

The Power of **ONE**

HOW REALTY ONE GROUP IS CHANGING LIVES
AROUND THE GLOBE.

by *Kuba*

The Power Of ONE:
How Realty ONE Group Is Changing Lives
Around The Globe

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Chapter 1

UNstoppable: What Is The Power of ONE?

Whatever we do, we do it together because together, we achieve more. That's the Power of ONE.

ONE is our vision, not just a number. It is who we are and how we conduct ourselves as ONE group united by ONE common goal: to change lives for the better.

Realty ONE Group—the name itself reflects our philosophy—is a global brand with 400 locations in 49 states and in fourteen countries on five continents around the world. Becoming a global brand was our goal when we began over 17 years ago, and today we are living the dream of helping others make their dreams come true, ONE family at a time, ONE home at a time.

The real estate industry was a field ripe for transformation when we opened our doors. Everybody did things the same way and not always for the benefit of the client or the real estate professional. We thought, what if we had ONE vision of how to transform the industry top to bottom, creating workplaces that were fun and alive, where no one “messes with the check” of the real estate professional, where clients got the most ONEderful service, and where service was joy?

This book is intended to share our ONE philosophy—the cornerstone of our business model— with you, whether you are a real estate professional looking for

something different, a potential franchisor anywhere on our beautiful planet 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, or an individual in any field who wants to see how putting people first creates awesome outcomes for everyONE involved.

If you are an entrepreneur, I'll show you how we transformed from a bold start-up company to a global brand practically overnight...and how you can achieve the same with your business. Remember, you don't *have* to work hard, you don't *have* to wake up with a positive mindset, you don't *need* to be grateful for anything, and you don't *need* to do more than's required of you. You don't *have* to do anything you don't want to do. BUT, you also don't *have* to win, and you don't need to be a success in life to reach for something greater than your today. These chapters ahead will show you how I seized on my own dreams as an entrepreneur to make them into ONE reality—and how, if you choose to do so, you can do it, too.

Initially, I did not have the benefit of mentors or coaches to advise me. I have always been independent and street-smart, as was my dear grandmother. Nevertheless, I hope this book is a mentoring tool for you—the businesspeople with the drive to shape and evolve their organizations; the entrepreneurs with the fire to create; and readers seeking inspiration and self-improvement. One day, I hope you will tell me your story too!

But first...how'd we get here, anyway? Let me tell you my story and the story of this amazing company we are building together...ONE Dream At A Time!

Realty ONE Group is the product of my upbringing, personal ethos, previous job experiences, and entrepreneurial dreams. I did not begin my career thinking I would go into real estate. But I did wake up every morning with ideas swirling around in my mind about doing something innovative that improves people's lives and makes a difference in the world. Real estate is where I have found my true purpose, ONE family, and ONE home.

I have always had a mindset of winning through hard work. My parents were Polish immigrants, children who were born and raised during World War II in Poland, who instilled in me the value of earning my own way through resilience and effort and an inviolable commitment to respecting others. Growing up, they reminded us that once your freedom is taken away, it's nearly impossible to get it back.

I call my grandmother Babi, and her strength has kept me grounded when raising me, and now in spirit over the past decade. Babi raised four children as a single mother. She was tough in mind, had a kind soul, and a delicate sense for the world. She was the best cook, but her kitchen magic was never written in recipes. Just like she had no kitchen notebook filled with beloved recipes, she had no playbook for life.

Babi led from the heart, and I learned so much from her. She was generous with her courage and humility, and she first introduced me to the difference between your own storytelling versus the song of your life, which often includes everyone's else's voices and heartbeats. I believe that you can continue to lead everyday with gratitude, with your heart, and with love to positively change your life and the lives of those around you. This will allow others to become your best storytellers in return.

When I was 5, I learned English, decided to be a wanderer, and never changed my mind. As a youth, I became a model employee, hustling as I delivered pizza or working other random jobs to earn enough money to put myself through college as the first person in my family to graduate from university. (My parents could not afford the tuition.)

Financial necessity required me to work for someone else, but I also made the time to be a self-employed serial entrepreneur, beginning as a teen buying computers at yard sales, and refurbishing and selling electronics on eBay. But it is difficult to focus on your original ideas and vision when you're in school, studying for quizzes and writing essays, and working at part-time jobs.

Sustaining and realizing my entrepreneurial dreams was not easy. They do not teach street smarts in American universities, or how to start a business, or money management skills. Instead, you are taught how to continually improve your resume to rise in an employer's ranks or to find another employer.

It is a big leap from employee to employer; it requires fresh ideas, identifying opportunities and seizing them, and, most importantly, having a fire in your belly. I had that fire. All of us, ALL OF US, with the entrepreneurial spirit have the freedom and flexibility to wake up and shape each day in any way we want, on a daily basis! Freedom, don't ever take it for granted. Find strength to be honest with yourself, find strength to trust yourself, find strength to love yourself and, as a result, you'll never give up on yourself. If you do those things, you will inspire others to become your trusted tribe and make the space and possibility for you all to achieve together meaningfully.

