isaiah 117 House to last two to three years.

We operate on love. As ONE family, we pull together and make a difference in our communities. On the May 1 anniversary of Realty ONE Group's founding, we celebrate big-time by giving back to the community. It is a call to arms to everyone in our network throughout the country to find a cause that is important to them in their own communities. People mobilize to clean up beaches, work at food kitchens, and volunteer in other ways.

Realty ONE Group's 100 percent commission structure is a matter of being fair and giving people the freedom of time to balance their work and personal lives. But a significant ancillary effect of not messing with their checks is that it empowers people to keep more of their earnings, which leaves them with more money to donate to the causes that matter most to them.

One of our newest initiatives is ONE Dream, where anyone in our network can express their dearest wishes. This is another way we celebrate and honor each other. We have created a website where our real estate professionals can post their dreams. Each month, we try our very best to fulfill as many as possible. The wishes are as varied as our

people—a hot air balloon ride, a chance to do a standup comedy act, guitar lessons, etc.

At one event, we had a ONE Dream wall filled with Post-it Notes. People were invited to post their dreams anonymously on the wall (with their names hidden on the back so we could fulfill them). You might think the wishes would be self-serving, but they were not; they were mostly requests to benefit others. Instead of asking for the typical \$1 million, people hoped for special experiences or contributions for others. For example, one broker-owner wished their team would donate to an American Red Cross relief effort, and another wished their mother's home mortgage could be paid off.

At our events and in our corporate offices, you will see many people sporting our cool swag with stylish self-confidence and pride. This gear is another way to embrace our Coolture. We have professional and casual wear and accessories in our black and gold team colors with the company logo and words that represent our core beliefs and express our identity: unity. Our marketing team is always looking for what is trending and what is popular so we can express and reinforce our modern lifestyle brand. It may become a morning habit to wake up and drink coffee from a Realty ONE Group tumbler!

Typically, company clothing and merchandise are cheaply made. You go to an online store and find a T-shirt you can customize with an iron-on logo. Or you get a coffee mug with an emblem that can be easily scratched off. Often, it is promotional stuff you never use. We created

We *live* by our
ONE Philosophy and
Our ONE Belief that
everyONE *matters*
and everyONE
has a *voice!*

our company from scratch, and that is how we make our swag—original and special.

Like everything else we do, Realty ONE Group's clothing and other items are of the highest quality, designed to reflect our spirit. (At the National Association of Realtors® conventions, even people who are not affiliated with us buy our merchandise.) At our ONE Summit event, we have a full-size retail ONE Store, and team members flock to it.

One year, our creative design team made a customized Monopoly game called Onopoly that has been a big hit. Every detail was meticulously planned, from the gold player tokens to the Community cards.

ONE Store and its merchandise is not a profit center, but the accessories do energize our people and become great advertising that invites conversations: "Where did you get that? Tell me about Realty ONE Group!"

Ask anyone who is a part of Realty ONE Group, and they will tell you: we live by our ONE Philosophy and Our ONE Belief that everyONE matters and everyONE has a voice!

you ARE THE *one*

- **What is your main driver, what's your Philosophy and Belief?**
- **What charitable organization is close to YOUR heart?**

CHAPTER 7

UNmatchable

ONE Coaching for Success

We support our team members ONE member at a time. How? Through our extensive coaching, mentoring, and teaching programs. Whether it's a new licensee, an experienced agent, or a franchisee, we invest in our real estate professionals' success and happiness by providing continued personalized learning opportunities. If the individual wins, everyONE wins! We're so committed to our members' continuing education that we have a Chief Learning Officer who works with a team of coaches nationwide.

Thousands of real estate professionals join Realty ONE Group every year. Unlike other brokerage firms, our view is that *our own people*—the professionals—are our customers. Our mission is to provide them with value-added services. Instead of taking advantage of our real estate

professionals the way many competitors do, we offer them every advantage!

As a result, our professionals stay with us for a minimum of forty-six months. Successful recruiting and retention numbers aren't just statistics; they represent our people. We currently employ more than eighteen thousand real estate professionals in over four hundred offices globally.

Staying power in the real estate industry is no small matter. As I've said, it's common for new licensees not to make it beyond their first two years in the business. Why? Newly licensed agents don't have the proper training. Studying by yourself for the real estate licensing exam just doesn't cut it. Or licensees don't have the financial ability to wait for transactions to close; it takes thirty, sixty, and up to ninety days to receive compensation on a sale—and that's if we get compensated at all, because deals often fall through.

Realty ONE Group takes the long view, with educational programs for the lifespan of a real estate professional's career. We guide people in their journey going from a licensee new to the industry, to becoming a CEO of an independent real estate company that they could potentially sell to enjoy a comfortable retirement—in other words, from surviving to thriving in business and life. A lifetime in ONE profession!

Using surveys, discussion groups, and individual communications, we listen to our professionals by constantly asking them what they need. But we don't stop at simply gathering information; we find ways to implement their input.

We see time and time again that our approach to coaching allows each ONE of our team members to enjoy long-term professional success and satisfaction. We start with new licensees. People just getting into the real estate business participate in our Rev Up program, which goes way beyond typical onboarding processes. Each new professional is matched with an experienced coach who works hand-in-hand with them through real-world applications. We do not just send an agent out and wish them luck. Before they jump in, our new licensees Rev Up with in-house, interactive training workshops on listing presentation scripts and transaction processes. This way, the licensee feels prepared for what it will look like when they go out into the field.

What's more, we go out into the field with them. A coach literally walks the licensee through the business by going to properties with them! They accompany them to a seller's house for the initial listing presentation and introduce the agent as their team member. Right out of the gate, new agents are legitimized as valued professionals. Then, we'll return to the office to debrief: What went on? What were the seller's objections, and how did we overcome them? What can we do better, and what worked well? The next time we visit a seller's house, we'll do the presentation collaboratively. The agent does more talking, and the third time, the agent does the listing presentation themselves, with the coach there for support.

Additionally, we accompany licensees to open houses and show how they're done successfully. Open houses generate buyer and seller leads, so we help our professionals do

both. We teach the agent how to engage with a potential customer, provide value, and offer services and resources. Then, we mentor how to follow up and convert leads into deals. It's on-the-job training at its best.

Licensees learn the buying and selling processes much faster and better by *doing*. The benefits are exponential. They'll get the listing as soon as possible, get money in their pocket, and see some success, which builds their confidence. If a deal falls through, the coach is also there to minimize disappointment and keep the agents motivated.

Realty ONE Group's team of coaches learned what to do from what *wasn't* done for them early in their real estate careers: training and support. Our coaches initially came to Realty ONE Group from brokerages as agents and managers and easily identified what would have helped them in those roles. They agreed on a strategy: to go out in the field and provide continuing mentorship.

