

The Three Pillars Post

A monthly publication devoted to providing friends and clients with insight and knowledge of the real estate world based on three core pillars of my business; Philanthropy, Business and Growth.

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IT'S NOT MY FAULT!



How many times have you heard this? Sadly it's not always from young kids after they've spilled the milk all over the counter but from adults trying to

deflect blame onto someone or something else. Accountability and taking responsibility for your actions is hard and we all know it's becoming even more rare now than it once was. Just watch the news and of five stories I bet at least three have some politician or businessman giving an excuse for what they said/did and why they said/did it. Whatever happened to owning up to a mistake and then fixing it? Okay, yeah making mistakes sucks, but it happens to everyone, no one is perfect all the time no matter how hard we try. As a matter of fact, if you are trying to improve yourself or your situation, what ever that may be, you will make more mistakes than a person playing it safe. It's impossible not to. You can't be perfect in something you have never done before or have only done a few times. It takes practice to be great at something and with practice will come mistakes. So, why do people always try and blame something or someone other than themselves?



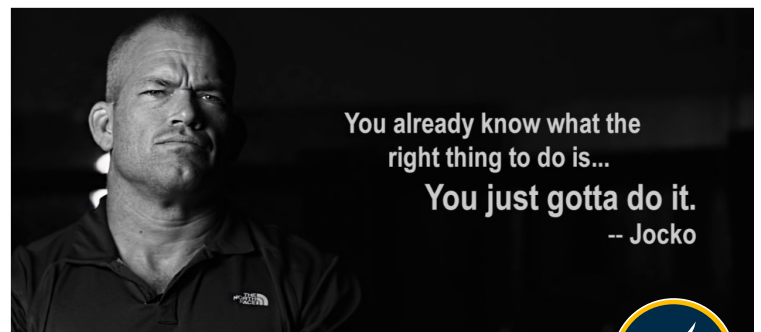
Two weeks ago my son Conor, who is 12 years old, was cutting the lawn with our John Deere riding mower. He has been cutting the lawn for only a couple years so he is by no means perfect at driving or

cutting the grass. He misses spots, goes too fast sometimes when cutting thick grass, so it's not even, forgets not to blow the grass into the pool...you get the idea. He's learning by making mistakes. So, as parents what do we do? We encourage our kids by saying great job, proud of you but then we also help make them better by saying what can be improved on and why. Now kids and Conor is no different, always blame other things or people. So when I point out that he missed a couple spots it's

'my brother was distracting me' or if the grass is in the pool 'you didn't tell me not to do that today' type thing. As parents we all want our kids to be better than us so we try to teach them not to blame others but take responsibility for their actions. Two weeks ago when Conor was cutting the lawn, he crashed into a tree.

He is fine, no physical injuries, so all good. The hood of the lawn mower however, is a different story. He smashed a hole in it and mostly destroyed the one side of the hood, but I am getting a little ahead of the story. It was still holding together so he kept cutting the lawn. Not long after my wife Sue came home and noticed the smashed up hood and called Conor over. She asked him if he broke the hood and got the 'I smashed into a branch on the apple tree' story. Sue asked Conor if he had told Daddy yet. Conor said no, and was afraid to tell me because he said 'Dad will be really angry' Sue said, 'don't you think it would be a good thing to tell him what happened instead of him finding out on his own? What do you think would be worse?' Conor said 'Ok, I will go tell him'

When Conor came inside and told me what happened I can't lie, I was upset but the first thing I asked was if he was okay. Then how did it happen? Turns out he was trying to cut close to the tree to do a good job and was watching the wheel and the mower deck to make sure they didn't hit anything and forgot to watch the branches to make sure they didn't hit the hood. So I asked him, 'Ok, what did you learn?' Mistakes happen and its not about not making mistakes but about learning from them so



IT'S NOT MY FAULT! CONT'D

you can get better going forward. I was very proud that he came in and told me about the accident and didn't try to hide it from me. Conor then offered to pay for the hood out of his savings saying 'it was my fault so I will get it fixed'. I have to say that impressed me. 'No' I said 'you don't have to pay for it. It was an accident but I am proud of you for taking responsibility and stepping up to make it right.'

Everyone makes mistakes, sh*t happens. Its how you deal with that mistake that defines your character. Jocko Willink, a US Navy Seal and author of "Extreme Ownership" once said "You

already know what the right thing to do is....you just gotta do it." Owning up to your mistakes is a really hard thing to do, which is why so many people blame others. Whether it's as a business owner when something goes south and the whole team comes together to make it right, or if it's as a parent, when your child crashes into a tree but steps up and offers to make it right, you can't help but feel proud. So when you ask yourself 'how you are doing', and you have examples of your team or your kid stepping up and making it right....be proud that you are being a good leader or parent. Funny thing is, being a parent or being a leader, they are not that different.

STRAWBERRIES AND GOOD WOOD



I always seem to be the one who does the groceries and errands for the family and a few Mondays ago was no exception. Coming in at the tail end of strawberry season I hadn't had a chance to grab some so while I was on my way to get some lumber for our real estate signs, (yes, we make our own), I stopped to get some strawberries. There is nothing like fresh local strawberries. Now since it was almost the end of the season the selection wasn't that great, only a half dozen baskets or so were left. So I carefully look them over, pick up one and nope, soggy bottom so you know there is a bunch that are squished. Grab another, nope lots of white on theses berries, picked too soon. Then I grab the third one and yep, that's the one. Red, firm, not squished. Great, it's the best of the lot. Now on to the lumber yard!

As we launch Three Pillars Realty this year, we chose to make the first few sets of posts ourselves since it is something we know how to do.