After earning a Bachelor of Science at the University of California San Diego, I began a lucrative career as a financial advisor and portfolio manager while continuing to work on computer hardware and software. I was building wealth for young investors (and for myself), but I yearned for more freedom and flexibility. I also wanted to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Real estate is all about relationships, so it was the perfect place for me to fulfill my purpose. What could have a greater life-changing impact on people than opening the door for what is, for most, the most significant purchase of their lives? What could be more important than helping others realize their dream of home ownership?

I left the world of finance and changed my direction to become a real estate agent. It was a very good choice because it paved the way for an even better journey. I worked for a couple of prominent real estate firms for about one-and-a-half years and did 111 transactions with more than \$30 million in sales! Although I had the freedom and flexibility I had sought, I began experiencing pain points that other real estate agents admitted they felt too. Our firms were making money off our backs and then messing with our checks. That experience motivated my career transition—I knew there was a better, fairer way to conduct a real estate business.

It was time to honor my entrepreneurial spirit. It was time to become an employer instead of an employee.

I saw the potential—and the pitfalls—of the real estate industry when I launched my brokerage firm, Realty ONE Group, in 2005 in Las Vegas, Nevada. But real estate is a highly competitive business. Many stakeholders are involved in every transaction –

multiple real estate professionals, the buyer and the seller, and the brokerage firm – all with different interests. It is also a highly emotional business; a house is usually the most significant, most expensive purchase people make. And a house is not simply a building; it's a living, breathing space that people call home. To compound matters, the real estate industry always faces dramatic economic shifts with fluctuating markets and interest rates.

During the first couple of years of Realty ONE Group, I went after the critical mass – the total addressable market. My focus was potential revenue, and I experienced success, attracting 250 agents and making \$102 million in sales in the first year. How? I was authentic in sharing the personal story of why I launched Realty ONE Group. This story inspired real estate professionals because the vision and accomplishments that comprise who we are and what we value resonated profoundly with them. So we grew as a team and as a brand. We were all about people, not property. In my area in Las Vegas, there were two big competitors. Still, we tripled in size during Year 2.

Then there was a glitch: our expenses went up five-fold. Here is where my lack of formal training in money management kicked in: the cashflow expenses stretched me in a way I was unprepared for. Additionally, the quality of my home life suffered, and my first marriage ended in divorce.

I needed to adjust the balance between my personal life and the relentless pursuit of my entrepreneurial vision. Had I better defined my priorities and managed my daily activities accordingly, I may not have stumbled so badly. I had to brush off my

knees, get up, and do things differently and better. I was determined to learn and grow as an entrepreneur and as a human being.

But here is a good point to call out that being tired, and stumbling as you grow, is part of the game, otherwise it's just an excuse. Successful people are constantly more tired, and it's normal for high achievers! If you hang around three confident people, three intelligent people, three millionaires, or three idiots...you will be the fourth.

When the brave and bold stumble, cowards rejoice—and nothing feels better to a coward than to watch others trip and fall. Throughout my career, I have known a bunch of people who think and talk negatively, have doubt, and it fires me up because they don't go the extra mile, study a few more hours, and go deeper. It's not easy, but everyone has the ability to get off the couch to be better and to do better.

If an eagle ever sees a bird flying at the same altitude that it is flying at, they must be seeing another eagle...because pigeons don't fly at the altitudes of eagles. If you find yourself flying at the same level as pigeons, then you're flying too low. Your crowd is a reflection of your future.

As a I grew, and even as I stumbled, I was also determined to beat the odds; my startup would NOT be one of the 90 percent of startups that fail (70 percent fail within the first five years). They do not make it for a variety of reasons, including significant cashflow problems and poor marketing strategies. I established Realty ONE Group in 2005, and we are still growing exponentially!

My entrepreneurial vision continues to evolve. Early on, I realized that despite my financial success, I still didn't feel I was fulfilling my true purpose. So my north star

shifted to how to connect with individuals as an employer to an employee. That's when Realty ONE Group's culture began to evolve, and our core values— the 6 C's—were created as an instrument to articulate the main purpose of ONE: EveryONE matters. The 6 C's are Coaching, Community, Coolture, Connect, Care, and Commission. Each one signifies a different experience that catalyzes the varied people we serve. Together, these six pillars of our business make it stand strong, and I will discuss each one in depth later.

The foundation of Realty ONE Group's philosophy is our Coolture (culture + cool), which values unity, respect, and empowerment. Our respect for our real estate professionals and franchisees empowers them to take control of their own professional and personal growth and maximizes their earning potential. Not only does the 100 percent commission structure (with minimal flat fees for transactions, risk management, and office space) distinguish us from competitors but it also ensures that 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.

Everything we do at Realty ONE Group we do with intentionality. For example, I purposely put "Realty" as the first word in our name, followed by "ONE Group." Think about many of our competitors' names. Do you immediately know they are realtors? And many real estate business's names consist of a few last names, not *ONE Group* like us. Our identity is clear: We are a *team* that celebrates each other's successes!

“ONE” has added significance: “O” forms a circle. It is inclusive and unified. It is continuous, so there are no corners and no hiding. We are OPEN!