Their instincts were right. Our real estate professionals openly attribute their success to the learning opportunities and support we offer. They tell us they can't imagine working anywhere else. Further, our real estate professionals are our biggest cheerleaders and help recruit other agents to Realty ONE Group. They grow, and we grow!

Playing to Win

Working at Realty ONE Group is a fun game! Real estate is a contact sport, and like any team sport, it's competitive. We gamify the process by tracking appointments,

number of transactions closed, percentage of conversions from open houses, and more, and then we post the information. It's a motivating, performance-based numbers game. We encourage agents to compete against themselves and improve their percentage scores while still working as a team. After all, athletes strive to improve their stats and break their own records—and coaches help that happen!

Time management is essential to play the game well. As the clock ticks down on the agent's day, did they get the points they set out to win? To do so, our coaches encourage time-blocking.

Multitasking is a myth; it is simply ineffective. We highly recommend that the licensee be a stickler with their schedule by beginning with their goals and breaking down the blocks of time required to achieve them. What activities are necessary, and when should they be performed? It is astonishing what can be accomplished if you focus on the next *hour*, not the next *day*. Interruptions are inevitable, so when they happen, the professionals are also prepared to get back on schedule.

Rev Up itself follows a schedule—it is typically a twelve-week program beginning with weekly interactive workshops followed by one-on-one coaching. The next learning component is group accountability at Mastermind Monday meetings. As independent contractors, our agents are their own bosses. So, it's beneficial for them to report their successes to others and be part of our community. Mastermind Monday meetings are one way we create an

Time management
is *essential* to play
the game *well*.

environment where professionals' emotional needs are met and their accomplishments are celebrated.

Realty ONE Group also supports its more experienced Realtors and top producers with short-term, focused coaching. By first exploring their motivation for joining us, we individualize learning to address what *they* want to accomplish. Why did they leave another brokerage? What skills do they want to improve? How can we help?

Beyond the mentoring, our real estate professionals have 24/7 access to ONE.U, our proprietary learning platform, with nearly three thousand educational items in multiple forms. There are predesigned course curricula for every experience level and built-in tools to track their learning journey.

While we make all these resources available, we don't insist on their use. Our professionals are valued *independent contractors*, and we don't tell them how to run their business. Instead, we let them know we're there if they need us. As long as they represent our brand well and abide by the real estate industry's code of ethics, they have as much freedom as they want.

Education for EveryONE

The same learning principles and level of support are available to our franchisees. Opening and owning your own franchise can be an overwhelming experience with a steep learning curve. Realty ONE Group is with them all the way, launching new franchisees in their new endeavor with

This benefit is consistent
with our *philosophy*
that our professionals
are valuable *assets*
worthy of care.

comprehensive, four-day training at our HUB in Laguna Niguel, California. They'll also connect with franchise owners around the country through ONE.U. Our Step Up program is to franchise owners what Rev Up is to real estate professionals—a three-phased mentoring program, starting with the fundamentals of running a successful firm.

As I've said, real estate is a relationship business, and we maintain ongoing relationships with our franchisees. We host events throughout the year to support them, including recruiting boot camps, our Basecamp Leadership Retreat, and our annual world-class ONE Summit. This puts the FUN in Realty ONE Group!

We also provide franchisees with tech support through zONE, our proprietary platform, which maximizes productivity and lowers employee fixed costs. Thus, franchisees can manage their business in ONE place, from onboarding new agents to cutting the commission checks.

Realty ONE Group doesn't charge real estate professionals for training like some competitors do. This benefit is consistent with our philosophy that our professionals are valuable assets worthy of care. Added to the favorable high commission, low fee structure discussed in another chapter, coaching is ONE reason Realty ONE Group attracts and retains the best of the best.

you ARE THE *one*

- What is YOUR number ONE learning goal?
- What is YOUR long-term career plan?
- Do YOU know the importance of a coach?
- Do YOU have a coach or a plan?

CHAPTER 8

UNbreakable

ONE Winning Mindset

Sometimes, we have all been tempted to say, “Stop! I can’t do this anymore!” The crazy pressures of family obligations, finances, and deadlines simply overwhelm us. The unrelenting routine becomes too much—commuting, working, going home, eating, sleeping, and getting up the next day to do it all over again. We lose sight of who we are and how much power we have inside ourselves.

But how can we find the energy and motivation to achieve great things? To even bother trying? By adopting an UNstoppable mindset! This way of thinking characterizes the power that high performers know how to tap into. *You* can achieve that UNstoppable winning mindset too!

Expectation, Anticipation, and Training

We often use the words *expect* and *anticipate* interchangeably because they both express attitudes toward a future event. But there is a significant difference: an expectation is a prediction of the future, whereas anticipation is a certainty that it will happen. Further, to make the imagined reality a certainty, you must take action and plan. So, let me go through this three-step process—*expect*, *anticipate*, and *train*—to achieve a positive, can-do, mindset. Think of this as how to **EAT** a healthy breakfast in the morning!

The first step is to wake up every day with a clear *expectation*. You need to have an expectation of winning before you even have the opportunity to win. Thus, you are envisioning and predicting a positive outcome.

When I was very young, I expected a bright future full of entrepreneurial ideas that would come to fruition. As the son of Polish immigrants, I understood I was given the gift of opportunity. My parents hoped I would attend college and get a good job; I *expected* that I would!

But expectation alone is not enough. You also need *anticipation* to win. This means taking action to make your prediction—your expectation—happen. It's not enough to expect to go to college. That's just your vision. Anticipation goes further; it means taking the necessary steps to get there, like working hard and getting good grades. Here's the difference: an athlete might hope for a win (a feeling), expect a win (a prediction), and anticipate a win (a certainty) in order to succeed.

But you haven't finished **EAT**ing your breakfast yet. Next, you must *train* for the task like an athlete determined to practice, exercise, and do whatever it takes to succeed. In the world of business, training for the task at hand requires mental preparation and discipline.

How do you start? Focus on the task at hand!

There Are No Excuses

We all come up with excuses for not doing something. But the high achiever always shows up, pushes through, and does phenomenal things regardless of what is going on in their lives. They see themselves as worthy of achieving their goals and dreams, and they ignore the voices that stop them from expecting, anticipating, training . . . and succeeding.

The negative voices are the common mental and emotional roadblocks we erect: Fear. Procrastination. Disappointment. Inadequacy. Rejection.

But rest assured, there are many tools to knock down those walls: Confidence. Knowledge. Gratitude. Diligence. Perseverance. Consistency. Grit.

Earlier, I described the entrepreneurial drive that fueled my successful ventures. You, too, can dig down deep inside and discover what fuels *your* fire and strengthens your positive thinking.

Those who have an *UNstoppable* mindset are superb decision-makers. They do not sit around and ponder endless possibilities or analyze one option ad infinitum. Instead, they decide *quickly*, and once they make up their minds, they are committed and unwavering in their resolve. They are *clear* about what they want and how to achieve it.

