

# SHERRIE STOROR

## Ep.18 | How a Million Dollar Agent overcomes adversity

### Show Guests:

**Melita Bell** –REMAX Success Toowoomba

### Overview:

Are you facing a challenging time in your life? Are you wondering how you can still succeed in adversity? Have you wondered what the impact of having a high performing successful real estate career can have?

Today we have a very special guest, million-dollar agent Melita Bell from REMAX Success. In this episode, Melita shares with not only the highs of becoming a million-dollar agent, but the sacrifices she has had to make and challenges she has battled.

This episode is an extremely vulnerable one, if you are experiencing adversity and wondering how you can move through it, today's episode is one that will inspire you.

### 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 partnered with RateMyAgent on 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

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### Sherrie:

Hello, and welcome to episode eighteen (18) of the Build Your Best Life podcast series.

Let's get into today's episode and it's a biggie. It's something I'm hugely passionate about because this is a topic that we don't very often talk about. We talk so much about what it takes to become a million-dollar agent, but very rarely do we talk about the cost of this.

And Melita Bell, who is today's special guest is very bravely doing exactly that. So, let me tell you a little bit about Melita. Firstly, she is the number one agent for Remax in all of Australia when it comes to volume. She's ranked worldwide out of 125,000 agents, number 18 so this woman is truly a powerhouse. She's an in-demand speaker, you may have heard her on that AREC stage. She's one of my one on one coaching clients and she lives just outside of Toowoomba on what, 48 acres in Murphy's Creek in Southeast Queensland with her husband and her son Malakai.

So Melita, welcome to the Build Your Best Life podcast.

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**Melita:**

Thank you for inviting me.

**Sherrie:**

I absolutely loved that your you're here. But look, firstly, I must congratulate you because you have just taken home this massive accolade and have been awarded number one for all of REMAX for 2019 for volume, right? So how many properties did you actually sell last year?

**Melita:**

117, that's a lot of homes!

**Sherrie:**

It's not even just being number one in Australia for volume, which is a huge accolade, congratulations. Looking globally at the network for REMAX, which is a huge business, I think there's over 125,000 agents, you guys and you and your team have crowned what number 18 about 18 weeks.

**Melita:**

Yep 18 and now I'm like how I get under that.

**Sherrie:**

This to me is pretty, pretty huge because if you look in Toowoomba what's your average sale price?

**Melita:**

\$350,000

**Sherrie:**

So, I mean, that's a lot of transactions to be running that through. And you've been consistently sort of doing this sort of number over a number of years now. So, today we're going to talk a little bit around what that takes to become a million-dollar sort of writer. So last year you wrote \$1,000,050?

**Melita:**

Yes, that's right.

**Sherrie:**

And the year before you've sort of been writing around that million dollars or just under or just over. So, you've always been consistent at around that, that level. But I guess I was trying to remember where we actually met and I know we were talking about this earlier, I know that we've sort of connected, I think we worked out, it was Facebook?

**Melita:**

Yes, I think I was Facebook stalking you.

**Sherrie:**

Probably vice versa, but we just became Facebook friends and connected in that way when I was working as an agent too. And then I think we actually met at AREC. Did we meet for the first time at AREC?

**Melita:**

Yes, we did.

**Sherrie:**

Yes, we did before you went up on that stage and then we had dinner and we've connected and kept in contact over the years. But I have been loving working with you. So, we started late last year, but today I wanted to hit the rewind button. Talk a little bit about your journey throughout real estate and how you sort of got into the business. So, tell us all about that.

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**Melita:**

So, I started off as a PA actually for a \$1,000,000 performer in Ipswich. I was her PA for about seven years. So, I learnt from \$1,000,000 performer and practically how I am today. That's how she is, just extremely easy going, we just did our own thing.

**Sherrie:**

And so what happened because you were in Ipswich for seven years working in real estate and then you basically decided to move to Toowoomba, you were getting married.

**Melita:**

Yeah, I was like oh, I'm just going to go to Toowoomba, get married and I didn't want to do real estate anymore.

**Sherrie:**

You're like, nah, I'm too old for this. Which you weren't, how old were you at the time?

