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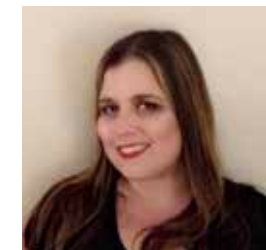
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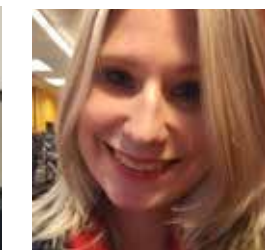
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Dave Danielson,
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Nick Ingrisani,
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►► publisher's note

Legacy

Written by **Mitch Felix**

Hello, Real Producers!

I appreciate you participating as we build this community of reciprocity together.

Hot news: I'm a DAD!!

Juliet Violet Cali Felix was born on February 5th at 2:36 AM. She weighed 8 pounds, 2 ounces, and was 20 inches long. Mom went into labor 17 hours earlier. She chose a natural birth. 17 hours.

That is only slightly longer than it took her to complete an Ironman.

Watching my Wife become a Mother...to try and summarize it in a sentence...the vocabulary required escapes me.

Today, as I write this content, it's been 3 weeks since that day. It's fascinating to consider that every memory I have ever had of being a parent is part of this one long 500 hour day. Time is distorted.

Here is how that most relates to you and to Real Producers.

Legacy.

When Real Producers began here in 2016, it started as a way for me to participate in the lives of my family and to leave a legacy. Yes, ad sales and sponsorships pay the bills, but that was never going to get me out of bed. The significance of contributing value and building a community was a huge motivator.

When I became a parent, it snapped the world into focus.

Interviewing 200+ Real Producers taught me that many of you work "For Your Family."



Today, I deeply understand that answer.

What's exciting is I'm working with a bigger purpose – a bigger Why.

I am all in – I always have been, but now my "all" is more than it's ever been because I have Juliet.

Jasmine FINDING HER GROOVE Lee

“‘What did I not do before real estate?’ is the real question,” Jasmine Lee begins with a sarcastic smile.

Growing up in Arizona, Jasmine dreamed of becoming an event planner. She attended business school at Arizona State University and graduated with a big vision and a business plan in hand. She knew that she didn’t want to remain at home in Arizona; she sought a fresh start and a new place to call home. After a short and unfruitful stint in Illinois, Jasmine landed in the Silicon Valley.

“My brother was living in Sunnyvale,” she reflects. “He had an extra room and asked me to come to stay with him for a few months. It was the best thing that ever happened to me, apart from getting my real estate license.”

Shortly after arriving in Silicon Valley, Jasmine landed an event planning job at a luxury bowling ally in Cupertino. Despite the fact that her work at the bowling ally aligned with her professional dreams and path forward, she was -- to put in bluntly -- miserable.

And then Jasmine remembered another dream that had been brewing behind the scenes since she was a little girl.

“Growing up in Arizona, everything is brand new there,” Jasmine offers. “All these large developments go up, and they have the model homes you can tour. For fun, my mom would take me to tour the open houses on the weekends. I was like six years old when we started going.”

By the time she got to college, Jasmine had seen quite a few homes. She came to understand – and genuinely enjoy – real estate, so much so that it became her career “backup plan,” in case event planning didn’t work out.