Make Decisions Quickly; Change Your Mind Slowly

What are some of the traits of the greats? Those who have an UNstoppable mindset are superb decision-makers. They do not sit around and ponder endless possibilities or analyze one option ad infinitum. Instead, they decide quickly, and once they make up their minds, they are committed and unwavering in their resolve. They are clear about what they want and how to achieve it.

After winners make their decision, they stick to it. They spend the time and effort to get the desired results and don't stop until they do. High achievers do not vacillate or change their minds quickly. They understand it is counterproductive to keep moving their target. Because when the target is constantly moving, you are missing it. And you are wasting valuable time.

The Enduring Value of Using Your Time Wisely

We've been told to use our time wisely ever since we were schoolchildren. And effective "time management" has become the subject of countless volumes of how-to books, corporate presentations, scholarly articles, and podcasts. The consensus is that "I don't have the time" to accomplish something is a poor excuse.

Here's a simple exercise that will help you understand how you use your time and how you can manage it to achieve an UNstoppable mindset:

First, let's do some simple math. There are twenty-four hours in a day and one hundred sixty-eight hours in a week. Now, calculate all the things you do on a day-to-day basis. Account for everything—eating, sleeping, working, showering, spending time with family, working out—until you have filled one hundred sixty-eight hours.

I have found that 80 percent of individuals cannot account for one hundred sixty-eight hours. Not even close. They have no idea how they're spending their time. More importantly, they do not know how much unused time is available to accomplish their goals. Once you realize how much time you're wasting, you invalidate the excuse about not having time to do what you should be doing to implement your decisions and further your goals.

Do you actually *not* have the time to do something, or are you managing your time inefficiently? Those with an UNstoppable mindset find the time; they know how to plan. They are not averse to delegating and empowering others to assume some control. They also resist the urge to say yes to anything and everything they're asked.

Despite what experts say, there is no one-size-fits-all time management system to maximize efficacy. You need to figure out what works best for you. What are the times of day you are most energetic and productive? Does it help you to exercise? To meditate? To use time-blocking? To prioritize better? Sometimes, it's a matter of trial and error; sometimes, it's a matter of revisiting the exercise of calculating the time you spend on your various activities during the week's one hundred sixty-eight hours.

Traits of the Greats

A mentor of mine gave me a helpful analogy that has stuck: a crooked stick doesn't know it's crooked until it has a straight stick to compare it to. So, think about your role models, those successful people with UNstoppable mindsets. You'll surely notice some of the traits I've described in this chapter, such as their skills at expecting, anticipating, training for the task, decision-making, and planning. These individuals are not perfect; they're flawed human beings like the rest of us. But they have found the formula that drives their achievement.

YOU have the power to replace your negative thoughts with positive self-talk. Much like you encourage a friend or colleague, you can encourage yourself. If you cultivate and achieve an UNstoppable mindset, you will write your own success story!

Leading and Living Your Best Life

When I say the word *spider*, what do you think? Creepy? Running away?

When I say *snake*, what do you think? Get a shovel? Running away quickly?

When I say *market*, what do you think? Volatile? Opportunity? Recession?

This isn't a game of twenty questions! I intend to give you tools to understand the psychology of the people you lead. Once you have insight into their motivations, how

YOU have the *power*
to replace your
negative thoughts
with *positive*
self-talk.

you lead will enhance their work performance and enable them to live their best lives.

Think about your immediate responses to the words *spider*, *snake*, and *market*. Then, consider where your word associations come from. They come from stored memories that are not based on real experiences; instead, they're based on subconscious perceptions of reality. Even if we've never encountered a snake or a market downturn, just the thought of them can trigger a fear response in our brains—fight, flight, or freeze.

Let's take the example of a salesperson's reaction to a bad economy. Our perceptions generate a chain of events: an emotional response (I *feel* afraid), that leads to a behavior (I *avoid* telling my spouse), to a cognitive component (I *know* I'll fail), to a belief (I'll *always* be incompetent and broke).

Additionally, a leader's personal beliefs influence an employee's behavior. There is a classic social psychology experiment that supports this claim. Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson studied first graders and their teachers and concluded there was a Pygmalion effect: high teacher expectations yield improved student performance, and low expectations lead to worse performance.³

I'm sure you are nodding in agreement—you've seen this in action!

3. <https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/being-honest-about-the-pygmalion-effect>, October 28, 2015

Changing a Fixed Mindset to a Growth Mindset

These scientific psychological findings impact how to lead effectively. Your job as a leader is to believe in your teams, because your beliefs subconsciously influence them. Leaders must also recognize that each individual has their own belief systems that drive their behavior. If you have high expectations they will succeed, they will rise to the task!

To maximize sales professionals' well-being, job performance, and satisfaction, you must believe in them! Help people shift their fixed mindsets, their beliefs, to a growth mindset that is open to change. This takes humility from those you lead—they need to know what they *don't* know and be willing to change. That is how everyone lives their best lives, even through adversity.

Understanding Motivations and Needs

Why we work determines how well we work, and not everyone is motivated the same way. You may have learned this in a college psychology class: there are two drivers of motivation—inside forces (intrinsic) and outside ones (extrinsic). As an entrepreneur, I had both an internal drive to innovate and be the best I could be and the external motivation of making money to help my parents.

A leader must develop their self-awareness to know what makes others tick. Motives typically fall into five categories: play, emotional pressure, economic pressure, potential, and

Why we work
determines *how*
well we work.

A *leader* must
develop their self-
awareness to *know*
what makes others tick.

inertia.⁴ We may have multiple motives simultaneously, but I'll discuss them one by one.

Remember, I'm talking about our work lives here, although these motivations also apply to our personal lives. In the work context, *play* means really enjoying what you do. You love building relationships or helping people buy their dream homes. You have fun while you're working. Or your motive could be *emotional*. Your spouse pressured you and insisted you take this job. Or your motive could be *economic* pressure. You need the income to pay your bills. Or your motive is the *potential* yield. You want to become a manager of a franchise one day. Finally, it may be counterintuitive, but your motive could be *inertia*—no drive at all. You feel stuck where you are and have no idea why you do what you do. More people feel this helplessness and job dissatisfaction than you think.

As a leader, you can do something about this. Once you've identified your own motivations and are living *your* best life, you are in a better position to understand your team members. And once you understand those you lead, you are equipped to lead them the way they need to be led, give them what they need to succeed, and bring out their best.

If you offer support based on your employees' and colleagues' motivations—whether it is offering continuing education, collaborative projects, or other assistance—you

4. <https://hbr.org/2015/11/how-company-culture-shapes-employee-motivation>. November 25, 2015

Once you *understand*
those you lead, you are
equipped to lead them
the way they need to be
led, give them what they
need to succeed, and
bring out their *best*.

will see results. Most importantly, your employees will *feel* the results!