**Melita:**

I was only in my early thirties. So then I worked for an employment agency for 12 months and we went to go put one of our houses in Toowoomba on the market and I rang quite a few real estate agents, believe it or not, and only one showed up and I thought one showed up out of four. Gosh. So, I thought, okay, this to me there was a gap missing in the Toowoomba market. So, I thought, why not? Let's just go back into it and see what happens. I knew no one, so I was either going to sink or swim.

**Sherrie:**

Wow. So that's pretty groundbreaking sort of stuff. And I think you talked to a lot of people and they, you asked them, why did you get into real estate? And they'll say either to make money or because they felt that they could do it better. So, which is quite interesting. So, after joining House, you were there for what, four or five years, tell us about this time because you did some pretty remarkable things in the business. And I think there was one year that you wrote 1.1million and it was just you and a PA, so I can't imagine the hours that you're working.

**Melita:**

We're working a lot of hours, but it was fun. I mean this job doesn't feel like a job some days, other days it does. But I think if you have a really good support team, I think that's a big thing that you just love coming to work because it just feels like they're part of your family, so you're at home and just doing your own thing.

**Sherrie:**

Well, one of the things that I know you've talked about this, this time with me is just the energy that you kind of had in the marketplace and it was kind of this fresh approach in Toowoomba and you kind of sort of shook things up a little bit. So, tell me more about that.

**Melita:**

Oh, I think Toowoomba is very much older generation, which is fantastic, like there's so many beautiful people in Toowoomba because we're obviously a rural community. So, we have a lot of farms and out of suburbs that we deal with. So, it was just good to get that interaction with all new people. And when we came, all our clients, when we turned up and had energy, I remember going to a farm in heels and he just cracked himself laughing. So, then I was known for turning up to rural property in heels. So just doing a little thing, just having energy and just bringing new marketing and new social media marketing is a big thing. So, so a fresh approach.

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## **Sherrie:**

So you've now been at REMAX for the last four years and I mean, obviously things are continuing going from strength to strength, but looking over this period, there's now been five years where you have been \$1 million writer. What do you think it's driven you to kind of want to achieve this million-dollar kind of big ah ha that we have in real estate?

## **Melita:**

I never thought I'd ever be a million-dollar performer and sometimes it's not all cracked up to, what the big hype that people think it is. But I just, I think the day that you don't want to be \$1 million performer and you're just doing it because you love your job and you love, meeting people and hearing their stories and why they want to move onto their next adventure or they've had heartache throughout their time in the home. So, it's just, I don't know, I just like helping people, so I don't even look at the numbers. I don't even know how many numbers I write until my boss comes and tells me.

## **Sherrie:**

Well, look, this is certainly one of the things that we're going to be changing in our work together because it's all about accountability and tracking. But I, and I think it's, it is really about knowing the numbers, but there's a lot of agents out there where we're literally just head down, bum up doing the deals. And it really comes that power in terms of competing with yourself is where we really start to drive forward. Because, in a town like Toowoomba and there's actually a lot of great agents in Toowoomba actually, right? Another one of my coaching clients, **Helen Austin**. Hi Helen if you are listening! But certainly there's a lot of great performers, but I think when we moved back in, back into looking at this kind of, keeping yourself accountable but also keeping competitive within yourself, I think is incredibly powerful because it's so easy to get caught up in the noise, but it's actually about improving and bettering yourself quarter after quarter, year on year. And it's not always about the figures about bettering yourself. Sometimes it's about, okay, well I actually want to put this project into place or this template or I actually want to put systems and processes in place in order to take time off, so it's different for everyone. But let's face it, we are an industry that's driven by figures. So quite often it's about that, so tell us honestly, what has it, what has it really taken to be number one?

## **Melita:**

A lot of sacrifice, being a mum as well and my son's only seven, so I've had to miss out on a lot, from sports days to first days of school. So, I'm very lucky I've got a great family support behind me that can actually take over when I'm not there. But I've had many countless nights driving home crying thinking, what the hell am I doing? Because I've put other people first before my own family and that's okay, sometimes I'm not saying it's not okay, but I don't think sometimes people realise when you've got other responsibilities at home, especially children, it does really hurt when you miss out on a lot of stuff. So yeah, it's not all the glitz and glamour that people believe it is. It's only really what people want to see sometimes, I think.

