

SHERRIE STOROR

Ep.12 | From zero to hero with Jane Caulfield and Karen Chant.

Show Guests:

Jane Caulfield - Fletchers Real Estate, Melbourne.

Karen Chant - Bob Berry Real Estate in Dubbo.

Overview:

Are you wondering how you can pick yourself up and hit the reset button after a tough time in the market? Want to know what action to take and strategies to use to go from zero to hero? Are you looking to build a celebrity profile in a metro or regional market?

In today's episode, you'll learn from two incredible coaching clients of mine, how you can change your circumstances, turn your business around, levelled up and live your best life. Meet **Jane Caulfield** from **Fletchers Real Estate**, Melbourne and **Karen Chant** from **Bob Berry Real Estate** in Dubbo.

Hot Gossip:

My 51-Point Checklist: This is a step-by-step 51-point checklist that takes you through going from off-market to on market to exchange to settled to sold. Get my step-by-step process to follow from social media, managing your CRM, working your pipeline sellers, letterbox drop emails to text messages and videos to send. This will help you build your stock list even in this challenging time. You can download it for free from [here](#).

My FREE Webinar Series: Last year I hosted a 3-part webinar series designed to bring my courses to agents all over Australia. During this difficult climate, I want to support and give back to an industry that I love and that means so much to me so I'm releasing the entire series for free!

You'll get access to these three training courses:

Week 1: Build a Celebrity Profile - Become a POWER Agent

Week 2: Find your EDGE walk away with a killer listing presentation.

Week 3: Be a Social Climber - Social Media Strategies to List and Sell Properties. Access the full training series by registering [here](#).

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SHERRIE STOROR

Sherrie:

Hello, and welcome to episode twelve (12) of the Build Your Best Life podcast series. Now, I'd love to introduce you to today's speakers. And I have two powerhouse agents, two powerhouse women that I would love to introduce you to.

Firstly, we have **Jane Caulfield**, now Jane is a lead agent for **Fletchers** in Canterbury in Melbourne. She is one of my one on one coaching clients. And last year she finished up her time at **Noel Jones**, where she was awarded three massive awards, one of which was the most outstanding salesperson. She lives in Redwood North with her husband, in fact, she's a newlywed with Jimmy and her three children who are now in their early twenties

We also have **Karen Chant**, now Karen is a lead salesperson with **Bob Berry** real estate in Dubbo. She's a licensed real estate agent, but on top of that, she also is a stock and station agent. She's one of my coaching clients and she has achieved the highest number of sales, highest, total sales volumes, and the most amount of recommendations in Dubbo. She has three children and she lives with her husband in Dubbo, please welcome to our show, Jane Caulfield and Karen Chant.

Sherrie:

Ladies, welcome to the build your best life video podcast. I'm so incredibly excited to have you here.

Karen:

Thanks so much for having us. Wow. We're really excited to be here.

Jane:

Absolutely thrilled to be here. Thank you.

Sherrie:

Now I think why I'm so incredibly pumped is not just for the reason that you guys are, you know, my one on one coaching clients and as part of your journey, I guess we've gotten so close and I love both of you also very much.

In fact, we were just talking about that before the show started, but I think both of your stories are incredibly important and very, relevant. And I think that there's so much in it that every agent can really relate to. So today we're going to talk a little bit about your careers and the paths of what has actually taken you and gotten you to where you are today. And then really, a little later in the show, we're going to be talking about implementing skillset and systems and structures.

So Jane, I want to sort of talk about how we originally met and I'm not sure, well, I'm sure you remember originally, we sort of met a couple of years ago now and I gave a keynote presentation in Melbourne, for **Noel Jones** talking with all of the agents. And at that particular time, I remember after the session you came up and introduced yourself, which was magical. Thank you. And then you called me when I was at the airport. And I remember it so vividly, I was sitting in Qantas Club and getting ready to board my flight to Brisbane, but we were just caught up in kind of this, this chat and this conversation. Do you remember this?

Jane:

I remember it.

Sherrie:

And I remember when we were sort of chatting, I was thinking, look, you sound like such a remarkable, amazing woman, but I don't know that I'm the coach for you. And part of that really led me to the fact that you were saying, look you currently don't have any listings. And I'm thinking, well, look, you know, perhaps one of my other programs might be better than the one on one, but then you kind of started telling me your story and how you just had some time off, but how you were totally determined to get back up there and to make it make it happen.

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So, you totally won me over and we began working together. So, let's talk a little bit about this journey and how you got to that point of basically starting back from scratch again.

Jane:

Okay. I think I've been doing sales for a couple of years and when I first started, I really hit the ground running. I was just going for it, prospecting, working really, really, really hard. And because I was working a territory, I got traction very quickly. And then unfortunately in life stuff happens and that stuff happened. It was going towards the end of spring. It was that cusp of October, November. And I had three phone calls within 10 days, which was my father and my two dearest, closest best friends were all diagnosed with cancer. So, it rocked me. And I kept my responsibilities to my vendors. I got the property sold and then took some time off, that would have been mid-December and sort of came back towards the end of January early February, the next year. And I had a final inspection and broke my ankle.

Sherrie:

Bad luck.

Jane:

I know, and it was a beautiful house, absolutely amazing house and a beautiful vendor. And it was very embarrassing and terrible as I was lying there, like a beached whale, but that's enough of that I won't go into that.

Anyway, I broke my ankle and unfortunately, I was in a boot for quite a while and being in a boot went for longer because I insisted that I was invincible and went back to work and was walking and doing everything that I shouldn't have done.

So essentially from that time when I stopped working up until the middle of the year, when I started working with you, which was the 1st of July, I had no listings because walking around in a moon boot, no one wanted to list with me, even though I had relationships with people.

And I totally understand this, you know, you want someone to be there 100%, not 90%. So, it was a really tough time for me, but a gift in that, I started to question how I did real estate.

And after meeting you and listening to you, you were what I was looking for simply because what I've been doing was very male oriented. I was coming from this space of male energy and I just, I wanted to find me, and I wanted to connect with a mentor who was, heart-based like I am, because I felt like a fraud. Does that make sense?

Sherrie:

It totally makes sense. And I have to say, you know, I work with a lot of women who probably, you know, feel exactly the same as you do, but I also work with a lot of men, who wants to soften and actually what is being practiced, I guess, more widely within the industry, just doesn't feel real and authentic for them. But, you know, prior to having this time off and not having any listings you had actually performed incredibly well, in the previous year, you'd written over 500K in GCI.

Jane:

Just under, I kept going just under.

Sherrie:

So essentially, we kind of got to work and it was one listing and one listing is essentially all it took to kind of get everything back on board. And we're going to talk about this a little bit later on, but it was that one listing that basically got you more sales on the board and you became a number one for that business for **Noel Jones** at that time. But look, as I said, a little bit later on this shortly.

So, Karen, we began working together and I'm not sure how you heard about me, actually. I just remember you sent me an inquiry through the website, and I remember having this really

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in depth conversation with you over the phone, because, you know, again, most of my agents, aren't in the same location as me, but I remember that first conversation and our first sit down and due diligence working on your business.

And I think we both would agree, and we said this yesterday, we fell totally and utterly madly in love with each other. And I'll never forget that was probably one of my most fun sort of obsessions because it was so you were so honest and so real and I thank you for that, but you know, I guess I wanted to talk about your journey and what took you to that point, I guess, of making the decision to call.

Karen:

Yes, well, I've been in the industry on and off for over 33 years now. So, don't do the calculations, I've been around for a while, but only in sales full time, since 2011. So, in 2014, 2015, I was the top agent in Dubbo, which was great. So, I moved up very quickly, which was fantastic, but I was just finding in 2015, I was burnt out. I didn't have an assistant. I think a lot of us can all relate to that feeling. You're just running and running and running. Everything just became too hard.

I felt overwhelmed and I just had enough. So, I actually resigned. I had a great career, I was developing obviously a database of clients and things like that, but it was just all too much. I just didn't want to work that way. So, I left, and I actually went and worked with Crown Lands as a supervisor, which was fantastic, great group of people, learnt a lot there too, obviously.