Giving Professionals What They Need to Succeed

Once again, remember that many people do not know why they do what they do; you must often help them figure it out. Your job as a leader isn't finished once you've done that, however. The next task is motivating them.

Take someone who is stuck in inertia or inaction. Once you help them understand they aren't moving forward because they feel incompetent, your job is clearly defined: to create competence. Offer them the tools they need to succeed—coaching, encouragement, training, etc.

Understanding your people's motivations goes hand-in-hand with maximizing their job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. You must go beyond understanding what makes them tick to understand what they need from you to succeed. These concepts not only apply to individuals but also to teams.

Both psychological research and firsthand experience have identified four significant needs all humans have that, if fulfilled, will allow them to feel valued and heard and to succeed: competency, autonomy, community, and psychological safety.

First, if your employee feels incompetent, they become unmotivated and frozen in a state of inertia. The solution? Equip them with the necessary tools to succeed. Think about it: we all perform better when we feel competent.

Additionally, our self-esteem is boosted, and the positive effect snowballs.

Second, human beings have a need for autonomy, so micromanagement can be disheartening and unproductive. This holds true for teams as well as individuals.

Third, people need community, particularly in times of adversity. We need deep relationships and affiliations to achieve our best selves. There is a well-known scientific experiment that confirms this. Monkeys, like human beings, produce a hormone, cortisol, when they are stressed. But when researchers put a highly-stressed monkey in a cage with one with low cortisol levels—guess what happened? The stressed monkey calmed down! Being part of a community improves everyone involved.

Fourth and finally, we need psychological safety, which is intertwined with community. If we feel safe to be ourselves, trust our leaders, and feel comfortable to reach out for help, we can overcome psychological barriers and live our best lives.

Roger Bannister, a middle-distance British runner who later became a neurologist, is a prime example of someone who overcame long-standing extrinsic expectations and entrenched beliefs. However, his own *intrinsic* beliefs, certainty, and motivation powered him to break the seemingly unbreakable world-record barrier of running the four-minute mile. Doctors claimed it was a physically impossible feat because the human heart could not pump enough blood to the rest of the body to sustain that speed. Bannister believed differently.

By *understanding* and
encouraging the potential
of those you lead, you,
too, can *empower* them
to break barriers of fear
and inertia. Then, you
and they can *achieve*
great things together!

In 1954, at the age of twenty-five, Bannister ran a 3:59.4 mile! Since then, more than sixteen hundred athletes have broken the four-minute mile. Like a true role model and leader, Bannister changed others' belief systems. By understanding and encouraging the potential of those you lead, you, too, can empower them to break barriers of fear and inertia. Then, you and they can achieve great things together!

you ARE THE *one*

- What long-standing beliefs have been holding YOU back?
- What kind of support would YOU like in times of adversity?

CHAPTER 9

UNdependence **ONE Dream**

From Nevada to South America, Canada, Europe, and Asia, Realty ONE Group has opened doors across the globe. As a first-generation American, I've always seen beyond geographical boundaries. I understand that people everywhere want to find a place they call "home." They want a place to gather with family. After all, owning a home is the American Dream and a goal for others worldwide. Owning a business is also a cherished ideal for many. As ONE, we can make that happen!

Realty ONE Group has expanded from its original roots of corporate-owned branches to welcoming affiliates everywhere. Owning a Realty ONE Group franchise feeds your entrepreneurial spirit while giving you the chance to "have your cake and eat it too." You gain the support of our dynamic brand, systems, and experts *and* the freedom to

People *everywhere* want
to find a place they call
"home." They want a place
to *gather* with family.

build your own business your way. In addition, franchises are a lower-risk investment than an independent startup. They are a win-win opportunity.

The word *affiliate* comes from the Latin verb that means “to adopt as a child.”⁵ Much like a parent guides their child, so do we help make you the hero in your own story. Realty ONE Group provides our affiliates with the chance to be their own boss and prosper emotionally and financially.

From Employee to Employer

It is not easy to open and operate your own business. Realtors may be great at selling real estate, but they’re not necessarily great businesspeople. Think of Michael Jordan. He was an extraordinary basketball player but has had rather dismal results as a basketball team owner. He excelled in athletics but not management. Recognizing this potential pitfall, Realty ONE Group educates franchisees on how to run their businesses successfully. It also helps them educate their real estate professionals to be great at what they do.

I know what it’s like to go from being an employee to an employer, so Realty ONE Group will guide you to shift your mindset from working *in* your business to working *on* your business. An entrepreneur’s mentality needs to be that of someone who reaps what they sow. It’s hard work with enormous payoffs. Realty ONE Group will be with you all the way to ease your transition and sustain your success.

5. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/affiliate>, reviewed May 15, 2024

We have learned how to make money and guide franchisees to make money too.

How does our franchising process work? You can get to know us by talking to our director of growth, visiting our corporate office aka The HUB, in Laguna Niguel, California, or visiting a regional office near you. Once we mutually decide that we are the right fit for each other, you'll return to The HUB for four days of free comprehensive training. There, you'll meet people just like you who are launching franchises, and you'll develop your own business support system. Additionally, you'll have numerous ongoing resources available, including our Step Up program and ONE Support group of franchisees.

As Realty ONE Group expands nationally and internationally, we consider the cultural, legal, and other differences that exist and customize our training, tools, and resources accordingly. Wherever the franchise is located, it's still about the people, not the place.

One key piece of advice early on is to get a specialist to negotiate your commercial space lease. Bad leases have sunk many businesses. Yes, as a real estate agent, you've successfully negotiated residential leases—but that doesn't mean you're able to get favorable commercial lease terms as a broker-owner. You wouldn't go to a cardiologist for a broken leg, would you? A commercial Realtor can even pay a referral back to you, so you make money on the deal.

A Realty ONE Group franchise specialist will collaborate one-on-one with you on a comprehensive market analysis to set competitive pricing and plan a budget. Once your financial framework is set up, we'll help you figure

It's still about
the *people*, not
the *place*.

out the nitty-gritty of your operations, such as roles and responsibilities and hiring.

At this point, you'll be ready for our subject matter experts, who will help you establish additional revenue streams, such as a mentor program to attract new agents and ONE Marketplace to partner with local service providers. When your systems are in place, you'll transition to an affiliate development consultant, who will be your personal go-to coach. As a franchisee, you'll also have access to zONE, our proprietary technology platform; ONE.U, our training and education programs; and ONE Design, our marketing and branding expertise.

Your Dream Requires a Team

Once you have your new Realty ONE Group franchise up and running, it's time to build out a team. As we mentioned, you can't work on your business if you're the only one working in your business! So, let's talk for a moment about how and why to find real estate professionals who are a perfect match for your company.

Real estate is a relationship business. By surveying our consumers, we've learned that 84–86 percent say they would use their Realtor again. That sounds pretty good, right? However, the reality is that only 16 percent of a real estate professional's business comes from repeat customers and referrals! What does that enormous gap tell us? Real estate is stuck on being a transactional business, but for it to thrive, it needs to be based on relationships. Similarly,

hiring decisions are highly interpersonal: attracting the right people for the right role.