## **Sherrie:**

This is such an important, powerful message and I just want to take a moment to acknowledge the openness that, we've sort of discussed that we're going to be talking about today because it is so easy just to stand up on that stage and say, Hey, listen, I'm the King or I'm the queen and everything is fantastic, but no one really does understand those sacrifices that you need to make. And it is different if you're doing average sale price of \$350K opposed to \$3 million. Like you don't need to do as many transactions if you're in a, in a larger sort of Metro area. So that just means that you need to work harder and you need to pump through the volume in order to achieve that. but it means more hours. So, something has to give. And this message that you're talking about here is incredibly powerful because it's not just about families or whether you'd be male or female or whatever your gender is. It's actually sometimes even about sacrificing yourself. sacrificing time with others. I think it's very commendable that we're talking about this today. So, thank you so much for

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that. But over the last, couple of years, how many days a week have you been working?

**Melita:**

Probably the last 12 months has been a little bit different due to health reasons. But before then it'd be nothing for me to work seven days a week, every week, 80 hours a week to build the business. So, a lot of sacrifices cause my son was only quite young when I really started to build the business up.

**Sherrie:**

Well let's talk about some of these costs and these sort of sacrifices because I think that this is again, something that's very imperative that we talk about and particularly, it is hard if you are a woman in this industry because at the end of the day you're still a mum so you want to be there with your child and you're still nursing a child. So, let's talk about some of these costs. And I know you've said to me that you were back at work literally two weeks after having a baby. So, I mean that is just jaw dropping like crazy. Why did you do that? Can I ask you honestly why did you do that?

**Melita:**

My nature is I don't like letting anyone down. So that was a big thing for me to learn that it's okay to say no and to take time out for me. And that's probably, I've learnt that probably since I've met you in December. But it's okay to say no and I'm very hard on myself like that because I don't like letting anyone down. And I'd get up early in the morning and get Malakai all organised and then off he went to mum and dads. And I sacrificed a lot, it hurts when I talk about it.

**Sherrie:**

And I think, it's this kind of message that we need to talk about because we might be seeing people that are saying, I want to be like Melita and I want to write \$1,000,000, but really, it's important that we talk about, yes, that's fantastic and there's been lots of financial gain and other rewards, but there's also a downside to that. And so, I think it's important that we talk about this because it's never really spoken about. It's always swept under the carpet. So, I think that's huge. You were mentioning the other day, you didn't even have time to really look after your own self and eating dinner or during the day it was going through a drive through.

**Melita:**

Just going through a drive thru because that's all you had time to do. So, I put on a fair bit of weight, but yeah, they're just things that you forget about. Thank goodness for my mum and dad because half the time I'd call around and my washing and ironing was done, and they'd have a nice meal cooked for me in the evening. Without them I wouldn't, I honestly wouldn't be where I am today.

**Sherrie:**

Which I think is pretty exceptional that you've got them there. But not everybody has that. And again, what we've sort of talked a lot about is the fact that you're always putting, the listings first so to speak instead of you and your family. And there is a way to do both. But again, it's about that accountability and having the systems and structures so that you're able to do that. But it's also really been about your health and we're going to, we're going to talk about this a little bit later on, but also, your husband has had some health issues and today we also want to talk about overcoming adversity and issues that have sort of popped up. So, tell us about the time in your life where your husband had a car accident.

**Melita:**

My husband had a car accident with our son in the car which then we found out that from that car accident he actually had cancer. So, it was a lot of rushing down to Brisbane to have open

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heart surgery and then chemotherapy for six months after that and you still have to run your business and it is hard for me to speak about it because none of my clients would have even known that there was anything going on in my life. So yeah, so it was a really horrific time because I'm watching someone with cancer and you think chemo is good but the things that come out of their body and then you're trying to run a business and, and look after a small child and then making sure that they're okay with what they're seeing as well, cause it's really big for a five year old at the time to take all that in. That this is what was happening to his life.

**Sherrie:**

Well there's a lot of stability issues then afterwards because they always sort of feel quite concerned about is mum or dad going to be around, they're worried about their health.