But then during that entire year, **Bob Berry**, who is my owner and principal and manager from the previous business where I worked on and off all these years, kept meeting with me and trying to encourage me back and then offered me a share in the business. And in the end, it was just too good to refuse.

So, I started back in 2016 and then of course quickly then built up my work again to the point in 2018, I had a number of issues going on and I can remember, I somehow found you on Instagram. I'm not sure how it actually happened, but you came to me on Instagram and I just kept looking at all these build your best life posts.

And I was just reading it going just want to build my best life, so I sent you a message and then we connected, and you just helped me get out of a really bad place at that particular point. So, you look, you made such a difference to both my business and my personal life, so I'm forever grateful.

Sherrie:

Oh, you're so beautiful, me too, darling. I love working with you, but I think, you know, what's really interesting I feel is that, you know, it's not often that someone will stay with the one business pretty much their whole career. I mean, that's really saying something and as you mentioned, you became a director in the business. And then, you know, most recently you've kind of sold your shares and you've converted back into becoming a lead agent without the responsibility of running an office. Tell us a little bit about this.

Karen:

Yeah. So, I hit the ground running in 2016 in July or August actually started back once we'd taken over the business. And there were four other owners or directors, so five of us altogether and all had our allocated responsibilities, so that was an extra workload like the compliance and human resources and things like that for me. And then just became super busy again with sales, which was fantastic.

And I mean, obviously we do this because we love it. And particularly when we keep going back to it, we know that it's something that we're meant to be doing, but then just trying to control the monster because it ends up sometimes getting out of control.

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So, at the end of 2017, I had a major surgery and I was quite stressed going into that, not about the operation, just with work and the workload and things like that. Just wasn't looking after myself, moved into 2018 and then I became seriously ill, following that operation and I was ill for nine months. I was very silly, I continued to work.

I just felt like I had an obligation to my clients, to the new business and to the other directors. So just kept, you know, we pushed through it, push through it, kept pushing through it. And, then at that time that was in, July or June, I think I connected with you in 2018.

I was still sick at that particular point. I was also having some issues at home with one of my children. And then of course I decided to renovate a house and do everything else that we do when we really should be just looking after ourselves.

So, we then started working together in July 2018, and that's when I really probably started working towards making some changes, in my personal and my business life. Then, you encouraged me to actually take time off because I hadn't been doing that and hadn't been giving myself a good holiday.

So, I took a whole month off in October 2018 and went to Peru with a girlfriend and had a great time. And just having that time and space just brought the awareness to me that I really wasn't living my best life and I wasn't living how I wanted to. And I didn't have time to dedicate to those people that really mattered outside of my life.

So, I came back. I was well by that stage. It was about a week before I left that I got the all clear. So, I came back and spoke with the directors and just said, look, as you know, I've been really sick all year. It's been a massive year; I really just want to take a step back. I really had a big think about things I'm happy to transition, however you want. I'd love to stay on in the business, I want to help as much as I can. And fortunately, they were really understanding, so we worked towards the sale of my share to them that happened in July last year.

So, I'm still there, it's like my family, we all have our ups and our downs as we do in every family. But it's like my family, **Bob Berry**, he was my long-term mentor and he still is to me, he is like a father figure to me. So, I'm really, really lucky to have had that experience in that learning under him initially.

Sherrie:

And since that, I mean, you have now really been able to just focus wholly and solely on your sales and you, I know that you have been sort of busier than ever before as a result of it in terms of actually listing and selling, correct?

Karen:

Yes, that's right. When I really looked at it, I thought at the time, that I was putting in being a director, I knew that if I put that time into my sales work, that I'd certainly make up for that lost income. So, I think it's one of those things, a lot of people think initially that, yes, that's my goal. I want an own an agency or I want to be a director or a part owner, but the thing is, if you own an agency outright, look, I really admire those lead agents who are also, one like the only owner in an agency. Their workload must be incredible and they must have a great team around them to be able to do that, and likewise, when you're working with a number of other owners, obviously there's differing opinions, you have to pull your weight, you have to do your share of the workload as well.

So, yes, you do obviously hopefully get an income as being an owner and a director in a real estate agency. But also, I think if you're doing really well with your sales, you can earn just as much money and possibly even more because you have more time to dedicate to that. And plus, time to give to yourself to actually have some time off. So, you can rest recuperate and like me, just give yourself time to be able to see the bigger picture.

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Sherrie:

Look, I think this is really powerful because in our industry as salespeople, we kind of aspire to owning our own agencies or becoming directors of the businesses that we work with but it's not always necessarily what's right for us. And I think it's actually takes real courage. And I really admire you for this, the fact that you actually said, actually, hang on, I'm not sure that this is actually what I want in my life. And you know, I also, you know, really quite admire the people in **Bob Berry** who actually acknowledged that. And instead of you having to go and work for another agency said, no, look let's actually make this work. We want to continue the relationship in the business, and we love having you here and move forward. And I think it's a really important message to share because sometimes we do get caught up in this greater, a bigger, better kind of world.

And I guess there are two reasons why I really wanted to, you know, interview the both of you and the both of you together. And that is the fact that you both are really great at leveraging your listings and your results. And you've also done a really great job of building your own celebrity profile and a brand within the brand of the businesses that you work with.

So I guess the reason why we've kind of done this is because we want to kind of almost annihilate those kind of traditional forms of prospecting and do what actually makes more sense and what makes us, you know, more listings and more sales and really amplify that.

So Jane let's rewind back to that time when you only had one listing, because really, as we talked about, it was that one listing that took you to then becoming number one at **Noel Jones**, which was huge. And, and you're obviously now working for **Fletchers**, but let's talk back about this particular time. So, what is it that you actually did with that one listing that you then leveraged?

Jane:

Worked my butt off! look essentially, I just followed your processes that you taught me to do. So basically, one of the things, I had my database really tight for the areas that I worked in because I work a territory. And so, I just ensured that everybody knew about the sale. So, there would be SMS's there would be emails, there would be drops going out and phone calls. So, I'd call the street and let them know and ask them if they'd like to know the results.

So, I've got a great belief in give, give twice before I ask for any business. So, give, give information, then ask for the business once or, and of course you've got to read, read the play of each person, but give, give. So, it's always about providing information, providing a service to my clientele and to my area.

So essentially through SMS, through emails, through phone calls, through drops, everybody knew about this listing and invited them, you know, would you like to know about the result? And throughout the process, so just listed under offer, just sold. The other thing that I did was prior to settlement a week or 10 days before a letter would go out and it'd be very personalised to the street or the surrounding area, just to let you know, you've got a new neighbour moving in, you know, John and Shelly will be moving in, you know, you might like to welcome them. If there's anything else you'd like to know, you know, feel free to reach out. So I was very much grounding myself as the go to person and the expert in the area that already seen my face before, because I'd been doing well prior to that, what six, eight months that I had off.

Although it's quite interesting how people forget quickly, unless you remind them, you know, you've got to keep reminding them, reminding them, hi, I'm here. And, and just providing that service. And from that, it was really interesting because that first listing, I think that was Arnott Street, since then, I think I've sold three houses in Arnott Street and they've all called me when they were going to sell. There are a few streets in the area that I've been quite blessed with. So that was sort of my philosophy. And it was just following the processes that you taught me to do. So yeah, it worked.

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Sherrie:

Well, it sure does work, I think you're a great testament to this. I mean, it's easy for me to say, I know it works, but it's actually, you know, the proof is in the pudding and I think you're an exceptional example of literally going from zero to hero. So, I think, you know, just, just breaking this down, there's really good content in what you've just given us. The first part there, I think is talking about, you know, giving information, having this mindset, instead of just asking for a listing, which is unfortunately what most agents do, it's coming down to the mindset of, okay, well, I'm just calling you because I want to list your house, but actually that's not what this system is all about. It's actually around, hey, what service can I give to you?

Hey, you want to know about your new neighbors that are moving in. Let me tell you all about them. So, it's actually providing that kind of community environment. And only then at the end, can you actually then ask for business because you have actually edified yourself and you've actually, you know, your worth it then. So, I think that's really, really powerful. And I think the number of letters and the consistency of the letters is also important. You've talked about, you know, a couple of them there, but essentially you need to send out to just-listed the auction invite the under contract, the sold, and then the prospecting letter. So, I think that's key, SMS as you also talked about.