The bad news is our franchisees tell us their biggest challenges are recruitment and retention. There are two ways to overcome those barriers to effective hiring: be a good storyteller and recognize you are not engaging in a listing consultation, but a buying one. Great broker-owners are great storytellers, and recruiting is telling your story well; the key to retention is living the story you tell. Apply your talent and passion for selling houses to recruiting talent!

Smart hiring is like a thorough real estate buyer consultation that helps determine what houses you'll show. Some Realtors rely on the confetti approach—taking a potential buyer to all the available homes in a town and hoping one will appeal to them. Great Realtors, however, ask qualifying questions: *What do you want in a home? Do you want to be close to your workplace? Do you want a place that's conducive to entertaining?* If you listen to their answers, you'll increase the likelihood they'll find the house of their dreams.

Similarly, if you ask a job candidate probing qualifying questions and listen actively to their responses, you maximize the likelihood they'll be an excellent match for your business. Additionally, listen to the applicant's questions.

Here's an instructive scenario: The candidate asks how you will provide leads. In response, you ask if they're willing to learn how to *generate* leads.

If they say, "No, I want you to give me leads," that person may not be right for you. There are so many fabulous real estate professionals everywhere that you can afford to be selective.

Cultures *vary* from country
to country and from
continent to continent.

But we've discovered
that certain practices and
attitudes underlie success,
everywhere on the planet.

If a broker-owner continues to increase their sales force wisely, they'll increase both their business and their happiness. I am living proof of this concept: I love the people I work with at Realty ONE Group, and my business and happiness have swelled beyond my dreams! You'll meet several franchise owners and an area owner in the following chapter, and you'll hear directly from them how Realty ONE Group franchises have also enriched their lives. Yes, cultures vary from country to country and from continent to continent. But we've discovered that certain practices and attitudes underlie success, everywhere on the planet. We want to help you find success and realize your dreams, wherever you are in the world!

you ARE THE *one*

- What are YOUR entrepreneurial dreams?
- What do YOU need to make them happen?

CHAPTER 10

UNbelievable **ONE Voice**

I have been blessed beyond words to get a firsthand, front-row view of some incredible people's success under the Realty ONE Group banner. It should be clear to you by now that I don't just see our broker-owners as coworkers, employees, or colleagues. Our relationships go so much further and deeper than that! These wonderful people are my family, and I get more excited about their success than I do about my own!

As we wrap up this close look into our business and how Realty ONE Group has changed all of our lives, I thought it was only fitting to step aside for a moment and put the spotlight on a few superstars I've had the pleasure of working with over these past twenty years. Their stories—and the thousands of similar stories I've heard from others in our Realty ONE Group family—keep me laser-focused

on growing this business and maintaining a platform that has enabled all of us to succeed beyond our wildest dreams.

Sergio González, Master Franchise Owner

Nothing compares to Realty ONE Group's spirit of excitement and commitment. Realty ONE Group is all about its people. Its magic formula is a simple equation: making money plus having a good time plus helping others. It's definitely the UNbrokerage—UNlike any other place where I've worked.

I've been in the real estate industry for over twenty years as an agent, branch manager, marketing director, and franchise owner. Before coming to Realty ONE Group, I worked at two other large brokerage firms. Currently, I am the master franchise owner for Realty ONE Group—Central America, Panama, and Western Caribbean countries. So, I actually *am* in a position to compare Realty ONE Group to other brokerage companies!

I bought my first franchise from a reputable real estate company in Costa Rica. I was living with my family on Jaco Beach in Costa Rica, and my business became very, very successful. Life was good . . . until I was diagnosed with stage IV cancer, and my world turned upside down. I faced death. I just knew it, and the doctors in Costa Rica confirmed the prognosis. But they started chemo, radiation, and other therapeutic treatments anyway. I got even sicker, so I had to sell my franchise. To make matters even worse, it was 2008, and the economy turned upside down too. I

went from earning \$300,000 a year to earning nothing—and I lost my health insurance.

My search for healing took me on a medical journey to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and the Moffitt Cancer Center in Miami. I ended up spending a year and a half in the United States. The doctors in Houston repeated the same grim news—it was unlikely any cancer treatment would work. But they were willing to try something that might make me a candidate for a bone marrow transplant.

God sent me the first of many miracles: a Cuban woman at our Houston hotel told me about pastor Joel Osteen and Lakewood Church. Even though the church was packed with twenty-five thousand people in a stadium, the service and people were incredibly warm and welcoming. People seeking healing were invited to walk through the center aisle, and people would pray for them one at a time. When it was my turn, a little elderly woman (Joel Osteen's mother, a cancer survivor) told me I'd be healed in the name of Jesus. She gave me a little inspirational booklet, "How I Healed Myself from Cancer," which I've since shared with several people.

I never gave up, and my medical journey continued at the Moffitt Center in Miami, Florida, where I was told I was eligible for health insurance since I was an American. Thankfully, my story has a happy ending, not a tragic one. I received a successful bone marrow transplant. I returned to Costa Rica healthy and vibrant, and I embarked on a new chapter in my real estate career.

Overcoming serious health challenges has given me a profoundly new perspective: I've become fearless. I know I

"Overcoming serious health
challenges has given me a
profoundly new perspective:

I've become *fearless*. I
know I can do anything. I am
grateful." —Sergio González,
Master Franchise Owner

can do anything. I am grateful. This spirit serves me well now at Realty ONE Group, where I work with like-minded people. Still, there was one more career detour before I'd have the happy opportunity to find my ONE home.

My family settled in Escazu, a beautiful suburb of San José, Costa Rica, where many US expats live. In 2012, I opened a franchise office of a large, well-known real estate brokerage. I was doing quite well, and I envisioned expanding to other areas in Costa Rica or even the region. I was determined to own more franchises, much like I was determined to beat cancer. But a couple of years passed, and the region was purchased by some employees of the firm. I never knew it was available for sale. Additionally, the brokerage sold a couple of offices a mile from my office. I felt betrayed, and my dissatisfaction escalated.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the real estate industry, like many businesses, suffered big-time in Costa Rica. The airports were closed for seven months, and nobody was making any money. The franchisor was still pressuring its franchisees to pay our (rather steep) dues. That was a turning point for me; I concluded that the franchisor did not share my values, and I wanted out. I started researching other real estate franchising businesses and came across Realty ONE Group.

At first, I was unsure about the firm because I had become so accustomed to the other brokerage. Something as simple as their logo put me off. Then, I recognized many people working for Realty ONE Group came from my current brokerage. They were good people who were now employed in leadership positions! That's part of Kuba's

brilliance. His vision, energy, and smarts led him to invite these top professionals to grow his company. And they're still working there.