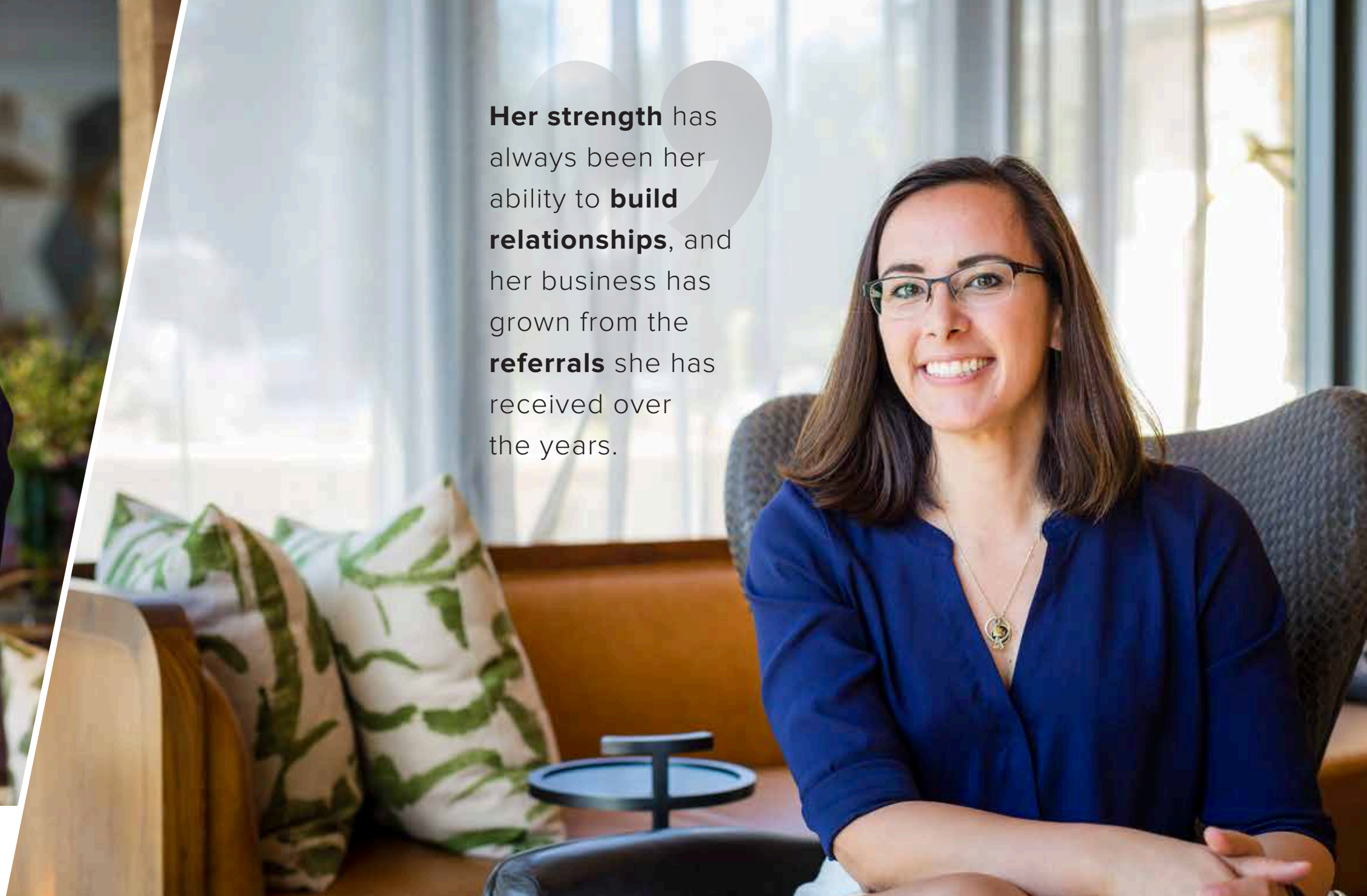
“When I was in college at Arizona State, one of the classes I had taken was a business planning class,” Jasmine explains. “The professor says, ‘Come up with your dream job and a business plan for your dream job.’ At the time, my dream job was event planning. I said, ‘Alright. Done.’”

...





Her strength has always been her ability to **build relationships**, and her business has grown from the **referrals** she has received over the years.



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How you treat **yourself** is a reflection of how you're going to treat **other people**. If you don't have **self-care**, how are you going to **care for your clients**?

But Jasmine's professor knew better than to stop there. Wiser than his students, he encouraged them to continue their planning session.

"He said, 'Guess what guys? You're 18 years old. Chances are your dream job isn't going to work out, so I want you to come up with your backup dream job and backup business plan.'" Jasmine pondered the assignment for a moment and then instantly decided on her backup plan – real estate.

As her dissatisfaction at the bowling alley became a stark reality, Jasmine thought about her next move. Real estate came back into the picture. Although she wasn't raised in California and lacked an extensive network to tap into, Jasmine decided to dive in.

"When I was new, I didn't know where to start," she laughs. "I saw on a motivational quote: 'Start with what you know.'" So Jasmine started with what she knew. She remembered talking to one of her friends at a Memorial Day party about buying a home, and so she started with him.

"I got my license a few months after that party and I reached out to him on Facebook, since I didn't have his phone number. His budget was limited and what he was looking for was very specific, but we found it." Jasmine went on to get a referral from her friend and began to grow her business from there. Her strength has always been her ability to build relationships, and her business has grown from the referrals she has received over the years.

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As good as she is at building relationships, Jasmine admits that finding a consistent work schedule and sticking to the same set of tasks day to day has been a challenge. She knows that the next step in her growth will be predicated by her ability to harness her own will and motivation through consistent action. Paired with her natural ability to build relationships, she'll become a powerful force.

"The most challenging thing for me is building that consistency. I hear from a lot of top producers that it's a skill they've mastered," Jasmine explains.