Our brand is authentic – it’s the heart and soul of the organization. We value transparency. 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 know they will receive what they expect. In today’s business and political environment, authenticity is what people, especially young people, increasingly expect. Gone are the days when the business uniform was a power suit that expressed anonymity and authority. Enter the days of jeans and t-shirts.

Realty ONE Group is a modern lifestyle real estate brand. We connect the company with its people by giving them the freedom, flexibility, and respect I sought for myself when I launched this UNbrokerage. Do you want to work remotely or use our offices? Do you want to own your own business? You have those choices along with our full support.

Like Apple, Lululemon, Nike and other lifestyle brands, we attract professionals who believe in what we do. And much like Apple connects with its users and Lululemon and Nike connect with fitness and health-conscious customers, we connect with our clients, the real estate professionals.

As a result, we continue to grow, and there are two ways to join us. First, we currently have 12 company-owned brokerage offices with 3,000 agents, primarily in Las

Vegas, Nevada, and Phoenix, Arizona. Second, we have a rapidly expanding network of franchise operations both in the US and internationally. Find your ONE home with us!

My path as an entrepreneur has lead to some of my best life experiences: to be sometimes afraid, sometimes nervous... and sometimes wondering, am I going to find the next step, or will the next step ruin the progress and the entire outcome?! This is significant: you must take time to create lessons and strength, and to take a moment to close your eyes and to believe deep inside of yourself what's important. There's power in reflection AND power in pause.

I believe that you must earn your way and charter your own path... it doesn't matter what it is! You must dream big with effort... because it is effort that separates successful people from those who are just complainers! Things sometimes go sideways in life, but doubt is toxic!

Your mantra and conviction must be "I'm UNSTOPPABLE! No matter who, what, where... I believe in myself and I AM UNSTOPPABLE!" and as a result you won't let yourself down. You will fail, but it's important to restart the project and the plan, remaking the money you lost and always remembering that you are 90% of your life's asset—and the remaining 10% can (and will!) be achieved while learning along the way.

Don't get stuck in your mind, don't get stuck in the moment... nobody likes being stuck, so get over yourself and take the next step forward starting with your right foot. Get up and go! There is no time for waffling and you should not put yourself in a position of being a victim for any reason. Everything is a learning lesson, an opportunity so get up from the challenging moment and go, continuing to apply effort!

We're all grateful for something in our lives, but we must be grateful for everything. We can't pick and choose what we're grateful for; everything is a gift to learn, to become stronger, to do it together. We must be grateful for all of it! Remember, YOU are the author of your own life!

I invite you to read more about Realty ONE Group's story – our business model, philosophy, and opportunities – in the following chapters. And remember:

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 to be idle, but to sit back, reflect, regroup, and then proceed, energized with a new perspective. Especially in the frenetic pursuit of your entrepreneurial purpose, sometimes it is important to look back to move forward.

Like everyone, my childhood paved a path for who I am, and what I do and do not do. I was a shy child and as an adult, I am private about my personal life. I hesitate now to share personal details, 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...

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

When they arrived, my father's group was put in a factory where the conditions were horrible, with relentless bombings day and night. He recalls a time when he was

standing by a factory window, and bombs knocked him clear across to the opposite wall. Although forbidden, he and his brother went outside to beg for bread. Often, doors were closed in their faces, but later, they found bread and sandwiches left for them outside. That is how they survived amid fear and uncertainty – with a few small scraps of kindness.

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

In 1945, Americans brought him to a refugee camp, where conditions were considerably better – there was more food and more freedom. Fear may have dissipated, but uncertainty still prevailed. Then, he had the good fortune to be 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.

He lived in Chicago when 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 is possible by believing in yourself, believing in the decency of others, being a good human being, getting a good education, and working hard.

My mother was born in a bunker in 1943 in a tiny village south of Poland with 200 people. Both of my parents were the eldest children of large families; my father had 12 siblings, and my mother had four. She studied pediatric nursing in Krakow and ended up in Chicago, where she met my father, and I was born, an only child. Thankfully, my parents are still together, alive and well today.

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 parents worked multiple jobs simultaneously, trying 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 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.

This feeling became my primary pain point too, and entrepreneurship was a way for me to be independent, to steer my own course. My mother's frustrations actually

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 them 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 and protect me. When I saw my parents on the weekends, we had a tradition of going to yard sales to get second-hand 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 because I bought and refurbished old electronics and sold them on eBay.

I also knew my parents would not give up on me because they did not give up on themselves. Despite their challenges, my parents led with their hearts and with love and genuinely cared about other people. Underlying that care was a profound sense of respect that I 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 a new life. Imagine this: she sponsored 12 people 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, tried to do the right thing and be a proper child. Now that I am pausing

to reflect, 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, a bond.

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 entrepreneurial fire was sparked in high school, and I viewed school as babysitting. (As a result, I was not a stellar student.) 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, the first in my family to graduate college, formal studies were a distraction from my intended purpose.

My brain operated on imagination, not random facts. I was hungry to create and to 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 in the jungle.

I could not sit still behind a desk. Not because I was fidgety but because I understood that the world is a much bigger place than four classroom walls. I felt

anxious that I would miss out if I did not put myself out there and learn first-hand in the streets rather than in books. There was an invisible breakout moment when I began to be truly independent. I did not want to sit around seeing my parents work hard and waiting for them to make money. Just the opposite: I was motivated to work hard and make money to ease *their* burdens.

