

Here Are Some Principles Which Have Guided My Real Estate Career

By JIM SMITH

One of the most frequent contributors to Inman News is Jimmy Burgess, who is the CEO of a Berkshire Hathaway Home Services brokerage in Florida. Last week he wrote about “*6 surprising real estate paradoxes that will change how you do business.*”



At the risk of telling readers more than they want to know about me, I'm going to use this space to describe those paradoxes and how they factored into my own success.

How successful have I been? Well, thanks to the readers of my long-running column on the opposite page, I have been pretty successful. I could have been even more successful if I did some prospecting. More about that later.

That leads me to Burgess's first paradox: “*The more you give, the more you will receive.*” That truth is epitomized by my column, which has appeared in YourHub since that localized section was introduced by *The Denver Post*. You also see it in the quote which is printed below our logo: “*Concentrate on giving, and the getting will take care of itself.*” I saw that quote taped to my sister Susie's fridge in the 1990s, where it was attributed to Confucius. (It sounds like something he would have said, doesn't it?)

It resonated so much with me that I used it in a 2008 column. First, however, I used Google to verify that Confucius said it. He didn't. Now if you Google that phrase, the top hit is my column reporting that Confucius did not say that!

Getting back to my point, the “Real Estate Today” column is all about giving instead of getting. I started writing it as a new Realtor who didn't really know as much as he should about real estate, but I'm a journalist by training, and the job of a journalist is to spend hours learning all about a given topic and then sharing what I learned succinctly and in layman's terms with readers. To quote Richard Bach, “*You teach best what you most need to learn.*”

Sure enough, writing about real estate every week, whether or not I had a new listing to feature, taught me all about real estate — more than if I had taken countless CE classes — and over time readers came to recognize that I do know real estate well. And the phone started ringing.

Writing and publishing “Real Estate Today” has always been about giving without worrying about getting, and yet I got all the business I needed to earn a living — and to pay for the ads.

Burgess's second paradox of real estate is “*The success you desire will take longer than you anticipate, but once it begins, it will happen faster than you imagine.*” That has been so true

for my business model, based on paradox #1.

Burgess's third paradox is “*The more problems you encounter, the more opportunities you will have to show your worth and grow your business.*” Readers and clients ask how I come up with a new topic to write about each week. Topics come to me from my day-to-day work with buyers and sellers. Often after speaking or being with a client, I'll say to myself (or them), “I should write a column about that.” And I do!

The fourth paradox is “*The less you try to sell someone, the more they want to buy from you.*” I don't recall ever making a prospecting call. My time is best spent writing my column, and letting readers call me. I am terrible at following up with prospects, too. I count on them calling me again, and sometimes a hungrier prospecting agent gets to them before that happens. Oh, well.

The fifth paradox is “*You need to spend money to make money.*” My ad rep at The Denver Post would be happy to explain that paradox! **Note:** I didn't cut my advertising in downturns.

The sixth paradox is the only one that doesn't resonate with me. It is “*The thing you fear the most is probably the very thing you need to do the most.*” What Burgess espouses is that you get a coach and do what he or she says you must do to succeed. I hired a coach my first year. He said I should make lots of cold calls.