I approached Realty ONE Group about buying the Costa Rica franchise. Much to my surprise and delight, they asked me to take on more than that small territory! They offered me the entire region, and I purchased Central America, Panama, Dominican Republic, Grand Cayman, and Jamaica. I took a risk and agreed. Winning my battle with cancer inspired my fearlessness and faith.

Kuba's vision is infectious and magnified my already-fierce determination to continue growing Realty ONE Group in North America, South America, and Central America. I've told Kuba my goal is to have thirty-one locations open in the region in the next ten years!

What makes Realty ONE Group special and superior? Again, it's the professionals; they are authentic, respectful, and laid-back, but still exceedingly hardworking. The training is exceptional too. I was awed when I went to my first annual Summit, a meeting for leaders and affiliates in Las Vegas, the city where Realty ONE Group began its rapid climb to the top. Energy and a sense of fun permeated the conference, and I learned a lot.

Other companies' meetings I had attended felt very corporate—all about numbers, making money. Yes, we want to make money at Realty ONE Group, but being happy translates into more productive agents, who in turn make more money. The low-fee, 100 percent commission structure motivates agents to work not just for the dollars but because they feel respected and valued.

Competitors' brokerages often change the terms of their financial structure midstream, often without notice. Realty ONE Group is always up-front about its fees and rarely changes them. One of Kuba's favorite expressions is, "Don't mess with the check." Since international markets vary, the finances may be slightly different; however, they're always superior to other brokerages, and the terms don't change on a whim.

For example, my master franchise region—Central America, Panama, and Western Caribbean countries—doesn't use the 100 percent split; however, our split is *significantly* higher than our competitors. Similarly, when other brokerages sell a franchise, there's usually a royalty fee of up to 10 percent and no less than 6 percent; our royalty is a flat fee of 2.5 percent.

Like our annual Summit meeting, Realty ONE Group distinguishes itself at industry-wide National Association of Realtors® conferences. Looking around the convention hall, we stand out with our energy, excitement, fun games, T-shirt giveaways, and fresh, modern branding. People don't just walk by our booth—they stay and hang out.

RealtyONEGroup's 6 C's values—Coolture, Coaching, Connect, Community, Care, and Commission—transcend geographical locations. Our fun office environment, modern branding, and caring attitudes are evident everywhere! However, we don't sacrifice attention to detail, a strong work ethic, punctuality, or being a self-starter.

Sometimes, a real estate professional is a lifesaver for people who are experiencing major life changes, such as the death of a spouse, financial challenges, job relocation,

or a new baby. Our number one job is to help our buyers and sellers by being caring individuals. That's exactly who Realty ONE Group attracts: real estate professionals who care!

Many people spend more time with workmates than with their families. It's beautiful that at Realty ONE Group, we genuinely feel like we are ONE family. When a thirty-five-year-old man's mother passed away, everyone from the office attended the funeral. A seventy-four-year-old agent went out of his way to thank me for helping him become more positive. These are typical stories I hear from my colleagues.

Additionally, Realty ONE Group doesn't charge for its continuing education, unlike the other companies I've worked with. Realty ONE Group doesn't stagnate; it continually offers new tools and educational programs. Recently, there was an announcement that we could be trained to earn a coaching certificate for free. What other company would do that?

I believe in Realty ONE Group. I am proud and grateful to be a master franchise owner. And I am not surprised that we earned the number one spot for real estate franchisors on *Entrepreneur's* highly competitive 2022 Franchise 500® list. It's truly all about the people!

Mona Phillips, Franchise Owner

Ten years ago, I hadn't heard of Realty ONE Group.

I came to real estate from a corporate background as a national salesperson of large office equipment. I left that

position to get a real estate license and went to work for a large Realtor. I left that agency to become a boutique broker-owner in the San Francisco Bay Area, still having never heard of Realty ONE Group.

I learned about Realty ONE Group by chance—a very lucky chance. My boutique realty company had ten agents, and we were doing extremely well. More importantly, I loved what I did! I prided myself on how my team worked together, educating each other and our clients. But I recognized that technology was quickly changing the real estate industry, and my firm would greatly benefit from a franchisor who could get us to the next level, one that also understood the local community—not just where we were situated but also our community of real estate professionals.

I sought a collaborative relationship with a franchisor. The large firm I had worked for was the opposite: cliquy, competitive, and phony. No one offered to help anyone, and when I received an award, no one acknowledged it. There wasn't any camaraderie, to say the least.

I interviewed lots of different real estate franchisors and finally chose one that seemed to be a good fit. I went to their West Coast office, ready to sign the contract. But I didn't like what I saw. A big TV screen greeted me, and the whole environment lacked warmth—big-time! The firm preferred virtual communication with clients, and the culture seemed distant and cold. It really bothered me, so I decided to hit the rewind button and did not sign the contract.

I decided I needed more information, so I called the references the franchisor had provided. When I called the

first name on the list, I was told she was no longer with the company. I Googled her new contact information and explained why I was calling. When I said I was ready to sign a five-year contract with her former company, she responded, “Oh, no, wait! Don’t do that yet.” She was very professional and said she left the agency to go in a different direction. What she told me next changed my life: this guy named Kuba was opening franchises for an amazing brand, Realty ONE Group.

Who is that?

I did my due diligence, visiting the Arizona office, meeting with a Realty ONE Group franchise representative, and talking to their real estate professionals. I loved the office vibe and the warmth of the people. I really felt their technology and culture would enhance what I was doing at my boutique firm.

I learned the competition felt threatened and nervous about Kuba’s potential impact. But I was nervous for a different reason: It was Realty ONE Group’s first foray into franchising.

Now, ten years later, I own two Realty ONE Group franchises in the San Francisco Bay Area. We have a total of one hundred and thirty real estate professionals and ten staff members in both locations. (Without wishing ill for our competitors, we did disrupt the business here as they had feared.) The team from my boutique real estate firm came with me. Yes, they were excited to earn 100 percent commissions on their transactions, but they were impressed by much more than that.

At first, I was skeptical about this thing they called *Coolture*. Was it just bad spelling or an effort to be cutesy? No, to the contrary. The culture *was* cool—laid back, warm, welcoming, authentic. It wasn't stuffy—people were comfortable dressing neatly in T-shirts and jeans. You felt like you belonged and were a part of a supportive community.

The warmth is evident the minute you walk into a Realty ONE Group office. It's not your typical real estate office with fluorescent lights and ugly filing cabinets. (The office is paperless!) The décor is beautiful—black and gold and white with funky art and gold soccer balls. I can best describe it as cool, edgy, contemporary, and UNstuffy. Beneath the surface, you see something else: community. The offices have gathering spaces for the team to relax and have fun. You see ping-pong tables, high-top tables, premium coffee, and even beer. There are plenty of private meeting rooms too.