In the last year, Jasmine has implemented a morning routine that includes meditation, exercise, and journaling. By dedicating time each morning to her own mindset, she sets herself up for success and becomes more capable of executing for her clients.

“How you treat yourself is a reflection of how you’re going to treat other people. If you don’t have self-care, how are you going to care for your clients? If I don’t put myself first and make sure I’m operating at the highest level, how am I going to consistently get the best results for my clients?” Jasmine questions.

Jasmine is steadily discovering the blueprint for success. The key going forward is her implementation, and Jasmine knows that she is more than up for the challenge.



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James Steele

Finding His Niche

profile ◀

Photos by Anita Barcsa
Written by Zach Cohen

“There wasn’t a pre-real estate time,” James Steele begins with a smile.

After graduating with a business degree from the University of Southern California, James packed up a Uhaul, moved back to the Bay Area, took his real estate test, and got to work. That was in 2009.

“I wanted to do real estate ever since I was in middle school or high school,” James reflects. “I would go to the precursor to the MLS, I think it was mls.com,

and just print out listings, look at houses -- even in high school, from the comfort of my bedroom.”

James has always been interested in houses. He remembers buying books that had different floor plans. And while he considered careers in architecture or urban planning, he admits laughingly, “I don’t have an artistic bone in my body.”

“There wasn’t a story there, necessarily. Everyone in my family is either a lawyer or an educator.

There wasn’t someone in the business that I knew, but it was something I was drawn to.”

James saw an opportunity to meet interesting people, fuel his love for houses and real estate, and learn the art of negotiation. In college, he had worked as an assistant to a commercial real estate agent, and by the time he graduated, he was ready to take the leap and head out to build a business.

Finding His Way

“I still get people that say I look young for the industry. I’ve been doing this for like a decade now,” James says. “But there was something that never really scared me about [being young].”

James always recognized the reality that real estate agents aren’t really in competition with each other for business. There are countless different types of people, personalities,

and ways of going about business. James’s goal was to find the people that wanted to work with him.

“I thought, ‘Maybe there’s a niche of people that want to work with someone that’s younger, has a lot of energy, is focused. I found that to be true. It can be a real plus. People like to work with that type of energy.’”

Back in 2009 when James began his real estate career, he found mild early success. Yet, quickly, he realized he needed to find a specialization. With short sales and REOs hot, he dove in.

“At the time I got certified to handle short sales,” James recalls. “They were very difficult transactions and sometimes took nine months to complete. About eight or nine people in my office got certified, but I actively marketed in my office. So a lot of very senior agents would partner up with me. I worked really hard, got people out of very tough situations.”

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As James proved his work to peers and top agents within his office, they began to trust him more and more with their referral business. "So I did a lot of really good things for people's clients. Once you do a good job for people and those clients, I found that it all flowed word of mouth. When you can impress your peers, and they think you're a stand-up guy -- that's something I'm really proud of."

Finding Balance

James is currently the #2 individual agent in his office, but when asked about awards or sales volume, he drew a complete blank. It's not something he's counting.

"I'm more focused on where I'm going. It's more about progression," James says.

Over the past decade, James has built a unique relationship with balance. He looks at balance not on a daily or weekly basis, but on an annual scale. When things get busy, and everything seems to be coming to life at once, he's willing to work long hours to get the job done for his clients. And when the flow of the market slows, he takes time off -- not feeling guilty about his willingness to relax.

"For example, this spring I have not had a day off. I don't think I've had a partial day off. That's really tough to maintain that degree of intensity year round. On a weekly basis right now I have no balance."

"But then there are times where there is a natural breathe and take. I go to Coachella every year... in August my wife and I went to Japan for two

weeks. I look at balance as an annual thing. I think with the reality of our industry trying to force a work-life balance on a weekly basis is not really feasible."