This quest for independence and the freedom and flexibility to chart my own course continued to fuel my entrepreneurship. I started working as a delivery guy at 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 spent my early years sitting at home with my beloved grandmother, and 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 so doing, to create happiness. And I am consciously and purposefully doing the same for my 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 our five children, gave them attention and choices, and let them chart their own course.

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 first-hand: do not sit idle and get caught in a drift or a lazy river, but instead, *do* something, search, and learn because then, happiness will greet you.

Starting and developing Realty ONE Group has enabled me to create happiness and fun for myself, my family, and my adopted family at Realty ONE Group. But please don't get me wrong — I am not being selfish or heroic or immodest. I genuinely want to inspire and 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, over the moon, and looking back with a smile.

I did not set out with a mission of positively impacting a large number of people's lives, other than my family, but that impact is a beautiful bonus. When I see the faces of Realty ONE Group team members smiling genuinely with their eyes, 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 am living it!

This philosophy and motivation drive my business. I would not take advantage of people the way my mother was taken advantage of. Nor would I let work — my work or

that of others at my company — take precious time away from family the way my parents' work took time away from me during my childhood. Mind you, I am forgiving. My parents did what they had to do. And they instilled in me, and I try to instill in my children, the inviolable value of respect.

Respect and integrity are of the utmost importance in the residential real estate business. It is highly interpersonal and can be a very emotional business too. Moving into a new home is a life-changing situation — it represents hope for the future. Buyers are embracing newness and to some extent, taking risks. Additionally, buying a home is the costliest investment many people make. So in this people-focused business, if you don't respect your clients and co-workers, the relationships break and are very hard to mend. I cannot repeat it often enough: lead with your heart, love, and respect, and always be thoughtful and mindful of others.

Like respect, trust is a valuable currency. I trust my children to chart their own courses and make their own decisions, with my guidance and support if they need it. This is my business management style too. The key people at Realty ONE Group drive the organization, 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.

As a result, Realty ONE Group attracts motivated self-starters who can succeed without being overly supervised. But we do not throw you into the water and make you

swim; we provide life vests. If a real estate professional wants guidance or learning opportunities, someone is available 24/7, and our educational software helps them immensely.

As I've described, I charted my own career path and founded Realty ONE Group to gain the freedom to continue to grow. Similarly, we are committed to providing the environment and opportunities to facilitate *your* growth, to free you to develop professionally and create your own career trajectory. EveryONE wins when the whole circle grows along with one's development and success.

Leading Realty ONE Group, I have tried to create the sort of family environment that, consciously and unconsciously, I wished for growing up. I want people to enjoy work and not feel exhausted by it like my parents were. So I have created a community — a non-hierarchical place where every voice matters and people can grow, benefit from their hard work, and have fun.

Trust is a two-way street. Sometimes, people seek advice and direction, and I am more than happy to provide it. I tell them to lean into leadership and trust us to guide them through uncertainty. For example, recently, I had a virtual meeting with some new franchise owners who said they felt stuck and were having trouble finding a way forward. My response was, "that's great." I said their feelings of uncertainty were learning opportunities that would stretch them. I described my own struggles to find the right talent at the right time and suggested they would benefit by being friendly matchmakers and finding who will contribute and create happiness for themselves and

each other. People who want to live our Coolture. Yes, new franchise owners go through growing pains, but ultimately, they will enjoy great success and satisfaction.

There were times when I wished I could have been braver. But I refuse to be paralyzed with regrets. I have taken the advice I give to others about the value of matchmaking in personnel recruitment and retention success. If I have learned anything, I have learned to be a matchmaker and put the right group of people in the right roles throughout the organization. And to keep them there if they are happy because that guarantees their contributions and job satisfaction.

As leaders at Realty ONE Group, we must identify more than who is needed in what role based on their skill set, past success, and future potential. We identify and want people who believe in our core values. Are they signing up for an individual sport to further their career, or are they looking for a team sport? Because we are all about the Coolture and the teamwork. Like a great basketball player who knows his teammate's next move and celebrates his success, we win together.

It is all about finding the people who have unbelievable hearts and will go the maximum distance, never giving up on themselves or each other. Both my parents are perfect examples. We want people who *want* to work with us and will give their best.

I will never forget the early days of the business when I was building it by repeatedly knocking on doors to sell our vision and our story. I sold our dreams and goals, and they became a reality! Now people are knocking on our doors. They tell us they've heard great things and see 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, but they also feel our spirit.

But I never come from a place of blame when it comes to our company. If there is a conflict, I always want to talk it out and understand another's point of view, their frustrations, and motivations. When I pause and reflect as I do as I'm writing this book, I think about myself as a six or seven year old. I was always inquisitive, asking myself questions.

Now, I ask my younger self questions: Would that self be proud of what I stand for, what I do for others, how I am raising my children, and how I live my life? What could I do better? How can I continue to grow? Also, I look at that younger child and think of my children. What is my legacy to them?

