

BY DR. FRED GROSSE

Reward Yourself

WORK IS MEANT TO *FUND* LIFE, NOT *BECOME* LIFE.
FEED YOUR SOUL BY REWARDING YOURSELF WITH
DAILY, MONTHLY AND LIFETIME GIFTS OF JOY.

Being a super-achieving REALTOR® does not have to happen at the expense of family, friends or any sort of social life. Work is meant to fund life, not become life. Too many REALTORS® are not clear about what they want, or they don't believe it's possible to have what they want. So they settle for much, much less. I want to encourage you to open your mind to the possibility that you can have both a magnificent life and a wonderful working experience. You can accomplish this by considering an alternative approach to life and work.

Let's begin by discovering just what it is that makes you happy, what rewards your soul. That is your first lesson: You must partner with your soul to be able to design a truly magnificent life. When your soul is not your partner in life, it's very difficult to experience all the richness of being fully human. When your soul is truly involved, traveling your destiny path becomes an adventure.

What Rewards Your Soul?

Where to begin? How about exploring what would really engage your spirit, motivate you to work? Invite your soul to be your ally and then do more: Promise to reward your soul! Then pay up. This can only be done by identifying the experiences and circumstances that make you happy.

Depending on the degree of joy that different positive experiences bring me, I rank rewards for my soul as "10s," "25s," "50s" and "100s." The 10s are the simple joys you can make happen every day, such as a good cup of coffee with a friend. The 25s might occur once a month: dinner with a beloved at a first-class restaurant or the purchase of a beautiful outfit. More special events — things that you do perhaps two or three times in a year — are the 50s, such as a weekend in New York. The 100s are the big rewards — the celebration that is extra special, mind-blowing and, ideally, tax-deductible! Make it a week in Paris, for example, and invite your colleagues and friends to research an investment.

The rewards don't have to be big-ticket items, either. **Rita McNeil, CRS**, of Priscilla Murphy Realty Inc., Ft. Myers, Fla., has developed her own "retail rewards" program. "After a closing, I reward myself by buying gold bangle bracelets — some plain and some with stones. The tougher the closing, the more I spend," she says with a laugh.

Most of us put a high value and importance on both money





and time. The examples I have given above are monetary rewards for the most part. But “buying time” is a great reward too. Working fewer days each month or having an afternoon each week to spend with a child or grandchild can be very fulfilling and worth working toward.

You have the idea now, so how about taking some time to really think about what feeds your soul?

Why You Should

Now you are probably asking yourself, “What does all this have to do with making more money in less time?” It’s very relevant. Here’s why.

Have you ever noticed that after a short trip or even just a day off, when you return to work your productivity increases significantly? That’s because your soul has been rewarded and is now prepared to help you achieve, to help you fund your life so that more rewards will follow. Many of us limit “payment” and in turn limit our productivity. Instead of saving all your fun and joy for a few 50s during an annual vacation, why not plan daily 10s and monthly 25s along the way? Doesn’t it make sense that it’s easier to stay single-minded and work-focused when throughout each day, week and month you’ve planned treats and retreats for your soul?

Design an Ideal Day

Your mission, then, the alternative approach I’d like you to consider, is to design an ideal day for yourself that includes not just prospecting, listing, negotiating and selling but also a number of 10s when you complete the planned tasks. Imagine structuring your workday to include three hours of uninterrupted prospecting, then three more hours of listing appointments and an hour or so workout, swim or massage. The reward is an evening of one-minded enjoyment with your children unencumbered by worry or guilt. Now that would make for a pretty satisfying day, wouldn’t it? Fifteen minutes at the end of the day spent on planning the ideal day for tomorrow would then ensure another more enjoyable and dollar-productive day to come.

Once you’ve had some practice rewarding yourself daily, weekly and monthly, then you’re ready for the next step. Dedicate a day or two to explore what 100s you would like to experience in

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your lifetime. What would be major rewards for your soul that would acknowledge superior achievement, such as a doubling or tripling of income or completion of a particular major project or investment? I want you to take out your calendar, sit down with your beloveds and plan for at least one 100 per year for the next 10 years. A 100 for you might be to take the family on a holiday to the Greek Islands or a cruise around the Caribbean.

Pay special attention to all those things you’ve dreamed about over the years and dismissed as being out of your reach. As you pick up speed and find your focus and enthusiasm returning full strength with your soul engaged as your business partner, you’re suddenly going to find yourself with an income stream that you never dreamed was possible.

Rewards Motivate

When I’ve checked in with people who have been working with this very simple, alternative approach to business life, I have heard time and again that it wasn’t the thought of more dollars in the bank that motivated them to double their dollar-productive behavior. What made them fulfill their commitment to two hours of prospecting calls a day were things like the promise they’d made themselves and their families to do a great trip together, or to take an extra long vacation just being at home.

My wish for you is that you achieve the highest level of fulfillment every day, both personally and professionally. Don’t be one of the walking dead; be an active participant in life. Give yourself permission to enjoy rewards for your inner being for being focused on maximum performance during both your work and your play. May you come to know what “magnificent life” means for you, every day. ■



Dr. Fred Grosse is an internationally recognized coach and mentor to some of the highest performing REALTORS® in the world. He is also a sought-after keynote speaker at national and international conventions. To find out more, visit his

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THEN REWARD YOUR TEAM

WHEN WAS THE
LAST TIME YOU
GAVE YOUR ASSIS-
TANT, PARTNER OR
TEAM MEMBER
A PAT ON THE
BACK OR SHOWED
APPRECIATION
FOR GOOD
WORK?