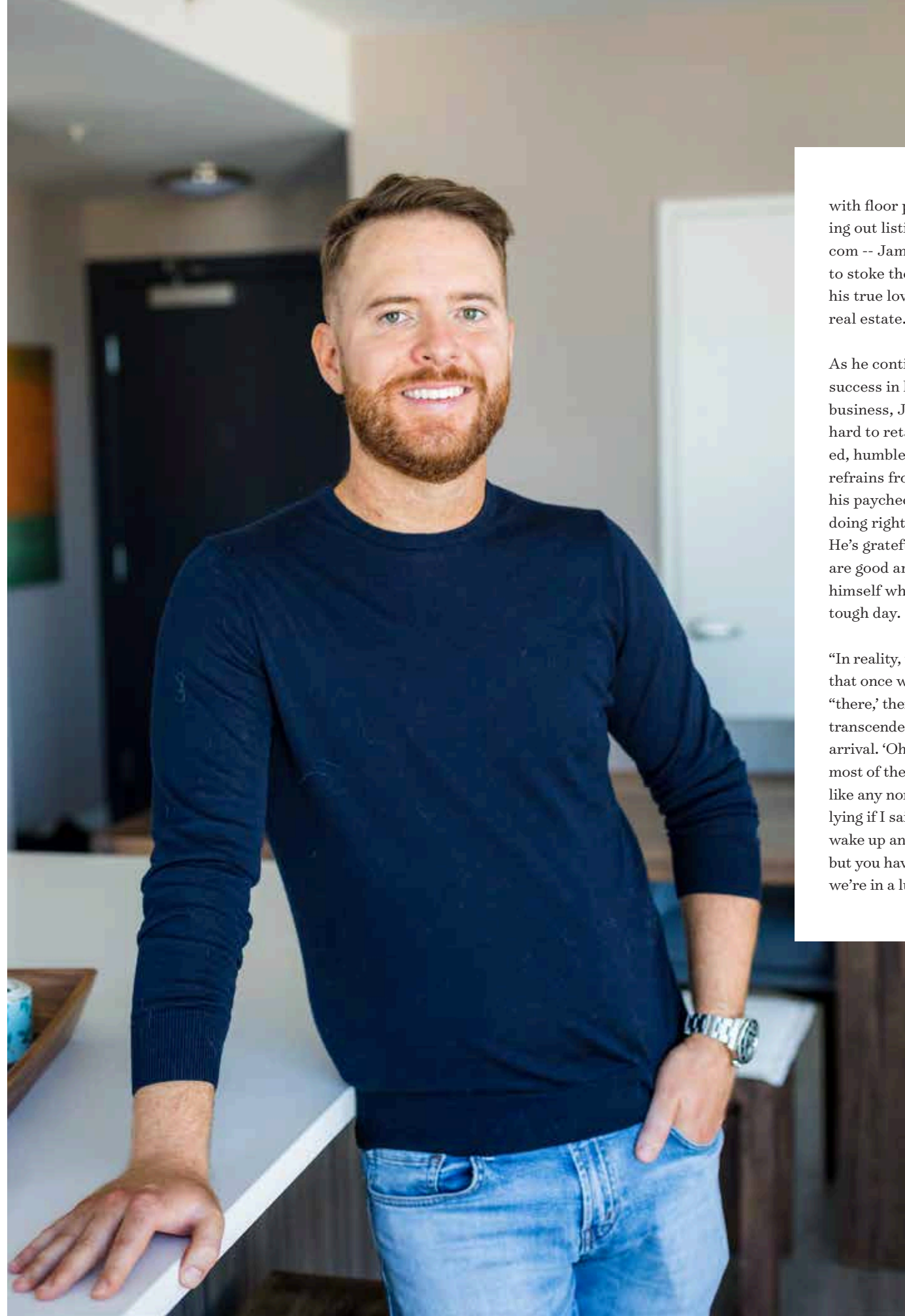
With acceptance and flow, James leans into the busy times, and appreciates the slower days and weeks. "I embrace it," James says.

Exploring the Differences

When he does find time away from real estate, James can be found with his wife -- traveling, eating and cooking good food, or working out.

"My wife and I spend a lot of time figuring out where we're going to travel to next. I love trying to learn as much of the language as I can before going to a place," James says.

And, admittedly, he loves keeping track of local commercial development as a hobby, even though it's not part of his professional life. It's just like the days of buying books



with floor plans or printing out listings from mls.com -- James continues to stoke the fire that is his true love for all things real estate.

As he continues to find success in life and in business, James works hard to retain a grounded, humble outlook. He refrains from counting his paychecks in favor of doing right by his clients. He's grateful when things are good and gentle with himself when he has a tough day.

"In reality, we assume that once we reach the 'there,' there will be this transcended moment of arrival. 'Oh my god!' But most of the time you wake like any normal day. I'd be lying if I said every day I wake up and recognize it... but you have to realize, we're in a lucky spot."

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cover story

Written by Nick Ingrisani
Photos by Anita Barcsa

Vanessa Pappalardo





...

LIFE IS THE PERFECT CONSTELLATION

“Always look for the perfect constellation.”

When everything lines up and is meant to happen, it will happen.”

Mariana Pappalardo is no stranger to going with the flow of life. She’s had countless adventures, twists, and turns over the years, with everything starting in her small hometown of Falun, Sweden.