YOU Are The ONE:

- What questions do YOU ask yourself?
- How do YOU reflect on your past and learn from it?

Chapter 3

UNlock: ONE Leadership

Imagine. 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 for an opinion, they don’t simplify or equivocate, they see the nuance in a situation.

Please do not get me wrong: I am no better than any other human being on our planet. It’s just that 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—it reflects a true sentiment to innovate, to disrupt by changing the business model while creating better opportunities for friends

and family. And that family has grown to support each other and to become a unique and succesful force that is painting the globe gold!

I defined my core business principles by having experienced many common pain points of realtors when I had worked for other companies and set out to solve them. 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. 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. Because each and every person is a valuable and necessary link to form a circle and support the rest. This is reciprocity at its best.

I was committed to finding professionals I could trust, and I did not relish the interviewing process. And in the early years of the business, I had mixed success. But I was generally able to find some great people and weed out incompatible candidates. If the answer to a simple question like, how was your drive over here, was "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 and, whatever they do, approach it purposely.

Passion: Too Much Of A Good Thing?

As a passionate entrepreneur creating a start-up, 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 in leadership, trust is everything!

To complicate matters, at the same time I was micromanaging, 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, the 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 immediately on each one. 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 relationships. As I've said, it took time to find the right people and learn to delegate to them.

The Lighthouse

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. 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.)

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. And once onshore, we celebrate our safety and success together.

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 that 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 16- to 18-hour days glued to my computer and phone. My hyper-creation 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 my enduring understanding that my daily activities, my routine, my lifestyle can and will change. That I have the freedom to shape my day, my way. 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.

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 over 20 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 are 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. But I didn't know anything—not a thing—about this side of the real estate business. So I hired a couple of guys who had experience and looked great on paper. It 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 2-3 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. Maybe 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.

My takeaway was that when you do a deal or transaction, it comes down to two things. First, both parties must feel like it is a good fit for them, professionally and personally. And second, the timing must be right. Then, if you want to get it done, you are going to get it done!

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

The nagging question was, is it worth it? After 12 years of business, it was not about the money. I had enough to raise my family and care for my elderly, retired parents. You may recall that as a child, I had set a goal of earning as much money as quickly as possible to help my parents and be able to spend more time together. No one had told me to do that, nobody pushed me. Financially comfortable now, I figured I could easily give up.

Additionally, my beloved grandmother, the “sister” who had raised me, passed away in 2013. She was my emotional support—my lighthouse— and the only trusted person I would 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 to enjoy the amazing places. My mind remained in worry and work mode.

So I decided to put the infrastructure in place to enable me 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 and 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 turn the play button back on at some point. I used the time to reflect on how I got here 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?

The choice is mine (and yours, too) to transform and clarify your passionate purpose. I decided on productive ways to change my lifestyle—taking breaks, walking, disconnecting from my phone, etc. 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.

Recently, I 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 10 on everything. Maybe a 6 or an 8. But 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 garage industrial appearance. Inside sits a yellow Fiat that my mom had when she escaped WWII and emigrated to the US. My mom had driven this 23-horsepower, 2-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.

YOU Are The ONE:

- What fuels YOUR imagination?
- What is YOUR mantra?

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. 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 so that they could spend more time with me. They worked multiple jobs for which they were overqualified (my mother had been a pediatric nurse in Poland) to make ends meet when they emigrated to the US. (I still remember cleaning houses with my mother when I was just five years old.)

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—let's do this, let's do that—to come up with new ideas and get rich. My imagination was boundless, and I was fearless. I started

a smoothie shop, a hair salon, and designed an online Polish portal to honor my heritage. Like most serial entrepreneurs, I wanted to make money and move away from being an employee to becoming an employer.

However, my real estate career did begin as an employee, working as an agent for various organizations. My goal was to make my first million dollars by age twenty-five, but I disappointed myself. I didn't reach that goal until I was twenty-six. I kept pushing and pushing to achieve that milestone. I was anxious and didn't even have time for a 3-minute phone call with a friend. I had no leisure time and didn't play basketball or soccer anymore. I didn't care about my appearance. My hair was shaggy, and I bought food and clothing without intention. My food was not nutritious, and my clothes were a reflect of my lack of personal and mental care. My entrepreneurial tunnel vision left me zero time to be happy. But, if measured by dollars, I was successful.

When I started Realty ONE Group, I still 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 250 agents, the second year it tripled to 750. Whoa, I thought, I am on my way!

I hired a bookkeeper to keep me organized and ensure I would not fall behind on bills or commission checks. Within a week, she reported grim news: my growth had

tripled, but my expenses had increased five-fold. She warned me that I would lose 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 start-ups, we were potentially headed into a downward spiral. Further, no one involved with Realty ONE Group was truly satisfied, not me, not my agents, 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 already described, 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 will engage in meaningful work, and everyONE will 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 purpose—Opening doors across the globe, ONE home, ONE dream, ONE life at a time.

I did not follow my own advice about priorities when Realty ONE Group was established. 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, it is common to brush them aside as I had done, “I’ll figure it out.”