Most top real estate agents rack up big sales by promoting themselves in every way possible. They put their names and faces out in the community — on signage, on trucks, as sponsors of charitable events.

The prominence of an agent's name means that he or she usually gets all of the credit and the clients' thanks when real estate transactions are successful. But the fact is, most top agents don't work alone. An assistant, spouse or team often is working behind the scenes to make the agent look good. Top agents take the time to recognize the contributions and achievement of team members. A little appreciation can go a long way in retaining good people.

The Effectiveness of Rewards

There has been some debate within the business world about

whether rewards are an effective tool for increasing productivity and performance. Social psychologist Alfie Kohn recently published a book entitled *Punished by Rewards* that argues that rewards result in lower interest in a work task or assignment and poorer performance because rewards, just like punishments, are essentially instruments for manipulating behavior. He says that intrinsic motivation, a fancy term for liking what you do and the most effective motivator, tends to decline when people are offered a bonus for acting in a particular way.

But other research suggests that Kohn's theory does not actually stand up in practice. The Zigon Performance Group, a company offering resources for measuring, managing and improving employee performance, for example, says that the only real question that arose during its studies was whether some rewards proved to be more effective motivators in one situation than another. The results revealed that verbal rewards

(praise and positive feedback), for example, increased performance, while tangible rewards (a money incentive, for example) reduced time spent on tasks.

Much current research says interest and performance will be enhanced when workers receive verbal praise, positive feedback or tangible rewards for attaining or exceeding a performance standard. Under these conditions, rewards foster performance accomplishments. When rewards are made contingent on effort, people work harder at the task they are assigned and show increased performance on other activities. The implications are that rewards based on challenge, mastery and high effort build skills, interest, performance standards and persistence.

Workplace guru Ken Blanchard, author of *The One Minute Manager*, puts it a little differently in his newest book, *Whale Done: The Power of Positive Relationships*. Blanchard says most bosses have the wrong idea about "management." Bosses tend to pay the most attention to workers when they make mistakes, swooping in and clucking over them and correcting. Wrong, says Blanchard. Instead, praise good behavior so it occurs more often. When workers are struggling, it's important to praise and reward them when they show even the slightest indication that they are headed in the right direction.

Nancy Luby, CRS, Distinctive Properties Ltd., Denver, couldn't agree more: "My personal opinion is that verbal praise is the best reward — just let your people know that you value them, even if you can't do it publicly. A personal compliment or a thank-you for a job well done probably goes as far as any tangible reward."

Making Rewards Special

Knowing your team members well enough to tailor an award to them is an especially effective way to keep spirits high and honor a job well done. The key is keeping the system of acknowledgment special. When everyone gets the

same prize, the recognition loses value. Also, using variety in the awards creates an element of suspense and continues to foster competition and initiative in the workplace.



NANCY LUBY, CRS



JOHN KILLENS, CRB



LUCINDA TREAT, CRS



VIVIAN FEEN, CRS

Jill Kirkberg, CRS, of Iowa Realty of Fort Dodge, Iowa, keeps her rewards simple by offering commission-based incentive bonuses at the end of the year. In the interim, she keeps the atmosphere in the office light and upbeat by holding weekly sales meetings that also serve as unofficial pizza parties.

An alternative approach to buying lavish presents for staff members is to create an intra-office award. **John Killens, CRB**, broker at Prudential Blanton Properties, Athens, Ga., created an "Oscar," an 11-inch high statue of a businessperson holding a briefcase, to give to a top-producing agent every month.

Lucinda Treat, CRS, Randall Hagner & Co., Washington, D.C., rewards her business partner every so often with flowers, just to say "thank you." Rewarding herself is easy: "A little 'retail therapy' goes a long way after closing a difficult or challenging transaction," she says.

Vivian Feen, CRS, RE/MAX Advantage Realty, Columbia, Md., works alone yet still felt the need to reward the listing agent on one of her transactions.

"Several weeks after the settlement, I went to her office and asked for her. When she came up front, she had no idea why I was visiting. I told her how much I appreciated her hard work when having to deal with a very difficult seller (the house had been on the market for more than a year!) and that I wanted to give her a large dinner certificate at a restaurant," Feen says. "I saw her recently, and she told me she just used it to take out a friend and her mother, who is battling cancer. It really made a difference!"

Sometimes the answer to motivating team members is simply to ask them what they want. You've identified what feeds your soul. Now find out when feeds theirs. ■

WAYS TO RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENT FOR TEAM MEMBERS

Here's an assortment of ideas for rewarding and recognizing achievements of team members.

- Pay fees and travel expenses to a conference or professional meeting.
- Present lapel pins for years of service.
- Declare a team appreciation activity, from small to large: a popcorn break, gift baskets, ice cream social, movie passes, bagels or birthday certificates.
- Create a formal annual awards program for team members. Make sure it includes a certificate, a ceremony with public recognition and something tangible, such as dinner for two at a local restaurant. Example: The Ambassador Award for the person giving the best customer service all year.
- Make a "Bravo" card for good work.
- Put the praise in writing. Use desktop publishing software to create a brochure for the award recipient, chronicling his or her achievements. Present the brochure publicly.
- Hold a staff appreciation lunch.
- Create a photo gallery in the lobby or reception area recognizing the team member of the month.
- Put the team member's picture on the Web site with thanks for the outstanding work and specific achievements.
- Send an e-mail saying thanks.