**Melita:**

Absolutely. And he still brings it up today. So, it does play on their mind.

**Sherrie:**

So, I think what's so interesting because essentially you would have had a choice to make, I mean cancer is not something that you beat in two weeks. It's literally a journey. And talking about operating the business, whilst this was still all going on, I mean, what did you do with listing presentations and so forth?

**Melita:**

So, I remember we had a hotel here in Brisbane while he was staying here, getting all the treatment and open-heart surgery. So, I was doing a lot of work from obviously the hotel and then I drive back to do listing presentations and negotiate contracts.

**Sherrie:**

All the while your husband's having chemo.

**Melita:**

Yeah

**Sherrie:**

Gosh! And it's so interesting because I know I've also been on a similar journey in the fact that I've always put other people before myself first. And I think we actually do a lot of that as service providers, whether you'd be male or female. I think women do have a tendency to do it a little bit more because of how we're culturally raised. And it's really hard to not want to let people down, especially if they sign that paperwork and they've made a commitment to you. They're going through really tough emotional time and you don't want to tell them, hey listen, this is actually what's happening in my life. Because then they want might want to go and list with your competition and you're like, I need the money to pay for all what's happening. So, it's a really difficult thing to sort of balance and, and to kind of work out. And I think, it's not just about how you manage it, the day to day and being strong for your family and sort of putting on this brave facade and then walking into the office and pretending everything's fine. But really, behind the scenes I bet everything's kind of feeling a bit of a mess. I'm sure there are lots of times where you're probably driving in the car. That was always my solace. Whenever I get, when I'm going through difficult times, I'll be in the car and there'll be tears and I think the shower is another great place, as soon as you close that door or get out of the car, it's like that's done and it and it's like go time again.

And real estate, it's very much like that. We are putting on a show and a performance, whether it be a listing presentation or an open home. And I think you need to have that ability to be able to separate yourself and to see yourself almost as a product. And a service in order to get by. Is that what you feel?

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**Melita:**

Absolutely, you've just got to learn to switch on and off at the, at the right time.

**Sherrie:**

So it's interesting because we've talked here that the costs, you've had issues with your, your family and you've continued working through it. That you've spent a lot of time and energy working. Then you've had a lot of weight, weight gain and you haven't really prioritized yourself. But you've also had some health issues.

And I remember it's about 18 months ago now and I saw you post on social media about having a melanoma and having it cut out and I think I called you and we hadn't really spoken much before this and I just, even now talking about it, I just am still feeling how I felt at that moment when I saw that post. But essentially you were sort of saying that you have prioritised you, you saw this for a little while, but you did nothing about it.

**Melita:**

Yea, I saw it for about 2 years, and I thought, Oh, it's just a little pimple or Freckle or something like that. But deep down, that there's something wrong, but you just, I probably made about five doctor's appointments. I won't lie. And I canceled them because the listing presentation come up or a contract negotiation came up. And it wasn't until I went to the doctor and she said, Melita, we need to biopsy that and it came back that hey you need to get it removed. And it might've been a little dot on my face, but it was actually a 50 cent, something growing underneath my skin that I had to get removed in my forehead, which was really, really panicky because you're thinking, Oh my goodness, it's on my face. So, now I found, found an awesome surgeon up in Toowoomba and he took a lot of care for me cause he wanted to do a lot of skin grafts and everything, but because I'm in the public eye, he worked it all out for me.

**Sherrie:**

Yeah, you look totally stunning now. But I think, what's really interesting here, and I see this happen all the time, you didn't prioritise yourself or your health because you're basically, we're too busy, needing to do the transactions and to write the volume to be the million-dollar agent that you'd heard that you needed to be. So, I think, I then came up to Toowoomba and I was invited to speak, in fact, I think real estate.com actually arranged that and Daniel and Katie asked me along and there was actually really special dinner on that night before, which was really cool. I felt, I felt like a superstar and we were sitting side by side and we're just talking about this this moment and you were telling me about your health and you were just sort of saying, how concerned you are, how concerned you are about the weight gain and literally, after that, that time I think, you had said, okay Sherrie, let's do coaching. And you'd signed up to do it, to do it twice, and the whole purpose behind that was slowing down and putting systems and structures so you could have time out. But of course, when the time came, you're too busy to do the coaching and you'd cancel. But something actually pretty big has happened in your life, hasn't it? Do you want to talk about?