Realty ONE Group offices are safe spaces. That may seem strange to say, but an environment of trust is essential. Why? We deal with people during transitions in their lives—marriages, divorces, deaths, new babies, job relocations, illnesses, and changed financial circumstances. Many of our clients feel vulnerable and want to talk with us about these issues, and that can make us feel vulnerable too. Granted, we're not psychologists. But much like Realty ONE Group professionals deeply care about and support each other, so, too, do we care about and support our clients. Kuba has set a tone of human decency that permeates the organization.

If we *really* search within
ourselves and recognize
that we can do better,
we *can* do better.

As a society, we've lost so much of our human connectedness. We focus on money and numbers more than on humanity. If we really search within ourselves and recognize that we can do better, we *can* do better. And Realty ONE Group does it better!

Clarke Van Devender, First Franchise Owner

I get emotional talking about my wife and our association with Kuba. We became the proud owners of Realty ONE Group's very first franchise in 2012 and have never met anyone like him. He radiates love, understanding, and joy, all of which he expresses in acts of kindness and authentic, visionary enthusiasm.

My wife, Barbara Baker, shared my admiration and affection for Kuba. Sadly, Barbara passed away recently after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. But we were partners in life and in the franchise. During Barbara's two-year struggle with her illness, Kuba displayed an unparalleled depth of humanity. Every week, he sent her a bouquet of purple roses, a gesture demonstrating impressive thoughtfulness, as Barbara's favorite color was purple. (She even had a purple streak in her hair!)

Barbara had a long, successful career in real estate and had been the first franchise owner of a prominent real estate brokerage firm. On the other hand, I came to real estate much later, at Barbara's urging. I worked at an international explosive ordnance disposal company as a contract employee. My work required frequent travel; sometimes, I was away for two weeks and sometimes two months, then

I'd be home for a while. Barbara encouraged me to get a real estate license to help her during the periods I was at home. What began as a side job became my full-time career. But Barbara was the star. In fact, I became known by her last name, Baker, instead of my own, Van Devender.

When Barbara was extricating herself from her first franchise business because of conflicts with her partner, she was open to new franchising opportunities. Our attorney suggested that we become our own brand, but our discovery of Realty ONE Group negated that plan. We noticed in a real estate newsletter that Realty ONE Group was starting to take on franchises. We did our due diligence by researching and visiting one of their corporate offices in Corona, California, and liked what we saw. The 100 percent commission and flat-fee business model was very appealing, but what attracted us most was Kuba's vision and heart.

Our initial meeting on July 3 with Kuba in Orange County, California, sealed the deal. The date is memorable because we met Kuba—this young guy in a T-shirt, tennis shoes, and pressed jeans—at a company barbecue to celebrate the Fourth of July. That experience gave us a real flavor of Realty ONE Group's warmth, positive ethos, and team spirit.

Kuba invited us to visit the corporate offices in Las Vegas to get a firsthand look at the back end of his operation. (The offices have since moved to The HUB in Laguna Niguel, California.) Barbara and I met with him and his head of franchising, a meeting I've come to remember as the "knee-knocking" meeting. We were overwhelmed with the energy and vision of Realty ONE Group and its leader,

so we were knocking knees under the table with agreement and excitement. But we were afraid Kuba would say no, that we weren't right for them. Apparently, Kuba and the head of franchising were also knocking knees under the table with agreement and excitement. But they were afraid we would say no, that they weren't right for us.

Our conversation shifted to the nitty-gritty business of the financial franchising arrangement. Barbara and I were somewhat puzzled because Kuba did not know our finances, nor had he checked us out, and we told him so. His answer was he didn't need to; he knew who we were. So, we asked the bottom-line question: "What is the cost?"

Kuba's answer flabbergasted us: "One dollar." (We were expecting \$20,000, or maybe \$25,000.) But \$1? That was the franchise fee!?

Why did Kuba only charge \$1 for the first few franchises? He believed the franchisees should keep the money they'd ordinarily spend up front and invest it into their businesses, so they would flourish. And when the franchises flourished, so would Realty ONE Group. (Buying a franchise now costs up to \$22,000, depending on the area; however, the company's philosophy of ensuring its members success, and, as Kuba says, "not messing with their checks," still holds true.)

Our Realty ONE Group office is in Temecula, California, just north of San Diego. We've experienced incredible growth—our office is now approximately nine thousand square feet, and we have about two hundred and eighty real estate professionals. When we hit two hundred professionals, Kuba sent Barbara two hundred long-stemmed

purple roses. What other company, what other leader, do you know who would honor and thank someone this way? As I've said, Kuba has an extremely generous heart and spirit.

As the first franchisee, we were like the beta test site. Naturally, there were hiccups along the way, but we always received support to overcome the hiccups. Always! The back-end technological portion of the business was somewhat challenging for us (maybe because we're older than the generation of digital natives). But whenever we contacted the corporate office, we quickly received help. This responsiveness emanated from Kuba's desire to see everyone succeed. At the same time, Kuba is a direct, no-nonsense leader; he'll let you know if something isn't working.

Kuba's energy is infectious. Not only could I see his impact, but I was also told about it. For example, I met a young broker from North Carolina who was attending her first ONE Summit in Las Vegas, the annual meeting for franchisees and broker-owners. She told me she had worked for three well-known real estate firms and had been to their conventions. She commented it was significant that Realty ONE Group didn't use the stuffy term *convention*; instead, it was *ONE Summit*. Further, she said she had never been to a real-estate-firm-sponsored meeting that was about *you*—the person—and not what *we* will sell you if you work for us. The enduring message is that Realty ONE Group is all about how you can grow as a person and as a professional.

Barbara and I had many occasions to meet potential franchisees, as Kuba had asked us to vet many of the first ones. It was rare that someone didn't want to join Realty

ONE Group. But if they declined initially, we knew they may accept later. We were in discussions with an eBroker with two hundred and twenty agents working for him in Northern California who could have become Realty ONE Group's second franchisee. He was intrigued by our fee structure and culture but was reluctant to join Realty ONE Group because he was accustomed to working from home. Although he didn't become franchisee number two, he did become number nine. Now, we joke around and call him "Number Nine."

My point is twofold: first, there is genuine camaraderie among franchisees; and second, those who shy away from or leave Realty ONE Group end up coming back! What are the number ONE reasons they cite? The educational tools and other support services and the team spirit. Although many people bailed out of the real estate industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, we flourished. Realty ONE Group maintained and expanded in online educational programs on Zoom, adding tools and motivational speakers.

Kuba's heart is also reflected in his commitment to his charitable foundation, ONE Cares. One year, ONE Summit had a small fashion show featuring company merchandise—T-shirts, sweatshirts, and other team gear. At the end of the evening, there was an auction for a leather jacket that the design department had decorated with company-themed doodles. Barbara and I had the winning bid for the jacket at \$2,500 and Kuba pledged to match the amount to donate to a charity we chose. We wanted the proceeds to go to Safe House Project, a program for female victims of domestic violence. We went to present

the check to the organization's board, and when the giant mock-up was turned around, the amount was *not* \$5,000 as expected. It was for \$11,111 thanks to Kuba!