Jane:

In conjunction with that. So, it's a timing, it's a process. So, it's the SMS's the phone calls. It's all timing, so it's not all at once. It's sort of a day, a couple of days apart. So it's just follow up and it's just touchpoint touch point touch point so that you become a familiar name and if it's personalised the dialogue that we use, it's almost like you become a friend. It's really weird when you go down the street and people say, hi, Jane, and you go oooo hello, you don't know who they are.

Sherrie:

Well, that's essentially because you do dominate the marketplace by dominating the letterbox by dominating, you know, social media, I'm going to talk about this in a minute and also, you know, dominating, you know, literally when people see you face to face. So, talking about social media, one of the things that I saw that you embrace was, you know, working in doing the selfie videos. And you know, I talk with agents all over Australasia about doing selfie videos, but very few actually want to implement them because we all hate doing it, I'm no different to anyone else. But I remember you, embraced it, initially, you know, you fought me on everything. Do you remember? You just didn't believe in anything that I said to you, then everything that I was saying started to turn out right and you're just like, okay, I'll just do whatever you say Sherrie.

Jane:

I remember saying it, saying okay I'll just shut up from now on and I'll just do whatever you tell me to do.

Sherrie:

You do do these selfie videos very well. And I even see them, you know, today. And it's a part of your process now, when you're posting on social media, when you first list a property, you literally get out your phone and you do a quick selfie video letting everybody know about the listing.

Jane:

Under 30 seconds. So yeah, when I first started doing them, I look back on them now and I go, oh my goodness gracious. I have got better at them. But yeah, it's a lot of fun and they get engagement and people just see it. And again, it's providing information. So, it's, you know, the mindset that I took on is that I'm a providing service. You know, as soon as I felt like I was taking, I felt inauthentic. But when I felt like I was providing a service, you know, keeping people updated, I found it a lot easier to do.

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Sherrie:

And this is also something that you do and the system that you work in your business with leveraging listings, correct?

Jane:

Yes, it is, and just practicing being in front of the camera now on all of my listings, I make sure that I pushed really hard. I'm really upsell getting a deluxe video. And I've got to the point now where I think about it and plan it first. I've got a script in my head. I've got everything sorted out how I'm going to film it. And I kind of direct the camera as well. And I've been, I've been really happy with the last couple of months, some of the videos that I'm doing. And again, I have to say, thank you to you for getting me comfortable in front of the camera.

Sherrie:

Oh, you're a natural we'll know that you love it. You love it.

So, Karen, I mean, this is also a process that you work in your business with leveraging listings and sending out letters and SMS's and phone calls and so forth. Tell us about, tell us about what it is that you do.

Karen:

So, you got me immediately working on my brand. So, my profiles and all the major portals getting professional photos taken, eventually we got a professional profile video done, which I'm really happy with. So that was the first thing. And then of course then flowing that out onto Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter. So just really upping the ante with my social media. Look, I'm still not completely happy with what I'm doing. Sometimes I'll look at it and just think it looks like a dog's breakfast.

Sherrie:

But Karen, I have to interrupt you there because I think you are the person who is never happy, no matter how great everything is, but the results have been pretty astounding. And you know, we'll talk a little bit about building your profile and how actively we kind of do that. But yes, I was subtle as a sledgehammer in that first meeting, we'll talk about what I said to you. But coming back into, you know, the letters and the SMS's and the phone calls, you know, talk us through, Jane's just given us basically the processes. Now I know that your system is obviously relatively similar because it's the process that I have given you as well. But how do you feel that this has really helped in your business, especially given the fact that, you know, days on market are a little bit, bit shorter in your part of the world?

Karen:

Yeah. So for me, what I've really been doing is maximising the sale, or the sale result, because it's with that, that people can actually, it's like the case studies, they can see the results, they know it's happening. It's not just about a property being listed or that how many signs are up. It's actually, how many are actually getting sold and the days on market.

So, my days on market at the moment, we're about half the median days on market in Dubbo, which is great. So, pushing that through, if I sell an off market, anyone in my database, who's looking for a seller who's looking for a property at that level. I even send them out an SMS just saying, hey, look, just want to keep you updated with the market. Just letting you know this latest sale at whatever the address is, if you're still looking, let me know, because the thing is, some of those buyers are sellers themselves.

So, it's just a subtle way of, again, as Jane said, giving them information, helping them along their way, but also allowing them to see them actually getting the results. So, I'm actually, which may or may not be a good thing, but I'm selling about 30% of my properties off market now, simply because I'm working on those results and those buyers, maximizing the listings, people, vendors are seeing that to, see because we are still putting up the sold signs and I'm still putting it on social media. I'm still getting that message out there of that sale. So just trying to letterbox drop as many people as I can SMS as many people as I can talk to as

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many people as I can, particularly prospective vendors who live in the neighborhood, because it's important again, for them to know exactly what's going on, how the procedure's working, how the system's working and just working through that way.

So I think, look, there's a lot of ways we can get leads, generate leads, generate sales, but once you find a system that works, I think we just have to keep working the system because otherwise, what I do is because I'm an information junkie, I listened to a million podcasts and webinars, and in the end you go, oh, I should be doing this, you jump to the next shiny object. When in fact, if anyone was using your 51 point checklist, which I know you are offering with these podcasts, if they download that and work to that, I just can't understand why they wouldn't be able to increase their business because it works.

Sherrie:

Exactly right. And I think, you know, to me, it's just crazy that it's there for free and you know, go get it leverage it. Let's talk about this off market. And I'm so excited to hear you say about the 30%, and the fact that 30% of your sales right now are off market and it is a trend that we're seeing more and more. And I think that's because we're starting to really use and leverage our listings and utilise our database and our social media and having it all come together, which is a part of the process instead of it just being all three sort of standalone kind of buckets. But, you know, off-market, wasn't something that you did a lot of really two years ago, was it?

Karen:

No, not at all. So, it wasn't even something that I could even think of starting. And I really think that comes back to that, we just didn't work our database properly and we didn't have a clean database. So just even with your instructions, with the targeted Facebook audiences, obviously having that clean data in our database, collecting all of that information and then using it, it's nice as to have a database with all the details in there, but if we actually don't use it, it's really not effective. So, I was in constant contact with our buyers and our sellers. Now sending out the newsletters, sending out those SMS's is sending out the property updates, doing all of that. So then that way, when it does come time to those buyers, making a decision to sell their property or those even current potential vendors making a decision that I'm the one that they'll actually pick up the phone and call.

And it's not hard, like it's just a matter of doing it. I think that's what a lot of people become overwhelmed with it. And perhaps when they look at your 51-point checklist, they're going to going, oh my God, I don't do any of that. This is all too hard. But even if they just work on this, you get the systems going and get it all set up, it's just, it just becomes a habit. So, having said that, look, I'm not perfect. I'd like to say, yes, I'm doing it all perfectly, there's certainly things that I miss now and then, and particularly when I'm busy, things get lost. But I just know that I've got that to keep going back to, to get back on track. So, if I do really want to build traction, I just go back to that list and go, okay, I need to get back onto this.

Sherrie:

Awesome. Well said, well, that was a very good advertorial for me. Thank you so much Karen.

Karen:

And it's all from the heart let me say, anyone that's out there is going to say oh that was so set up, but it wasn't.

Sherrie:

Thank you darling, thank you.

Jane, you know, one of the other really big learnings that I saw for you quite early in our time in working together, was that there was also somebody else who was working with you in your team.

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And, you know, it's really interesting because we know that in order to, you know, to get more of your time back into, you know, basically be able to go away on holidays and to write more revenue, more GCI, we know that we need to have people in our businesses, but it's a matter of having the right people in the right roles at the right time.

Now, you know, I've talked a lot about the EBU's in the last couple of podcasts, and it's something that I'll continue to talk about. It's one of the themes that are running right through this series. But, you know, at the end of the day, the lead agent is the one who is really should be doing that dollar productive work. Now this particular person who came on board and who worked with you, was another dollar producing agent. So, take us to that time and take us to that learning and that journey and how it cost you a lot of money in essence.

Jane:

It costs me a lot of money. It sounded like a really great idea at the time. And the agent was lovely. I really, really liked him.