**Melita:**

So last April I went to get out of bed to get Melnikov ready for school and I lost full movement in my right side of my body. So I got rushed to hospital and they thought that I may have had a stroke, which at 40 is not very, very good and then after lots more tests, lots and lots more tests, it came back that I was actually diagnosed with MS.

**Sherrie:**

So that's pretty massive. So, people who don't know what MS is, can you just fill us in?

**Melita:**

So MS is when you can have lesions on your brain or on your spine, which can actually stop movement of your body and everyone with MS is completely different. My lesion is at the top of my neck, which actually controls the movement of my legs. So, when it gets extremely hot, or extremely cold, I can have problems with moving my body which is not very good when you're in real estate. So, I've had to really take a step back and just before I got diagnosed

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with MS, I actually put on my third staff member. So, it actually to me was meant to be at that particular time. But it does mean a lot of reduced hours and that's where now I've got you on board to help me actually implement that and do a lot less hours. So, my role mainly is just obviously listing properties because I'm restricted with, how many hours that I actually can do and I'm not going to sacrifice my body for that. I'm very open with my clients now about it.

**Sherrie:**

So, so proud of you for even just making that statement.

**Melita:**

But I really wanted to put out there that even though you do have a disability that you can, , still work, but if you prioritise and do things a lot differently. So, I don't do anywhere near the hours that I did and some days I cannot work, in extreme heat, I just physically cannot walk out that front door. Otherwise I know I'm going to have a problem, um, driving a vehicle and I won't put my son in that situation or myself, so health's first. Cause what I do now is going to affect me in 10 years' time.

**Sherrie:**

That's exactly right. And I know that your family has been telling you to stop for quite some time. Absolutely. Your husband's been telling you to stop. Yes. Everyone else has been telling you to stop, including the universe. But it literally has taken this moment to make it, to make a change. Absolutely. And I love what you're saying there about, the disabilities, because I think this is something, we don't really talk a lot about in the real estate industry. I think the big topic has really been about gender in most recent times, but there are also people who, are colorblind and like that would affect you in marketing but actually then also have physical disabilities to, which is what we're talking about here.

But I think, when we're, when we're having a look at this and breaking it down, it's not just people who are going through something like you are to actually say, Hey listen, I can prioritize myself so that this situation doesn't occur, because in this industry for such a long time it's been all about this kind of burden turn kind of mentality. And it's all about this million-dollar writer. But what is the cost of that? Because you might be able to write that for two, three, four, five plus years. But there is a toll on it, and we need to be talking about this longevity. And interestingly enough, what you're talking about now with putting somebody else on and what you're talking about, in terms of going out and doing listings and that's all you do, that actually should be what happens in an EBU and very truthfully and honestly with this kind of volume that you're writing, it's not normal to be working 80 hours a week and, and not many people really do that. So, we've got to put the systems and the structures in order to maintain and make that happen. So, I think with the EBU, before this had occurred, you obviously were on that track and part of that was that you wanted freedom, that you wanted profitability and then your health came along. And that was certainly a pretty big motivator.

So, let's break this down and let's talk a little bit about, about your team. Because you've, you've had a PA for a number of years, so you're really comfortable with the PA and yet in actual fact, the volume in which you, you write and how you've worked, essentially, I would even think that your PA's are suffering from some burnout from time to time, which, look, I have to say the way that I previously have worked is also the case. And again, this is actually been talked about with a number of agents in this podcast series with EBU's about actually really loving our support staff and what we can do to make sure that they're not overworked so that they stay with us instead of burning out. So, I think that that's important. So, tell us about your team.

**Melita:**

So, I've got two staff members. I've got an administration PA who does all the behind the scenes, social media, my beautiful glossy brochures, all my marketing and she's just fantastic. So, and then I also have a buyer's manager who constantly runs buyers. So that's why I can sell a lot of offline properties because we've just got such a big database of buyers that we can look at so she comes and looks at the properties with me and then tries to match



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up the buyer before we even hit the open market. I was scared to put on the third person because you can write say, oh wow, I'm a million-dollar performer, but I can tell you now, you do not see \$1,000,000.