From a branding standpoint, we wanted all of our materials to be good quality. You can buy premade posts online, but they just aren't the quality we want. Those posts crumble to the ground after the first gust of wind.

Cheap. Chintzy. Not what we want for our company.

You have probably seen our posts, we get quite a few compliments on them from people that drove past a listing of ours. They are good quality. We make them from cedar 4x4s, hand sanded with redwood stain and quality hardware that holds up to the unpredictable Niagara weather. They take a lot of time to make, but it is time well spent.

I had a lot on my plate that day trying to prepare our listings and managing our current clients, but I didn't have a choice. The listings were almost ready, so I had to make the posts.

I pull into the Turkstra Lumber and begin to look for the posts.



Have you ever noticed every guy that steps up to a stack of lumber does the same thing. He picks the top board off the pile, holds it up at one end, closes one eye, and looks down the length of the board to see if it is straight. Then

he turns it 90 degrees and repeats. If it passes that test, he has a winner. The rest get tossed aside while he digs deeper in the stack. Only a select few make the cut.

Once he has what he needs, the rejected pieces get put back on the top of the pile. The next guy that comes along has to sort through the junk on top before he finally makes it through to the good ones.

Sure enough, when I got to the pile, there were probably 15 posts there. I only needed a few. I tossed at least half of them aside as I searched for the best I could find. The 3 that I chose weren't perfect. One was dirty from the rain and mud splashing on it so would need to be cleaned before staining and the others had a slight bow to them but it was small enough to probably not be noticeable. These 3 were the best I saw, so I bought them.



STRAWBERRIES AND GOOD WOOD CONT'D

I looked over the 'rejected' posts as I threw them back on the pile. They weren't all that bad. The next guy that comes along will probably take a few of them.

Then it hit me, I just did the same thing with the posts as I did with the strawberries. The more I thought about it the more I realized we all do this every time we buy something. So the real question is why?

The answer is simple. Competition.

With the few posts that I picked already gone, there were only 12 or so left. If the next guy needs 6, he has fewer to choose from. So the half dozen posts that weren't good enough for me will actually be good enough for him.

Eventually, there will come a time when all that is left is junk. Maybe there are 5 left, but they are all split down the middle or twisted so bad that they can't be used. Anyone in that situation would likely just wait for a new shipment rather than settling on the junk.

I couldn't help but think of this 'choosing' process and how similar it is to something I see every day.

Every time we list a house, we want it to be the best post in the pile, the best basket of strawberries on the shelf. Each buyer that comes through the house has probably already looked at 5 or more other houses and thrown them aside. We want our listing to be the one they throw on the good pile.

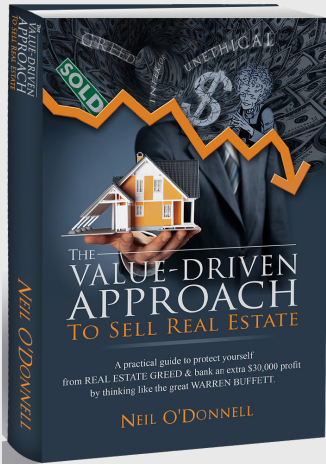
It is the reason we put so much time in to our listings up front. It can be a long process, the staging, professional photos, etc. They are all an added expense and take time out of our day, but in the end, they are worth it.

We often come across sellers that want to list their house quickly. They want to shortcut the process, skip one step here or one step there. Each time their mind goes there, it is our job to rein them back in. We remind them that we need to stick to the process. We don't want them to be the post that keeps getting tossed aside until finally there is nothing better left.

In our business, we always work with quality lumber. Literally and figuratively.



NEIL O'DONNELL - AUTHOR & CREATOR



An entrepreneur and a relentless innovator of the real estate industry, Neil O'Donnell is the creator of the "Value-Driven Approach to Sell Real Estate," author of the infamous report "Frauds, Lies, Cheats & Unethical Scams." He also founded St.Catharines First Responder Only Program®, and is a licensed agent with Keller Williams Complete Realty. Neil has been called "provocative and entertaining," but also "a committed philanthropist" for his mission to raise/donate over \$10,000 to local and First Responder-related charities each year.

Neil also supports many great local and national charities too, such as: Lincoln Humane Society, CIBC Run for the Cure, Heart & Stroke Foundation, MADD: Mothers Against Drunk Driving among others. Neil is a leader in the St.Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake business community as well, and co-founded ENG (Entrepreneurs Networking Group™) St.Catharines Chapter—an exclusive group of business owners, sales professionals and entrepreneurs, focused on three core pillars of impact: Philanthropy, Business, and Growth!



OUR TEAM ADVANTAGE AT...



Three Pillars REALTY

Our documented Value-Driven Approach is based on leveraging experts and professionals in all areas to ensure that we bring to bear the absolute best expertise available. It's that expertise that we use to execute our Value-Driven approach which has consistently achieved more profit for our clients than traditional real estate agents or teams. Just like you wouldn't want your heart surgeon to also be the nurse, anesthesiologist and the orderly moving the stretcher, we don't want our agents doing the staging, taking the photos, doing repairs, etc. We leave that to our team of experts which allow our agents to do what they do best, maximize the profit for your home. Any agent can sell your home but only we have a documented Value-Driven approach that has proven to bring our clients more profit.



NEIL O'DONNELL
Listing Specialist



DAVID SOKOL
Listing Specialist



MIKE WYERS
Investor Specialist



MARK GARRETT
Buyer Specialist



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Operations Manager



REMO COLANTONI
Inspector



KATE WARREN
Photographer



JEFF GEMMELL
Mortgage Broker



COLLEEN DONOVAN
Staging



JOHN WOLFE
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CONTRACTORS



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