Sherrie:

Nothing personal.

Jane:

Nothing personal. So, where I work in Melbourne there's a big Chinese, you know, at that time, a big chunk of our buyers more than 50% were Chinese. And so, I had the feeling and it was just coming out of the end of the, up to the heat of the market in Melbourne up to 2012. And at that time, the majority of the buyers were, I'd say probably 80% of the buyers were Chinese and everyone's wanting that Chinese dollars.

So, I had the mindset and the belief that I needed a Chinese partner, a male older bit younger than me and this was a lovely guy, he had a very similar sort of demeanor to myself. We had a really good chemistry together, enlisting. Anyway, what basically what happened is dividing the workload, in terms of the admin really became quite difficult. And I found that I was doing the admin and still doing prospecting and I was getting burnt out and sharing. So, it wasn't actually increasing my income, my income was decreasing because I think we had a 50/50 split. Is that correct? Is that what we were doing? something like that.

And so, it wasn't financially viable, although, because I liked this person so much, it was very hard. I had a sense of obligation and I really wanted to make it work, but I had to have my eyes open because I'm heart based as well. And I really want to help everyone. You know, I didn't want to let him go. I didn't want to break the partnership that we had, but in order for me to get where I wanted to go, you made it very clear. And I see it now to get a PA which I did.

Sherrie:

But, I think, you know, this is such an important story and part of your journey, because I think, you know, we hear a lot about, we just need to make more sales. Well, sometimes making more sales is not actually going to end up making you more money. And what ends up happening is that yes, you might be listing more, but there's a trail behind you and you're not selling through them and you're not leveraging and taking advantage of the opportunity.

And in fact, you're actually burning people, burning buyers and burning sellers and the best person in, you know, in your business to actually make the phone calls and get face to face with people is actually you, because you're the person who actually has the most amount of experience in this. So incredibly powerful and, you know, also too, having that understanding of letting things go, I think that was the other thing that, you know, you quite liked doing the paperwork. Karen, I know you're another one for this too. And it was hard for you to kind of let this go and have the comfort of somebody else picking up the ball and rolling with it, which I know is something that you've taken care of now.

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Jane:

Secretly a perfectionist.

Sherrie:

I think most agents are to be frank and we're also control freaks. So, we're all same, same but different. But, you know, I really did admire you in terms of how you did step up, because it was very, very hard to have this conversation with somebody that you really loved that you saw value in, but the reality was that it just wasn't a match for your business at that particular time and the right role at that time. So, do you remember having that conversation and how difficult it was?

Jane:

No, I've completely blanked it out. It was really difficult. And I just followed your guidance because, I liked this person so much, it wasn't personal, but from the onset, the whole idea was about us working together and then getting a PA on and sharing the cost. But the irony is, is that we weren't generating enough income between the two of us to be able to do that. And so, where I wanted to go with my business, I wasn't getting there. So I had to make a choice about me, and so I think we just sat down and I tried to tell him, you know, this is not personal, it's just something that I have to do for myself.

Sherrie:

That's right, it's a business decision.

Jane:

Yes, it is clearly a business decision It's something I've got to do for me for where I want to go and took that leap of faith. And, you know, obviously the responsibility of putting someone on full time and paying them and, you know, it's like standing on the cliff and free falling.

Sherrie:

And I think what was also very interesting about this is that, you know, you wanted to come back and basically really kind of show the market who you were. And, you know, as a direct result of that, you thought having a team would also improve your presence in the marketplace. And there was a little bit of an ego around that. And so, it was kind of hard to drop that ego as well. And eventually the dollars and cents kind of took over. Right?

Jane:

I think for me, I felt that I needed a Chinese person, a Chinese male there to make my business grow. And I had to learn to trust myself in my ability. And the irony is, is that when I sat down, I tend to list better when I'm in the room on my own anyway.

Sherrie:

And we are going to talk about this in a minute, because I think this is a really good story to share actually.

Jane:

So it was, it was learning to trust in myself and you helped me to do that. So yeah.

Sherrie:

So, Karen, look, let's talk a little bit about building your profile and, you know, going back to me being subtle as a sledgehammer and I hope you don't mind me sharing this. I know, I've done it in a webinar, prior to, and thank you so much for your graciousness in this, but I think it's really important because, you know, I always talk about the fact that we're stuck in the eighties and in terms of technology, I think COVID is being great for leveling us up, but sometimes we just get so busy during the business that we actually forget to stop and actually have a look, okay, well, if our consumers are going to research us, what is it that they're going to be seeing?

And this was kind of like an eye opening moment for you in the fact that, you know, you, I guess essentially had been using the same profile picture and I remember saying to Karen,

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you know, you're this powerhouse woman you're very bright and bubbly and very vibrant, but I'm not getting that, you know, from your profile picture, I'm getting a secretary, I'm getting a mum, I'm getting somebody who's kind of mousy, not someone that can put in a couple of hundred thousand dollars' worth of, you know, somebody's investment into you. So, what really happened, you know, for you to kind of change on your social media because your social media was the other thing that we also talked about, do you remember?

Karen:

Yes, I had lots of fronts of houses.

Sherrie:

You did because, and, you know, to be fair in a lot of the homes that you sell in Dubbo look relatively similar. So, it all looks same same. And there was no Karen on social media, which is hilarious because you're the most lovable likable person, face to face. So, what did you actually, you talked before about doing photo shoots, I mean, how was that this is not something that you'd ever done before?

Karen:

No. So I rang up our photographer who does our house shoots. And I said, Wen I need a hand and she said, oh yeah sure, and I said, can you just take some photos of me? She went of you? I went yeah, just of me and she went oh yeah sure. I said, I just need them for marketing and things like that. She went, oh sure, it'll be fun. And it was, it was a really fun day and she came to my home and we took a lot of photos just around my home. And, and I did a couple little changes of outfits and things like that, and just developed a bank of photos, which has been really good. So that's only two years ago now. It seems like so much longer.

So, I've just been using those banks of photos. And then occasionally I'll just, if I'm at a photo shoot or something like that, I'll just say, Hey Wen, can you take a quick photo of me doing this or doing that. So, she'll just do some updates. So, it's actually been quite easy to update those photos, which is good. So, I'm actually going to take my own advice and do a few more. So that's been one way that I've been able to collate a bank of photos that I can actually use on my social media and my marketing. And then obviously I really love quotes. I'm big on quotes. I really like that whole positivity and things like that.

So, I thought, well, I'm just going to start incorporating quotes into my social media because that's who I'm about. And quite often I can sort of tie it in and give it a real estate slant. And then I'm following your enlightening comment about how boring my social media profile looked. I then actually added in photos of different rooms and things and rooms that I really liked. And then I hoped buyers would actually like and find appealing too. So, it's a lot more interesting now I'm also including particularly during the whole Covid time and with all the negative media news releases around us, I was trying to add some good news in because really here in our local area, things are chugging along really, really well.

So, all of the national media releases, which obviously primarily are targeted on the capital cities, we haven't had the same effects. So, trying to post lots of positive news, items, market updates and things like that. So, it's now quite varied. I still do my own social media. I am thinking of obviously getting someone. I think they can certainly do a better job of it than me because it's not my area of expertise, but it's certainly a lot better than what it was two years ago.

Sherrie:

I think the point that you make there about working your own social media is an incredibly important and powerful one because you know, social media is scary. We don't really know what we're doing. Well a lot of agents don't know what they are doing, but why it's so important is because you really need to harness your own voice. And this is probably one of the biggest fails that I see agents make, where they go, and they give it to a social media manager who makes completely corporate and tries to make it like the perfect real estate

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agent. And that's not at all relatable. Whereas I look at yours and even those photos, you're talking about, you know, there was one there with the dog and I mean, there's just, you, you know, you're a people person, you're a pet person, but I think, you know, that actually to me is very, very smart. Do you think leveling up your social media has made a difference in terms of, you know, the properties that you list and sell today?

Karen:

Absolutely. So just the return for my owners for a start, like I had definitely sold some properties as a result of my social media presence. Just potential purchasers keeping an eye on it, then messaging me directly with questions and things like that and also potential owners. They're keeping an eye on it too, because we posted the results, we show them what's happening. We're shown to be an expert and a specialist in the area where we're actually giving information and market updates, telling them how it is.