When Barbara passed away, I struggled with how to honor her. She had been in the real estate business since 1975 and had a huge group of people who loved her. With Kuba's guidance, the Realty ONE Group design department organized a celebration of Barbara's life for two hundred and seventy-five people at our favorite winery. Kuba paid for the entire gathering. What owner of a corporation the size of Realty ONE Group would do such a thing? ONE person: Kuba Jewgieniew!



I'm humbled and honored more than I can say by the kind words Sergio, Mona, and Clarke have shared here. To be honest, I almost decided not to include these stories in this book after I first read their contributions—not because their accounts weren't powerful, but because it's frankly embarrassing for me to print such high praise from people I love and respect so much. They may *think* they're directing their appreciation at Kuba Jewgieniew, but all I've done is create an environment in which these three rock stars and others like them can thrive.

Every single person in our Realty ONE Group family is the hero of their own story. They have worked tirelessly, they have made sacrifices, they have built our Coolture brick by brick, and they are each responsible for their own success.

So, while I do thank you, my friends, for your kindness, it is I who am eternally grateful to you. Each of you represents the best Realty ONE has to offer, and you make me proud every day of what we can each achieve—individually *and* as a team—when we prioritize Coolture, Coaching, Connect, Community, Care, and Commission.

you CAN EXPERIENCE THE LIVING
COOLTURE BY GOING TO:

- www.onecoolture.com
- www.wakinguptowin.com

CHAPTER 11

UNlimited

Are YOU the Next ONE?

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for my parents and the opportunity they gave me to live the American dream. What started as one man's dream is now a worldwide reality. It is my legacy, and I am humbled by the opportunity to share it with you. Like my heartbeat, my vision never stops going—it keeps beating. My pledge to everyone who believed in me and my dream is to continue painting the globe gold, together as ONE.

I am also humbled by the success of my Realty ONE Group family and by our real estate professionals' kind words. The most meaningful feedback I have received about our ONE Summit meetings was that they were "life-changing" both personally and professionally. This comment reflects how well our organization is succeeding to

Like my heartbeat,
my *vision* never
stops going—it
keeps *beating*.

fulfill our 6C's: Coolture, Coaching, Connect, Community, Care, and Commission.

Thankfully, the positive feedback also means that I am doing what I had set out to do many years ago as an entrepreneur: innovate and change people's lives. I have gone from refurbishing computers in my parents' basement to creating the lasting legacy of a lifestyle brand.

I envisioned Realty ONE Group for many reasons. I was looking for scheduling flexibility to achieve a desirable personal-professional balance. I also wanted the option of working at an office or at home or both. And, of course, when I was a real estate agent working for other firms, I experienced a severe pain point: people were messing with my check by taking huge chunks in commission.

So, I launched Realty ONE Group with the intention of giving real estate professionals what I had not received: freedom and fairness!

When I looked at the thousands of people gathered at the ONE Summit, I saw people from all over the world coming together to learn and network and celebrate together as a family. It was a multiethnic, multigenerational group of people sharing the common purpose of improving the lives of others.

What I did *not* see were people looking at their phones with their arms crossed, ready to jump up and leave the room when they could do so discreetly. People were chatting and lingering. Best of all, they were smiling—not fake smiles, but smiling with their eyes!

Recently at our ONE Summit, it was a thrill for me to be joined by about twenty family members, including

my teenage children, who *wanted* to be there. They did not view the ONE Summit as a way to skip school; just the opposite, they love school! But here they were, 100 percent present, paying attention to speakers and taking notes. They were learning as I had learned—not through the American school system, but in the real world.

I am committed to hosting Realty ONE Group experiences that will be remembered—not just because they are fun, but because they are meaningful and informative. They are opportunities for people to network and share and develop enduring relationships with peers.

Like everything Realty ONE Group does, the gatherings and experiences are planned with thoughtful intentionality. I had never liked attending industry-wide real estate conventions because they rarely offered what I craved: meaningful interactions and connections. A motivational seminar might get you hyped up and excited for a minute, but it is forgotten the next day. That kind of experience holds no value to me. But what I do find valuable and enjoyable is going to an interactive show. Every presentation at the ONE Summit and Basecamp has an interactive component, where people feel vulnerable enough to get up onto the stage and participate.

Realty ONE Group is UNconventional, so we do not conform to the cookie-cutter recipe of other real estate industry conventions (pun intended). We put on a show that attendees remember even months later, and they smile at the memories and stay in contact with people they met there for the first time.

The letter "O" forms a circle. It is *inclusive* and *unified*. It is continuous, so there are no corners and no hiding. And it symbolizes our *beautiful* globe.

Let me remind you of the Power of ONE. The letter “O” forms a circle. It is inclusive and unified. It is continuous, so there are no corners and no hiding. And it symbolizes our beautiful globe.

Realty ONE Group is OPEN! We lead with open hearts. We open our hands to help others. We open doors not only to home ownership, but also to career advancement and business ownership. We treat our real estate professionals as their own CEOs who run their businesses and have a path to owning a franchise.

The possibilities are limitless.



What does the future hold for Realty ONE Group? I do not have a crystal ball, but I can make educated predictions based on experience.

We have been and will continue to be a high-growth, real estate industry disruptor. That is the true meaning of entrepreneurial innovation.

I am confident we will continue to expand exponentially in worldwide markets. Unlike many other startups and Silicon Valley unicorns, we have proven we are here to stay! And unlike other companies who have scaled and become impersonal in the process, we remain highly personalized. Real estate is first and foremost a relationship business; the transactions depend on ONE-on-ONE interactions!

Realty ONE Group will also continue to enrich our coaching opportunities, develop cutting-edge technological tools that empower the professional, and leverage social

We value the *power*
of the *pause*. What's
more, we do *not*
allow complacency
to set in.

media. I have every reason to believe we will continue to receive top honors in the real estate field because of our growth mindset. In 2023, *Franchise Business Review* awarded us two significant honors: a Top Recession-Proof Franchise and a Top Low-Cost Franchise. Additionally, *Entrepreneur* magazine listed us as the number one real estate franchisor on their highly prestigious Franchise 500® list, along with a spot on their overall Fastest-Growing Franchises list.

These commendations reflect how we have been able to succeed regardless of market conditions and fluctuating interest rates. We take advantage of slower markets to reflect and look toward the future. As I've said, we value the power of the pause. What's more, we do not allow complacency to set in. Realty ONE Group is resilient, and our people are agile, able to pivot when necessary—all the while staying true to our purpose.

We will continue to open doors across the globe, ONE home, ONE dream, ONE life at a time.

The next door we open to the future could be YOURS!

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