## **Sherrie:**

And we are going to get to the profitability part, because I think, again, this is something else that's massive and again, I thank you for being so open and honest about it. But coming, coming back to operating in a team it is very hard moving from that mentality of being a solo agent to actually being like the team leader, which essentially you, you kind of are because you're used to like taking everything and basically you doing everything. So, tell us about your mindset changes. And I know this is still something that we're currently working through. But how are you feeling about it?

## **Melita:**

Oh it, it was tough to let go of a lot of stuff. But I think the biggest thing was when I was in hospital, because I was in hospital for a couple of weeks while they were doing tests and everything. The biggest thing there was if I didn't have that team behind me, I wouldn't have a business and I wouldn't have a business today. So, if they didn't do, and then I thought, hang on a minute. Well they, they did everything while I was in hospital and they just left me alone. So, for me, I'm like, well if they can do it when I'm not there, maybe it's me that's the problem, not them!

## **Sherrie:**

And I think, it's, it's quite often interesting in these situations where an agent goes away on holidays or where there's a health issue where the team truly does step up because

they love the leader and they loved the lead agent and they want to prove that they can actually do it all. But we don't give them the opportunity to right. I think that this is, this is really imperative and I think how we operate and utilize the EBU is imperative and some of the things that we're going to be working, working through is actually, your day to day running what everybody actually does and their job description. Because really at the moment, like a lot of the things that you've been doing, we can certainly allocate and free up some of your time. So, we'll just digress onto that because one of the big things I'm super passionate about is agents having lots of free time. And a lot of agents I do work with who are basically writing even anywhere in between the 500 to the million-dollar Mark are still writing their own ads. I'm like, get a copywriter who are much better at it and you can free up your time to go and make more phone calls and talk to your database about actually buying the property instead of writing the copy about it. So yeah. So, I love that you've taken that point on board. Thank you. But I think the other one was really about slowing down in order to speed up because when you're running at this pace and when you're doing the volume that you're doing 117 transactions in a year is massive. It's kind of really hard to implement things when you're literally like there's no time left in the day to do it. And so, you've kind of got to make a decision about slowing down in order to speed up. Now you've got this massive motivator with your health now and before that you, you really struggled with making that decision. Why do you think that was?

## **Melita:**

Because I couldn't understand, well how am I going to slow down when I've got, when I can carry anywhere from 60 to 80 pieces of stock and you want to service your clients so you want to ring them four times a week and you want to send them emails and keep them updated. But in the same token, you want to try and find a buyer for their home. So, trying to get all that together and trying and like, I don't think it's possible to slow down to speed up, but when my health and the way that you've described it, I'm like, well hang on a minute. It all makes sense, but I've never had time just to sit down and actually think, well hang on a minute. This does make sense. I just had to retrain my brain to think that way.

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**Sherrie:**

Yeah, just thinking a completely different way that you haven't been open to in the past. And I think it's small things like just having templates, templated emails for all sorts of different things. Having a system and structure for even those basics. So, it's easy for your team too.

**Melita:**

Oh, the emails, just the structures you have sent to me, I'm like oh my goodness!

**Sherrie:**

So, I mean for all of the hard work and all of the million dollars that you've kind of done over the years, let's really break it down and talk about this profitability factor because again, we're talking about this million dollar agent, but it's not always the million dollar agent is not the most profitable agent. And you've also had a bit of an awakening on this too recently.

**Melita:**

Yes. So, getting new accountant and setting systems up in place to make it a lot easier for me. It was a big eye opener for me to actually see it in black and white, that and I'll be honest, sometimes my staff earn more than me.

**Sherrie:**

Which is quite common, can I tell you and a lot of agents that I do work with who are performing and writing really great figures aren't necessarily profitable. And in fact, sometimes we actually have to let the staff go because the agent's not making enough money. Absolutely.