No, that’s not how it works! You need to figure out your road map in advance. Entrepreneurs and leaders need to plan for the successful execution of their vision. Starting a business is not a sprint—it is a marathon that requires strategic planning to get to the finish line: When do I pause to breathe and drink water? Should I adjust my pace? How do I differentiate my style from my 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. 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*. Bradley 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 to 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, diversity, fairness, and acceptance. Not the sense of belonging, but 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.” What Realty ONE Group does goes much deeper.

Chasing Kindness

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

There is popular saying, “in a world where you can be anything... be kind.” You will see this adage on the walls of elementary schools and elsewhere. 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, never forgetting who you are, and never forgetting you have the power to positively impact another person.

Even though Realty ONE Group is in the sales industry, chasing the next transaction, we are first 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 were 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— our personal happiness is important. It’s OK to be selfishly happy; it is not the same as being selfish. It is like the warning, in case of emergency on an airplane, 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 most importantly, 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 and 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. And 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 wondered about my next entrepreneurial adventure, not the next mathematics exam. In business meetings, inattentiveness is not unique to me.

The longer the meeting, the more stressful sitting through it becomes; its usefulness is diminished because fewer details are absorbed. How do leaders remedy this problem? By preparing for meetings and identifying their purpose before even

stepping into the room or starting a videoconference—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. Thus, success is attained more quickly.

Group interactions are engaging, empowering, and inspiring. They rely on active participation, not passive complacency. Instead of a leader lecturing the whole (a one-to-many dynamic), they should stimulate discussion, sitting back and actively listening (a many-to-many dynamic). The best ideas are generated in break-out 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 are bluffing, not 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 had the opportunity to meet dozens of ultra-rich, 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 50 countries, some multiple times. Some of these high

net worth individuals were self-made, 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 70s and have already received their golden parachutes.

But in my conversations with them, I noticed a striking, universal consensus: they felt that 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 so. Your legacy is success, people look up to you, you have access to anyone or any place. You can travel the world and embrace your hobbies. But they did not care about any of this because their relationships had suffered. At some level, they had known as they were pursuing their next million or billion, that they were distancing themselves from family and close friends. But in the struggle between their business and their personal relationships, money won and relationships lost.

My first-hand 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. Owners frequently try to crawl back into their former business 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 it is enough, they might have realized the negative impact of their relentless climb to the top. It is good to be vulnerable, to be transparent, and 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, EveryONE Matters, The Six C's

Wouldn't it be nice if we could go to work and feel like we matter? Not only that what we *do* matters 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 that the purpose of their jobs was to work diligently and earn money, and their bosses 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 20th and 21st-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 that 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 30-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. Where do they turn? To their workplaces.

As I conceptualized and launched Realty ONE Group, I intuitively recognized what is most important and meaningful to my generation. We prize authenticity and honesty and 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.²

Our Core Values: The 6 C'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 6 C'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 that everyone matters and that we cater to each of our members. It is the golden glue to create community; even the word “Coolture” is a fusion of “cool” and “culture.” Without Coolture, there's no human connection! And 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

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; (5) living the principles of entrepreneurship and innovation.

work hard. To the contrary, this environment motivates hard work, engagement, and genuine happiness.

The physical design of our offices reflects our Coolture. It is 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 of 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 everyone's voice matters, and everyone's 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 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 another chapter, Realty ONE Group offers a unique blend of free training. 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 Disney's adage that it is better to spend money and train people and risk that they might leave than not train them and risk that they might stay! That being said, our monthly retention rate is 97 percent. What better tribute is there?

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 for the entire family, 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 you through every step of your career. Whether you are a novice or veteran agent, a broker-owner, or a franchisee, there are hundreds of resources to ensure you succeed on your 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 platform, and ONE University, our Learning Management System, 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 link they can click on to share information about an organization dear to their heart and request our support. If at all 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 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 close to our hearts. Our annual ONE Walk in Las Vegas, Nevada, raised 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 Real Estate Professionals And Empower Them

We don't mess with your check! You earned it and you deserve to keep it! 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 of our success. We are *not* a discount brokerage that skimps on services and nickel and dimes you; 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 you work, but you certainly need it.

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, like you, Realty ONE Group wants to make money, but we are completely transparent about finances. We are 100 percent upfront with our fee structure and also share the metrics achieved by our agents. Depending on your market's dynamics, we charge an average of \$100 monthly and a modest transaction fee. It is typically around \$200 for every \$200,000 in sales. Some of our franchisees

charge a \$200 compliance fee too. So, if you receive \$10,000 commission on a \$400,000 house sale, you would keep \$9,400 of your \$10,000 commission with Realty ONE Group.

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, so we charge an annual risk management fee of about \$1,000 to protect you. You are not personally responsible if there are legal issues.

There's another way we compensate and value our real estate professionals: you can take your listings with you if you leave. Most realty firms won't let you do that. They'll keep your listings or hold your license for 10 days, seemingly punishing you for leaving. We find that with those real estate professionals who do leave us, eight out of ten returns within 60 to 90 days. Sometimes, they 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 20 maximum. 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. We answer directly to YOU!