So I really think like, I don't know of any other medium where you can get messages out there, obviously yes, you can boost posts and pay for paid advertising and sponsored advertising, but for free just to have that platform and that opportunity to actually sell yourself there for free. You never know who's looking at it, what time of the day. So you're forever there and someone can just jump on whether or not it's midnight, midday, or like first thing in the morning just to see what's happening and as you said, just see what sort of person and what sort of agent and professional that we are.

Sherrie:

Well, the message is on mass, isn't it? Instead of basically picking up the phone and speaking to one person you're speaking to hundreds or thousands. But you know, in your marketplace, in Dubbo, the average sale price is \$365,000. So, you know, you are selling a lot of properties and the days on market are 60 days. And you mentioned yours is half that, so yours is literally 30 days. Now your bread and butter has always been kind of in this particular market segment, but you know, one of the movements that I've seen in your business is that you have been moving slowly into a higher price bracket. So, tell us about how you've done this and what price bracket you've sort of now actively been chasing?

Karen:

So again, it's like a before and after Sherrie thing, I just, initially I think it was just a confidence thing. I felt very comfortable in that \$300,000 to \$400,000 bracket as well, even up to \$500,000. It was my comfort zone. It was like my security blanket; I knew I could do it. I didn't need to stretch myself and just had a bit of a mental block or a limiting belief to that. Anything say five \$50,000 or \$60,000 and above in the double market was just going to be so much harder. And would I know what to say? Would I know what to do and which looking back and it's going well you just treat everyone exactly the same and every product is exactly the same, the \$600,000 plus properties might just have a few little different features to promote and to market. So initially it was definitely a confidence thing with me and a security thing.

And then of course then catching up with you and you highlighted it. I didn't even really realise that I was actually there to be quite honest. I was just, again, just in my own little comfort zone, trying to work out how to live my best life. And then you pointed that out. So that particular year when I started working with you, I had listed a home, which we then ended up going and selling for \$1,250,000 which was super exciting. So, I listed it and then my licensee in charge **Graeme Board**, and I both sold it together, to some people who lived out of town, beautiful people. And up until that point, I just am so grateful to that vendor who has actually become one of my good friends. And I've now sold her second property and I've then sold another property to her. And I'm just about to list another one.

So, she's gone on to be one of my greatest clients and a great friend. So, I'm so grateful for her just to see the potential in me and to have the confidence in me to list her home for sale. It was a very unique home in Dubbo. At that stage in 2018, it's the highest sale of an advertised property. There was another private sale a bit later on in the year, which was just slightly above that. But to have a sale at \$1,250,000, I think really just gave me a bit of a

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boost and a bit of a shakeup as well as what you were saying. And so now I would feel comfortable I think selling a property at any particular price point. I think it comes down to really knowing your product, whatever it is that you're selling. It doesn't matter if it's a \$200,000 unit or a \$1,250,000 home, you really do need to know your product. So, when someone asks you about the water or the land size or the zoning or whatever, anything the heating, the type of gas connection, you just need to be able to quote it straight up. So, I get so frustrated when I'm watching some agents,

If I go to another area and look at some open homes and people are asking them even just how much are the rates, or how big is the land? And they just don't even know those answers. So it's really important just to know our products and again, just treating our clients with, with care with understanding, with guidance, leading them, those people for me, in that upper end of the market are exactly the same as the people in the lower end of the market. They're just coming to us for expertise, for leadership guidance and especially for kindness as well. So, again, it really was just a change in my mindset, which has allowed me now to move up comfortably within that bracket.

Sherrie:

So I think know you said it very well, there, you totally are all over, you know, knowing the details and the nitty gritty of each individual home and, and literally being a service provider and not just somebody who stands at the front door when you're doing an inspection or an open home, but the second one was really your mindset. And actually having an understanding that you had a glass ceiling that you weren't even aware of and that the market, you know, because you were so almost kind of had the blinders on and were only focused on one segment of the market, didn't realise that there were others there.

Do you also think, I think this is a really important kind of you know, sale to talk about, because quite often it's just one sale that does change your mindset and does change, you know, your direction, your path and your career. This is certainly one of those, but you know, this vendor is then gone on to obviously sell a few properties with you. Now tell me, I mean, do you think that her publicly giving you great reviews has made a difference in your business as well?

Karen:

Yeah, look, I really believe in the power of reviews with getting feedback, it helps generate leads, it helps convert prospects, and helps obviously attract, attract clients. I really think that they can have a massive impact on your, on the business and the level of business that you're actually doing.

Not only that, the feedback also shows you how you're going, as far as your service, whether or not you need to make any adjustments. And also, it just helps you work out what your actual marketing message is, because it's funny, when you read back over your reviews, you can actually genuinely see a bit of a common theme.

So, and it's that common theme that the clients love about you. So, once you work out that common theme, it's really something that we should be pushing or promoting or using. So, yeah, reviews have been a big part of my business leading up until this point, so much so that I've just worked in collaboration with someone in another business and two other agents.

Sherrie:

You can mention them.

Karen:

Okay. So, myself and three others have just developed a platform as a way for agents to collect reviews over different areas, not just rate my agent, I love rate my agent. It's been great for me. I'm a rate my agent award winner. So, they're really great and they're doing great things and I'm very grateful that they offer that ability for vendors and buyers to get on there and provide reviews, but not all vendors and buyers are looking at just that one

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platform. So, you really need to have reviews across a variety of platforms. So we've developed an app, so to speak where agents just simply send out the link with an email or a text message or whatever the case may be to their buyers and their sellers, which then takes them to a variety of platforms where they can provide reviews, Facebook, Google, rate, my agent, real estate.com if they're on Yelp and things like that. So, it's just a great way. It's a very simple link. It looks nice and professional. Initially, we just get the feedback from the vendor and the buyer and a star rating. And if it's a negative rating, we then obviously get that review or that feedback. So, we can then act on that and fix it. And if it's a positive star rating, we then ask for the reviews to then whether or not they'd be happy to post a review on a selection of sites. Just last weekend, I sent the link out to one of my buyers and they ended up, I don't normally target buyers, but I'm just going to start because of course I'm a part of this development. I need to start using it. So just sent it out to the buyer and they ended up posting review on two different sites. It just blew me away.

To be able to easily collect those reviews, I think is a good thing. Mind you, it's not an automatic thing. You could perhaps put the link in with your CRMs with automatic messages and emails after exchange, but it's just a professional looking link, that enables people to click on it and go into this app. So then that way they can then get that feedback initially. So, they know whether or not they need to improve their performance, get the rating, and then of course then take them to those other directly to the agents, review sites. So anyway, can I mention the address for the link if anyone is interested?

Sherrie:
Absolutely.

Karen:
So per agent, it's only \$4.95 per month

Sherrie:
Doing the big sell, I love it.

Karen:
The cost of a cup of coffee. So, a month, it's \$4.95, and the website is **appraise-surveys.com** and all the information's there. It's extremely easy to sign up. Once you sign up Michael, who is our head guru, he will get everyone up and running and send the link. And then it's just in a matter of which I think it comes down to a lot of us in real estate. We just have to do it.

Sherrie:
That's exactly right. We have to implement it and we have to do it, but I think, you know, what's so great in addition to having this business. And we talked about the fact that you are a business owner previous in terms of, you know, having a share of **Bob Berry** real estate is the fact that, you know, sometimes as agents, we are constantly looking for the next thing and we often buy in or want to become partners in the brand that we work for because there's that emotional tag.

So, I love the fact that you're now branching out and finding other areas to actually fulfill your kind of business needs. But Jane, I think like Karen, you yourself have really built this kind of social media following, and you've built this brand within a brand and really hyped up your profile.

And, you know, I know that the both of you went in and you kind of created your own tiles, your own hashtag your own logos and you used, you know, **Lauren Dragosetti** from **Just Sayin Girl**, Hi Lauren, if you're listening. So, I know that this was something that was really key and really important, powerful to you. I mean, how hard was it to do this? It was an investment in yourself which you are obviously investing in other areas such as coaching, but how transformational do you feel like this was in your business?