As a kid, Mariana spent time playing in the lumber yard while her father, an engineer turned home builder, picked out screws and 2x4s. It was an environment that sparked Mariana’s interest in all things construction-related. These early years also instilled a strong work ethic in her. Mariana’s grandmother was an exceptionally hard worker, and witnessing that tenacity first-hand had a deep effect on her own outlook on life. This resulted in Mariana diving into the working world at just 13 years old selling Swedish pastries door-to-door.

In her last year of high school, Mariana traveled to the United States to live with a host family for a year to study English and learn about American culture. Years later, that same host family ended up inviting her back to live with them while she studied graphic design at the Colorado Institute of Art.



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But Mariana's stint in graphic design didn't last long. While her graphic design background helps her in creating a marketing approach for her real estate listings today, she first enjoyed a decade-long career in modeling. Mariana was discovered by Elite Model Management while in college and embarked on an international modeling career that brought her to beautiful countries, cultures, and locations around the world. By the end of her modeling career, Mariana had lived in 12 different countries. This experience interacting with different cultures and people around the world furthered her ability to connect with others – a vital skill in real estate.

"The Bay Area is pretty diverse, so as an agent, you need to be able to relate different types of people."

Eventually, she was ready for a change of pace, and as fate would have it, that's when she met her husband.

Building a New Life with a Family

Mariana and her husband, Marc, got married and settled into a quieter life in Boulder, Colorado. While Marc worked as a corporate tech attorney, Mariana found her own fulfillment selling high-end fashion clothes and accessories to stores like Neiman Marcus. She did this while pregnant and welcoming three boys into her family.

They moved their family out to the Bay Area for her husband's job a few years later, and a friend of Mariana's nudged her to try a career in real estate. Mariana decided to take the plunge, quickly got her license, and started working at Sotheby's. In the beginning, she was completely on her own and didn't have a support network to build off of in San Francisco. This was around the same time that her husband restructured his career, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise that motivated Mariana even further.



"The Bay Area is pretty diverse, so as an agent, you need to be able to relate different types of people."

"At the time, it helped that my husband was not able to be the sole provider, and I had to figure out how to recreate a six-figure income. And before I knew it, I managed to build a humungous real estate practice."

Today, Mariana's goal is to continue to add more people to her team and grow her ability to meet her clients' needs. Her clients range across the real estate spectrum, from first-time buyers to families to investors, builders, and developers. It's part of the reason she loves real estate so much. Each day is an adventure in its own way. But regardless of her clients' needs, she's always there to help them create equity and happiness in their lives.

...



“ [I’m] always looking for the perfect constellation. ”

...

“Real estate can be a very emotional process, so there’s a lot of gratitude to be found in it.”

Mariana remains motivated every day to provide a prosperous and happy life for her three kids. All of Mariana’s hard work is motivated by her children and nourishing her home that’s “full of life.” She takes great pride in being a full-time mother and real estate agent simultaneously. Real estate success is all about human-to-human connection, and her personal situation helps her relate to her clients even more.

“People look at me and they don’t believe me when I tell them that I have three kids under 12. But I am human like everyone else. Nothing has been handed to me in life. I’m a mom, and a busy mom at that. None of this would’ve been possible without hard work.”

Personal Beliefs and Outlook

Mariana’s real estate business is now centered around two core tenets. The first is the idea of always looking for the perfect constellation. The saying ultimately means that everything that’s meant to happen will happen. So when her clients ask, “How am I going to find my perfect home?” Mariana reassures them with this philosophy. When the timing is right and the stars align, everything will work when it is meant to. Coupled with Mariana’s market knowledge and the network that she uses to create opportunities for her clients, she can assure her clients that things will happen as they are meant to.

The second tenet she believes in is what she calls the “good vibe tribe.” It’s centered around doing good and projecting out good karma into the world.

“I believe in doing good, and I believe in empowering people. By doing that, I think that the karma you project is the karma that you get back. I’d rather let a deal pass by than live with knowing that I didn’t do the right thing. I always try to keep a spiritual focus in my life – even in real estate.”

Balance is incredibly important. Mariana regularly creates opportunities to get outside in nature, reset, and free her mind from the hustle and bustle of the Bay Area. She makes time every few months to take a memorable trip that’s focused on recentering and positivity. The stress and pressure of Silicon Valley is real, so it’s critical for Mariana to create space from her business and remember what’s most important in life.

“Without that balance, your batteries will run thin and you won’t be doing this for the right reasons.”

Mariana has plenty of open road ahead of her – in life and in business. Her life has taken plenty of exciting turns so far, and looking into the future, the sky is the limit.



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