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 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 six Cs. We fused the words “cool” with “culture” because authenticity is cool, and it defines us. 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 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 very 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. To know each other's families. As a result, our individual families have become blended into our work families. You'll see Realty ONE Group professionals bring family members to the office—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 consider ourselves “A Modern Real Estate Lifestyle Brand”: we are *living* our 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 and our Base Camp 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 18,000 professionals in 400 locations in 49 states. We are in 14 countries across five continents and are still counting. Unlike other companies, neither recruiting nor retention is currently a problem for us. Potential real estate professionals are knocking on our front doors; current ones are not heading through 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!

When we onboard someone new, it is not a matter of filling out paperwork or handing out an employee manual. 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 video conferencing 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, and launched a dynamic educational website called Wakinguptowin.com which hosts (still live) video blogs, free access to our coaching platform, a monthly calendar with scheduled classes and trainings, and so much more!.

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, or 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 and digital projects, and yes, 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 vibrant 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 home ownership 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 is an interactive conversation in a room that feels like a living room, not 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.

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 Summit. I'll discuss our international Summit in more detail later. But first, I'll describe our participation in the NAR conference because that is where you can really see how different we are from 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, eating sandwiches and looking bored. What you do not see is people wandering around and engaging there. We do things differently. Very differently—we create experiences, not stationary for corporate pictures.

At NAR, you are wowed by our 40' x 40' "booth" with a 360° camera, large monitors playing videos detailing our growth, a corner with fun interactive activities, a big interactive game like a claw machine in the middle. There's also a ONE Store. There's nothing like it at the whole conference. 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 can handle the challenge, to show we are resilient. We do 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.

In addition to our involvement in the NAR event, we meticulously plan every detail for our company's annual events. About 3,000 members of our network attend our annual ONE Summit and each year it 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 300 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 very active in the child foster care community. This was the beginning of our longstanding support of Isaiah 17 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 House takes them in,

provides their own rooms 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 15 were asked to build a structure with the supplies to represent our culture or their dream house, or something related. The creativity was extraordinary, and we sent enough supplies to Isaiah 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 1st 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.

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 make a difference by providing extra means to donate monetarily 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.

At one event, we had a ONE Dream wall that we constructed with Post-It notes to complement our website. 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 million dollars, people hoped for special experiences or contributions to 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 ironed-on logo. Or a coffee mug that has an emblem that can be easily scratched off. Often, it is promotional stuff that

you never use. We created 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 Summit event, we have a full-sized 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, inviting 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 our Manifesto that everyONE matters, and everyONE has a voice!

YOU are the ONE:

- What is YOUR manifesto?
- 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 you're 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 you win, 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 *you* – the professional – are our customer. Our mission is to provide you with value-added services. Instead of taking advantage of our real estate professionals the way many competitors do, we *offer* every advantage!

As a result, our professionals stay with us for a minimum of 46 months – over twice the average time that the National Association of Realtors® says people stay at firms. Successful recruiting and retention numbers aren't just statistics – they represent our people. We currently employ over 18,000 real estate professionals in over 400 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 30, 60, 90 days before we get compensated. That's if we get compensated at all because after all, deals fall through.

Realty ONE Group takes the long view, with educational programs for the lifespan of a real estate professional's career. From a licensee new to the industry, from surviving to thriving to becoming a CEO of an independent real estate company that they could potentially sell to enjoy a comfortable retirement. 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 say, good 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 that 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!

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, transactions closed, percentage of conversions from open houses, etc., and posting 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. Multi-tasking 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 12-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 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 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.

We make all these resources available, but 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.

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 will be with you all the way, launching you in your new endeavor with comprehensive, four-day training at our Hub in Laguna Niguel, CA. With ONE.U, you'll connect with franchise owners around the country. Our Step Up program is for franchise owners what Rev Up is for 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. (Some agencies actually make more money on training than they do on real estate transactions!) 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 towards 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 *e-a-t* a healthy breakfast in the morning!

The first step is to wake up every day with a clear *expectation*. 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 your breakfast of *e-a-t* 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 too. So 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.

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 24 hours in a day and 168 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 168 hours. I have found that 80 percent of individuals cannot account for 168 hours. Not even close. They have no idea how their time has been spent. More importantly, they do not know how much unused time is available to accomplish their goals. Once you realize how much time is wasted, you invalidate the excuse “I don't have time” to do what you should 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 168 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, 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 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.

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

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 that they will succeed, they will rise to the task!

To maximize sales professionals' wellbeing, job performance, and satisfaction, believe in them! Help people shift their fixed mindsets, their beliefs, to a growth mindset that is open to change. This takes humility on the part of 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 inertia. 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 franchisee 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 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. To give them what they need to succeed. To bring out *their* best.

If you offer support based on your employees' and colleagues' motivations—whether it is offering continued education, collaborative projects, or other assistance—you 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. So you must help them figure it out. And once you're enabled them to figure it out, your job as a leader isn't finished. The next task is motivating them. Take someone who is stuck in inertia or inaction. Once you help them understand that they aren't moving forward now 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 understanding what they need from you to succeed. These concepts not only apply to individuals but also to teams.

Both psychological research and first-hand 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 along with one with low cortisol levels—guess what happened? The stressed monkey calmed down! Being part of a community improves everyone involved. 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.