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Jane:

Actually, it was a lot of fun. I have to say. It was a lot of fun. I really liked Lauren. She was a lot of fun to work with. And just spending time with her talking with her, I think she captured who I was, my flavour, my personality in terms of colors, just all of that. So, it was a lot of fun and she got things up and running relatively quickly. I was quite impressed with her. It wasn't hard to do at all, but then keeping it going after that, while I was at **Noel Jones** and with my PA, I just had my PA making the tiles regularly, doing quotes, doing all of that stuff. So, and we had a calendar that we followed so that there was content moving all the time. And then I'd slot in little videos here and there, but she had certain content. So it was, it was quite easy to implement.

Sherrie:

And I think, you know, talking about that calendar is really key because we're talking about the implementation, but it's actually about the planning and it is a really different skill set to plan to what it is to execute. And sometimes, you know, the lead agent is not necessarily the right person for that. Hence while we have great team members, but, you know, you would then use programs such as word swag to then build out the tiles once you kind of had the platform on them. So, it was really cost effective then sort of moving forward. And both of you love motivation quotes as do I, but besides these kind of physical changes that I saw, you know, happening on the outside in your business, on social media and having the results and so forth, there were other really big mindset changes that I saw happening here, Jane.

And one of which was that when we started working together, your confidence was quite low. You'd been knocked around quite heavily. And we've heard you talk about the fact that you felt that you needed to bring somebody else into listing presentations that you needed somebody else, because you just felt like you needed the crunch isn't the right word, but you felt like you weren't enough to basically provide the service. And at this time, you know, you were always taking somebody else within the business, if it wasn't, this agent with you on listing presentations. Now tell us about the journey from doing that to going out and doing listing presentations by yourself to gunning them and closing them, you know, 10 out of 10 times.

Jane:

Well, it's really interesting because I think with humans, our personality, I think, our confidence can change from time to time, depending on the experiences that we've had. So previous to my father and two best friends been diagnosed with cancer, I'm fiercely independent. I like to do things on my own. I didn't start as a PA in the industry. I just hit the ground running and said, I can do this. And so, I did it all on my own and was listing and selling and listing on my own to be honest. I had some really amazing mentors. They were all men and they were all fabulous. And then that happened and then the broken ankle, and then no one would list with me and it hit my confidence terribly. And so, when I started back with you, my confidence was still at an all-time low and it's human to do that.

I reflect back now, and I see that, but when you're in it, it's not that easy to see. So hence one of the reasons I hired you because I wanted to do real estate from heart, find myself, do it differently and learn to trust myself again. Although at the time I didn't know that that's what I needed to learn. Just because of the market and the area that I was in all of a sudden I had this belief and it was a completely false belief because my confidence was at an all-time low and at the time also on top of that, the director that had hired me had sold the business. So, I'd sort of lost my anchor so that if anything happened, I've had that anchor to go back to and I'd lost that. So a lot of stuff happened and you know what, when I, you know, I was terrified when you said to break the partnership, I knew it had to happen step up, we're going to build an EBU.

All of that. I was shitting myself. That is the absolute truth of it all. But when it happened and I went back in the door and I listed, and, you know, we worked on my listing presentation and just fine tuning it to my personality, what my elevator pitch was all of that, but just doing it

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from a natural place and responding to the connection, you know, really building in rapport, I'm very good at building rapport with my clients. I think that's why I list well, because I don't follow a formula necessarily in the listing presentation. I'm just reading them and it's like you go in together anyway. And then going back there and the first couple of listings, because I feel blessed, I'm really grateful that my appraisal, like an A appraisal to list has always been quite high.

But you forget that when your confidence is broken, when shit happens and then getting back in there and just doing it and then listing, it was like all of those false beliefs, like cross, cross bullshit. It's just a story that you've been telling yourself. And then you just get back in it and then your confidence builds and builds because my personality is actually really quite strong and independent. I can be extremely fierce but then I can be also very soft. And so, it's that polarity that plays out in personality and just, yeah, I couldn't have done it without you, huge thanks and I needed a guiding light to get me back on track.

Sherrie:

Well, you certainly were all there and you can certainly see that you've studied psychology. Because you do understand that incredibly well, but it really was these gradual, you know, small wins and these small steps and the building up of the GCI that really kind of changed the mindset. And I think sometimes when you're in a tough place to kind of see yourself out of it and it just starts really, really small with that one kind of first win and then it's kind of keeps going.

Jane:

And you've got no time to think about the stories that are going on in your head. You know you're busy and you just keep going, going, going, going. And people are ringing you which is a point I really wanted to sort of focus on in this conversation. Because I've heard Karen talking about it and you talking about it. It's about being a human; it's about treating people humanely. It's about providing a service being there constantly being there in their face. But as a way that we are giving, we're providing a service, we're providing information. I'm here for you, so that, you know, this is prospecting,

It's different from picking up the phone and going, you know, are you thinking of selling? It's, you know, are you thinking of making a move so that when it's time, it's a completely different form of prospecting. They just pick up the phone and they ring you. I listed one, two nights ago and it's a cracker. Everyone would want this listing Montel, but North 1200sqm, 22meter frontage, high side of the road views north facing backyard. And this is a reticent person I've known him, I've seen him, he tracks everyone. He comes to all of my units over the past five years. And I know that before I walked in the door, just because of our previous conversations, I had the listing and that's because I treated him like a human.

Sherrie:

I love what you say here, because essentially you went into that listing presentation, in pole position. It was yours to lose, not yours to win if that kind of makes sense. And I think, you know, it was also this story about being a human and removing this kind of perfect kind of notion of what a real estate agent is, where everyone hates real estate agents and doesn't trust them. And we know that because it happens time and time again, every single year when these kind of surveys come out, we're always at the bottom as the least trusted profession.

Jane:

We are going to change that.

Sherrie:

We are, we are all on a mission. But you know, I think it is also these moments, and you talk here about recognising how happy you made your buyers and your sellers by providing a service and being a human. And you know, I'll never forget this, that, you know, I remember one of your clients even gave you a Louis Vuitton bag, right?

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Jane:

Yes, they did!

Sherrie:

Beautiful! So, this is what really happens when you kind of trust yourself and you actually sit in your power. And as you say, Jane, and you talk about this a lot is that you really embrace the authentic, you trusted your intuition and stepped into your own power, correct?

Jane:

Correct. It's been amazing, and you know you still continue to have your ups and downs. And that is okay, but for me, I've got a sign at work, I'm at home at the moment, this is my kitchen dining living area. And it says, when I first started at **Fletchers**, everyone was like, what does that mean, Jane? And it says, are you home? And what that is, I see it, and I've got it in red and it reminds me to stay true to myself, stay in my core, stay authentic, stay me, because she can get so caught up in you know, all this other stuff and trying to be something. And I find when I'm me, when I'm me and I'm there for my client, whether it's a buyer, whether it's a seller, they'll feel safe. And when they feel safe and like Karen said, you know, where there are experts, we're there as experts to lead and to provide a service and to provide solutions and guide them along the way. And if we do that our business grows.

Sherrie:

Well, I love, I mean, we're all on the same path here. And I think that there are so many people in our industry who feel exactly the same way. We just need to be making more noise. And we are seeing that more and more, but you know, I'm really excited even about the rise conference this year. Because again, we're seeing a lot of other likeminded people like ourselves and like those that are listening who feel the same way, where we are actually not about transactional orientated and yes, it's important for us to make money and for us to achieve our goals. But it's actually about providing a service and getting, you know, heart feels as a result of that and enjoying our job. But, you know, Karen, I think there's a time, well, actually there's a time when you talked about, even you talked about it when we first, originally started this conversation where you had literally kind of worked yourself into the ground, you were sick and you had a lot of things kind of going on and you know, you essentially were trying to do everything and you're trying to please everybody. And I think this is very common for both men and for women, particularly when you're service providers, where you like to please people we are people pleasers, but this was a massive mindset shift for you actually stepping away from this. And, you know, I really want to ask you now, how difficult was this to acknowledge number one and to actually implement and to make changes around kind of dropping this and trying to step out of stress?

Karen:

So, I'm a workaholic, which I think again, most hardworking agents are, so I'm a workaholic, I have a very strong work ethic. And for quite some time, I was putting work first, which again, I look back on, my children obviously are hugely important to me. And that's one of the beauties of our industry is that we can work flexibly and we can go to school events and things like that, but then I'd get home and I'd still be working and working until quite late. And then of course, just trying to get some dinner for everyone. And yes, yes and trying to have quick conversations rather than actually stopping and listening and talking to them. So, they were really suffering. I know, obviously my health was suffering, some personal relationships with suffering and it wasn't until I think I got whacked on the head.

Well, first of all, in 2014, 15, I knew then that I couldn't keep going on. I just was unhappy. Basically. I was just really unhappy. I think there was Steve jobs in one of his Harvard addresses or something said that if you wake up every day, if this is your last day on earth and you were thinking, this isn't what I want to do. And if you have a lot of days like that, well you need to change. So that's how I was feeling back then. So that's when I took the year off, then coming into 2018, like, obviously I was sick. I had all these other signs around me that my life wasn't working, but I just felt that overwhelmed. I just had so much going on at that time and there's no time and I was busy with work and I was in demand, which, I mean, really, that's what we all aspire to as a real estate agent.

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We want to be in demand, and we want to be busy, but I think it's really important that we have, as you said, those systems and procedures in place and even boundaries in place. So then that way we can actually cope with it. So, obviously meeting you, as I said made a big difference to my business and personal life. And you helped me work through, it wasn't only the business things, but also some personal things too, which I'm really grateful for. You were just a great sounding board and mentor and sometimes too, we just need someone just to go, hey, is what I'm feeling okay and is this normal, and should I do this or should I do that? And is it wrong for me to do this? And so just someone just even to use as a sounding board, as well as a mentor, and then from then it was just really a gradual thing, although that you are pointing out to me again, very blatantly that I needed to start taking some time off.

And again, I was just that scared of losing control by taking time off, and then I wouldn't be able to keep up to and how can I do it, so, I took that month off and just even taking that month off was just again, enabling me to step back and get a clear head. So even to the point that this year already, this financial year, I've already had six weeks off and that's like, holidays, actually it's probably about seven weeks. And then the whole COVID thing, I've kept working through it and certainly kept up to date with clients and have touched base with clients. But I haven't really been pushing, I haven't been pushing anyone, obviously. I don't think now is the time to be pushing anyone but haven't been pushing myself either. I thought I'm just going to be kind to myself during this time too, and just be here at home in my tracksuit with my hair not done and work.

Sherrie:

Well that was one of the conversations that we had because I know that there had been a lot of talk in the industry and look, we're coming out of the disruption phase now, but there had been a lot of talk in the industry about, you know, really kind of getting into it and trying to do the virtual appraisals and trying to get people to list and list and sell, which is, you know, I don't think people are dummies and I think that the marketplace really knows what's going on. We don't need to treat them like they're simple and they're stupid. So, you know, this was a great time. And I know most of my agents that I work with, I just told everyone just chill out, like have a bit of a rest. And Jane we had the same conversation too, because it was an anxious kind of time and moment.

And you know, the agents who have done all of the hard work and the preparation over a number of years, in fact, I was even just speaking to Helen Austin from Toowoomba today about exactly this, you know, she's coming back fierce and fine in another regional city, because of the work that has been done, but it's been really nice to kind of have a bit of a rest and reevaluate and think what's important in life. And I love the fact that you've taken so much time off while still selling a huge amount of properties, you know, is a real testament to you. And it goes to show that you can actually have this balance in life if you are systematised and you're structured.

So, look, the two of you actually spoke last year at my women in real estate breakfast series, which was a huge monstrous experience, it kind of took on a life of its own, oh my gosh, I don't know that I'm signing up to do that again in a hurry. But you know, we had 1200 agents that, you know, that came throughout four different cities in four different States. Now, Karen, you spoke in Brisbane and Jane, you spoke in Melbourne and it was difficult because neither of you had spoken on stage before. And for me, you know, I really wanted to, you know, to highlight both of you. So, what was that experience like speaking for the first time?

Jane:

I loved it. It was an absolute buzz. And the topic that you gave me was something that was really, really close to my heart. So very easy to talk about. It was talking about women female auctioneers. Is there a role for them to play? Are they better than men or women? Of course, I think they're not. They're both bring two completely different things to the table and it's something that's an industry we can tap into depending on what client is there. So it was, it was a lot of fun. There were great people there that I was speaking with and getting to meet them was amazing. And it was a Segway for me to be invited to join the REIV auction chapter

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committee, which is a two-year post, which I started this year. So, I cannot thank you enough. That invitation would never have happened. So yeah, it was a buzz. It was a lot of fun, but I did, I prepped.

Sherrie:

And you did a great job actually, but you did all the hard work here and, you know, as a direct result of that, you're now doing other speaking, particularly at **Fletchers** you've had a number of different invitations and opportunities, haven't you?

Jane:

Yes, I've done a few speaking gigs for **Fletchers** now and I've done some videos for them. And, I'm really, really thankful, I've called auctions for other people before, but that was because someone else couldn't turn up and not this weekend, the following weekend is my very first auction that I've been actually invited to do because one of the agents, who doesn't call auctions at **Fletchers** asked me to do it!

I called an Auction a couple of weeks ago and that was terrifying for me, simply because it was the first Saturday that auctions had opened back up in Melbourne and with how legislation around Covid and the vendor was the top auctioneer for the Queensland Government for a number of years, he's auctioned everything, called like 5,000 auctions. And I said, why did you ask me, I'm terrified, but it went ok, it went pretty well, a lot of work managing only having 10 people there and all of that, but yeah. So, something that I love doing, I don't mind getting up in front of people and speaking, it's fun.

Sherrie:

Well you did do a great job and I know you really did prep very hard for that. And again, that's also where you invested your time and energy. And Karen, I mean, you really leverage this opportunity of, you know, building your profile and, you know, part of the reason why I invited you both was not only because I think that you're amazing women and I knew that you would do a good job, but also too, I wanted to help grow and build your profile and edify you in the industry and in your marketplaces. And Karen, you did a really good job leveraging this. Tell us exactly what you did?

Karen:

No, thank you again for the opportunity and it really did, I think add to our personal brand and our profile, it just really added so much credibility to who we are and that someone obviously of your stature would even ask us to participate in something like that. At capital cities with a lot of high performing elite agents both in the audience and on stage so that was incredible. So, I did that obviously via social media, also just letting my clients know. I also did a social media release too, which was great, which went out locally.

Sherrie:

A media release and then you had an article in the paper as, well didn't you?

Karen:

Yep, so we had an article in the local newspaper and we also put in an article into the domain real estate newspaper, which we have, which is like the insert where all of our listings, like the real estate newspaper in Dubbo. So, that in itself. So, then I actually would have people coming up to me in the street and going, wow, congratulations. And isn't this great. And some of them, I didn't even know, but again, it's that whole photo. You just don't know who's looking when they're looking, who they're talking to. So, yeah, it was pretty special. Like, it was really nice just for people to stop and say hello and, recognise me and to congratulate me and then afterwards ask me how it went. So, yeah, it was a really big deal for a country girl to go on stage with those industry greats.

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Sherrie:

Well, you did do a good job. And I mean, there were heavyweights, so pretty big deal. So, Karen, you were up against people like **John Cunningham**, **Dane Atherton**, **Suzannah Toop**. I mean, it was pretty hardcore, **Andrew Coronis**, who I caught up with yesterday, he's such a machine. So, you know, there were big, heavy hitters on there and you really did hold your own, but afterwards you kind of had a bit of a moment, because I thought you did brilliantly, but can we just like talk honestly for a moment, you did have a moment afterwards. right?

Karen:

I had a moment the whole day I was suffering from imposter syndrome. The minute I woke up that day, I'm in my head, like, what is Sherrie thinking? What am I doing this for, I can't believe this, and I was so determined not to use notes because I wanted you to be proud of me. So I purposely didn't read the notes. And then of course, then at the end of it, I'm like, I didn't say everything I wanted to say and why didn't I say this? And I could've said this better. And my inner critic just went crazy. So, I was just feeling really inadequate and insecure and mind you, all these industry greats that we're talking about, they're beautiful people like John Cunningham, honestly, you couldn't find a nicer person could you? Like, he's just a gem. So, and **Suzannah Toop** is beautiful. Like they were all gorgeous. So, obviously no one had any idea that I'm just bashing my head against a brick wall.