In 1954, at the age of 25, Bannister ran a 3:59.4 race! Since then, over 1,600 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: Owning A ONE Franchise

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." 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 you have your cake and eat it too. You gain the support of our dynamic brand, systems, and experts *and* the freedom to 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 "to adopt as a child." Much like a parent guides their child, we 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.

It is not easy to open and operate your own business. Real Estate Professionals may be great at selling real estate, but they're not necessarily great business people. 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've had the benefit of experience going from an employee to an employer, and 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. 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 a/k/a 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 as a broker-owner you're able to get favorable commercial lease terms. You wouldn't go to a cardiologist for a broken leg. 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 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.

Real estate is a relationship business. By surveying our consumers, we've learned that 84-86 percent say they would use their realtor again. But 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.

However, our franchisees tell us that 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 engaging in a buyer consultation, not a listing 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. A realtor who relies on the confetti approach – taking a potential buyer to all the available homes in a town and hoping that one will appeal to them. Instead, ask qualifying questions. What do you want in a home? Do you want to be close to your workplace? A place conducive to entertaining? and so forth. 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 be taught how to generate leads. They say, no, I want you to give me leads. Maybe that person isn't for you. There are so many fabulous real estate professionals everywhere, you can afford to be selective.

If a broker-owner continues to increase their sales force wisely, they'll increase both their business and 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 later chapters, so you'll hear directly from them how Realty ONE Group franchises have enriched their lives too.

YOU Are The ONE:

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

Chapter 10

UNbelievable: The ONE Experience

Sergio González, Master Franchise Owner

There is nothing that 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 20 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 actually, I *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, 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. I lost my health insurance.

My search for healing took me on a medical journey to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and the Moffit 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 one of many miracles to follow: a Cuban woman at our Houston hotel told me about pastor Joel Osteen and Lakewood Church. Even though the church was packed with 25,000 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 one at a time, people would pray for them. 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 Moffit 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 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 can do anything. I am grateful. This spirit

serves me well now at Realty ONE Group – 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, very well-known real estate brokerage. I was doing very well, and I envisioned expanding to own 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 that 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, like many businesses, the real estate industry 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 saw that many people working for Realty ONE Group came from my current brokerage. Good people who I recognized were 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 31 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, laid back, yet 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, at Realty ONE Group, we want to make money. But being happy translates into more productive agents, making 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 upfront about its fees and rarely ever 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.

Realty ONE Group's 6'C values – Coolture, commission, cares, connect, community, and coaching –transcends 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 – the death of a spouse, financial challenges, job relocation, or new babies. 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 35-year-old man's mother passed away, everyone from the office attended the funeral. A 74-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 continued 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 No. 1 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. Not because I came to real estate from a corporate background as a national salesperson of large office equipment. (I had left that position to get a real estate license and worked for a large realtor.) I still hadn't heard of Realty ONE Group when I left that agency to become a boutique broker-owner in the San Francisco Bay Area. And Realty ONE Group was *still* unknown to me when I initially decided to purchase a franchise operation.

I learned about Realty ONE Group by chance. A very lucky chance. My boutique realty 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 Arizona 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 amazing 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 that 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 130 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% 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 belong and are 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 file 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, UNstuffy. Beyond the surface, you see something else: community – gathering spaces to relax and have fun. Like ping-pong tables and high-tops and premium coffee, 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 and support each other, so, too, do we care and support our clients. Kuba has set a tone of human decency that permeates the organization.

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 my 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 her two-year struggle, Kuba displayed an unparalleled depth of humanity. Every week, Kuba 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, sometimes two months, then 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 sideline became my full-time career. But Barbara was the star. 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 3rd 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 barbeque 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 first-hand 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. Barbara and I 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," 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,” you aren’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, maybe \$25,000.) One dollar! That was the franchise fee!

Why did Kuba only charge one dollar for the first few franchises? He believed that the franchisees should keep the money ordinarily spent upfront and invest it into their businesses, so they would flourish. And when the franchises flourish, 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 9,000 square feet and we have about 280 real estate professionals. When we hit 200 professionals, Kuba sent Barbara 200 long-stem 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, they may accept later. We were in discussions with an e-Broker with 220 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 two-fold: there is genuine camaraderie among franchisees *and* 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 its 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 275 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!

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Chapter 11

UNlimited: Are YOU The Next ONE?

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for my parents and the opportunity 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 Summit meetings was that "it was life-changing." Life-changing both personally and professionally. This comment reflects how well our organization is succeeding to fulfill our 6 C's: Commission, Coaching, Community, Coolture, Connect, and Care.

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. 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 Summit, I saw people from all over the world coming together to learn and network and celebrate together as a family. It was a multi-ethnic, multi-generational 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 discretely. People were chatting and lingering. Best of all, they were smiling—not fake smiles, but smiling with their eyes!

Recently at our Summit, it was a thrill for me to be joined by about 20 family members, including my teenage children, who *wanted* to be there. They did not view the 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, 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 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 even months later, attendees remember. And they smile at the memories and stay in contact with people who they met for the first time.

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 that we will continue to expand exponentially in worldwide markets. Unlike many other start-ups 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 media. I have every reason to believe that 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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