Sherrie:

You hid it very well.

Karen:

I'm bashing myself and ended up getting myself a migraine. And then I went up to say goodbye to you. And like, you'd had a massive day yourself. And I went, oh my God, I've just got to go, I'm so unhappy with how I spoke, and I wish I had done this and done this. And then you were like whaaaaaat!!

Sherrie:

Can I just tell you, to this day, people still talk about you on that stage.

Karen:

Oh, well thank you for saying that and thank you to them for saying that, but I think again, it's been a really good learning opportunity, obviously for me in a number of ways, firstly, just to have that like mini breakdown or anxiety attack and just to even feel that sort of insecurity, honestly, our vendors must feel that way. Every time we go to list a property, like they're going through that same emotion. So I can generally, I can certainly empathise with their concerns and their insecurities and all that sort of thing. But also, to, when I looked back, because of course, even after I left there, my inner critics going crazy, like why did you feel that way? But I think it's because we care, like when we genuinely care about getting a result and doing a good job, that's why we do well. It's because we care so much. So, I've learnt now that when my inner critic starts to click in, I can just go, yeah, well that's because you care, Karen, it's not so bad, settle down, take a breath. And then of course, then you asked me to speak in Sydney.

Sherrie:

I think that this is important, and I have to just sort of say here that, you know, a lot of agents who do speak on the stage are very uncomfortable around it because this is not what we do for a living. We actually list sell, negotiate and market homes. So suddenly speaking in front of a whole lot of people, and especially peers that are judging you is very, very daunting. So I think it is, you know, whilst it's something that we aspire to, while it's something that we can use to really build our profile and our brand to create attraction businesses and become power agents is also something that is extremely scary. And I think this second opportunity of you speaking in Sydney, I mean, how did you feel about getting on that stage? Because you introduced me in Sydney. So, how did you feel about that second time around?

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Karen:

I was just in a completely different mindset going into it. Like I was still nervous, and I think if someone says that they're not nervous again, that shows that they don't care. So, I was certainly still very nervous, but I was more, I was very determined. I knew what I was going to say and nothing was going to stop me from saying it, like, I knew what the game plan was and I think to because honestly your events are like nothing I've ever been to before. Like I was honestly like a deer in headlights of Brisbane just, everything, the champagne, everything was amazing. So not that I drank anything because my mouth what that dry I couldn't, it's just, it's incredible. It's beautiful. Your events besides being enlightening and informing and educating, they're actually beautiful as well. So, I certainly felt like a fish out of water at Brisbane, but by the time I got to Sydney, which again, wow, that venue at the Ivy was incredible to.

Sherrie:

And the balloons by **Fancy Schmancy**, do you remember how beautiful the balloons were cascading up that staircase? Oh my God. Hi Kady, by the way, another one of my coaching clients.

Karen:

Gorgeous, great job. So, I think walking into it, I knew more of what to expect. I had prepared and prepared and again, it was just that different mindset. And because I'd already talked to myself and obviously, just to try and get that inner critic under control, by the time I actually got up there on stage in Sydney, I was ready to roll. So, and I wanted to prove myself and I wanted to prove it to myself to, like going outside my comfort zone and proving to myself that I could do it comfortably. So, I was really grateful for that opportunity for me, personally, to prove it to myself, but obviously also to just to show everyone else that I could do it as well.

Sherrie:

Well, you did do a very good job. And, you know, as I said, I thought you did a remarkable job in Brisbane. And I think all of us, at some point, you know, do suffer from imposter syndrome, myself included, but, you know, in Sydney, I had two people that directly came up to me afterwards. And both, you know, I don't know if I've shared this with you, I think I may have, but you know, **Leanne Pilkington** came up and just, you know, really sang your praises and **Thomas McGlynn**, and they were like, this is a regional agent who has never spoken on stage, except for this one other occasion. Like, just so you know, really in yourself. I hope that there's many more opportunities for you, Karen, because I really think that you are such a remarkable agent and your story about being a regional agent, just because you're from Dubbo, you don't always have the same opportunities that the capital city agents have. So, I really hope that you do get a few more because you are a brilliant speaker. And I think you've got a really important voice.

Karen:

Thank you. And thank you to **Leanne** and **Thomas**, so that is so kind of them. And I have actually spoken with Leanne since too.

Sherrie:

Yes, great opportunity in that one there. But I think, you know, the two of you have really been on a journey over the last couple of years, and now are at different points where you're looking differently at your life, where you've gone from, okay, I want to build my best life. And I don't know that anyone can ever say I've 110% built my perfect ideal life. Even my life, I must admit, it's pretty good, but there's still one thing that's not quite right. I know you two know what I'm talking about with having a family, but, you know, you're both now looking with a different set of eyes in terms of your lives and your careers. What's next for, the, both of you, Jane, let's start with you. What's next, you know, in terms of building your best life, both in your career and externally?

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Jane:

Getting through COVID in Melbourne, getting through covid in Melbourne, successfully at the moment while keeping everyone's mental health, I've got five kids working from home, keeping everyone's mental health. So, keeping my business chugging along, I think Melbourne's been, it's quite tough here getting listings at the moment. So, I want to be able to, that's my focus right through until sort of spring. I think spring business is going to take care of itself. I've got a feeling there's going to be a lot of listings come spring, but in the meantime, it's about focusing, making sure that my family's healthy and happy. My boss's healthy and happy. My husband's healthy and happy and just getting right through and, and I'm healthy and happy. So, yeah, that's my focus right now.

Sherrie:

Love it. And what about you, Karen? What's, what's are you sort of looking forward to, you know, more so in the future?

Karen:

So, I think, my journey to this point has actually probably given me more confidence to actually say no more often I was never one to say no, so I was the yes girl, even in the office. Yes, I can help. Yes. I can do that. Although I haven't really been doing that so much this last year or so, because I've been so busy, but, I just find by being the yes person, you do get swamped, and there's only so much time and so many things that you can do. So just putting stricter limits on my time and you noticed it, I think at the end of last year, Sherrie actually put up a post to say that my books were closed for the end of last year, because I knew I'd reached that limit where if I took on any more listings, there was no way that I was going to be able to firstly, take time off over Christmas and also cope and be able to give my clients the service that they deserved. So, I'm actually going to continue doing that. Just once I get to a particular limit, I'm just actually going to say, look, I'm sorry, in order for me to give you the service that you deserve, I'm actually booked out at the moment. If you'd like to wait, how many weeks I'd love to help you then.

Sherrie:

And are you finding people are waiting for you?

Karen:

They are, which is again, I was going to say, which is surprising, but I think I've just come to the point now again, which started with you encouraging me to take time off, because I just really had that, I suppose that lack mentality, I was scared and fear mentality that I was scared that if I took time off and everyone saw that I wasn't working, even taking a day off, like now I take a day off, like who would have thought like before that gee whiz, and it hasn't made any difference at all to my bottom line,

Sherrie:

If anything, your impact is so much greater, really because you're taking time off and quite a bit of it. You've had weeks off as you've said this financial year, and you're still writing the business, you know, and I think it does come as an industry. We do have this kind of guilt and this kind of fear of loss and losing a listing and losing a sale, but people will wait when you actually have demonstrated your quality of human being, but also quality and professionalism as an agent. So, you know, it truly is a Testament to you.

Karen:

Thank you.

Sherrie:

So look ladies, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast today and for sharing with us, how you have really been working towards building your best life and how you are doing that. If people want to follow and continue following your journeys, where will they find you?
Karen?

SHERRIE STOROR

Karen:

So, I'm on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. So, if they just search for Karen Chant or Karen Chant Real Estate, they'll be sure to find me there's not many Karen Chants around.

Sherrie:

Awesome, and Jane?

Jane:

Same thing on Instagram, Facebook, I've got a Facebook page and also on LinkedIn Jane Caulfield Real Estate, or just search Jane Caulfield.

Sherrie:

Love it, ladies. Thank you so much for joining us today on the podcast.

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