**Melita:**

So the time, you can earn \$1,000,000 but then you have to give the agency there cut and then you, I've got two employees to pay and then you've got super, and now you've got to factor that super is potentially going up to 12% over the next couple of years and then on top of that you've got your tax and then good all marketing yourself because you have to market yourself so people know who you are. So, when you take all that into consideration, the bottom line does not look healthy. But I think we're so, everyone's like you have to be \$1 million performer. I remember, no offense to anyone, sorry, when people like you've got to get up at five o'clock to be a million-dollar performer. The biggest thing is you've got to do what's comfortable for you. Everyone's different. Absolutely. My 5:00am is different to the next person who can go to the gym. Cause I've got to get up and put washing in and make school lunches and iron uniforms and get my son off to school and then that's all before your day actually starts. And then you've got to then deal with the 80 clients and 80 buyers and you're potentially 30 sales you've got building and pest and valuations. So, trying to do all that it, it gets bloody tough, I'm not going to lie.

**Sherrie:**

The time management is really the hard part. And I think that's where it needs to be an EBU that's working, that's profitable, that actually has systems and structures where everyone knows their role, that they're the right people for the team and those roles sometimes change from time to time where somebody who might be a match for you, today might be in a different place in two years and they might want to be their own agent, and so it's just part of that journey together and having that sort of understanding. But I think, this is a very common issue that we're seeing in the industry. It's all about this GCI, it needs to be about profitability. So, we need to look at your profit and loss. We need to have a look at what the bottom line is, where we can actually cut costs. What we can actually do to restructure, is everybody profit centers because that's what it comes down to just as we are for the, for the agencies. So, I think another thing that we have touched on here is just about this working all the time. And you and I were talking about it yesterday actually about the fact that

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the industry is kind of created a monster. And were you telling me you were researching a video?

**Melita:**

I was, when I was looking at my AREC video, I thought to myself, if I spoke at Arec again, like that was the most probably highlight of my career.

**Sherrie:**

It's such a big moment, I have to say, and you were fantastic on that stage.

**Melita:**

But if I spoke again, it would be totally different because I'm in a different place now and it's not all about work.

**Sherrie:**

Yeah, well let's break it down. So, at Arec, you spoke, was it 2017?

**Melita:**

Yes

**Sherrie:**

So, what did you speak about? Do you remember?

**Melita:**

Just about how I got listings and how I ran my business at the time, because I think I was writing, I was doing about a hundred sales a year between 90 and a hundred sales a year. So, 2019 even though it was my hardest year health wise, that's when I realised that my team actually sold more. And if I didn't have that third person, that buyer's manager, I, probably, yeah like I said, I wouldn't have a business today.

**Sherrie:**

So, standing on that stage today you're invited to speak at Arec, **John McGrath**, if you're listening Melita is available...maybe in 2021. What would you actually talk about today on that stage?

**Melita:**

I'd talk about looking after we more and that being a million dollar performer isn't the bee all and end all. As long as you're happy and you're happy to help your clients, then that's, that's all that matters. Like if I only made 20 sales a year, it would not bother me. Well, I do probably think that because I have a team, that might be hard, but that's one thing my Health's more important because that day when I lost movement on my right side and I thought that I wasn't going to be here the next day the things that were running through my mind, it's, it wasn't good. It wasn't healthy for me.

**Sherrie:**

Well, you weren't really thinking about work at that point. You'll know, I'm sure. Thinking about your family and I know that was around the time when the women in real estate series was happening. And you are actually coming to the whole day, including the level up and the lunch afterwards and I remember you sort of called and reached out and said, look, I'm not able to come and sort of had mentioned what was going on and you very kindly donated your ticket to somebody else to come and enjoy the day, which was super, super nice of you. But I know that even in hospital there was still times where you were working because you found it really difficult to stop and to prioritise yourself. So, I think even from that moment to today, there's been massive mindset shift in you. To put that forward. I also think too, talking about putting we first is essential. And not every single client is going to be the right person for you and you're not going to be the right agents for them, it's ok to say no, because we're told just take everything, take everything. But sometimes those people, you can't help them. They might be overpriced. Those sellers, they might be wanting something more than what

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you can physically give; there expectations might be too high. They might be not in a position to want to do advertising. They want to sell it off market. But you can't sell a secret. Sometimes we do sell them off market though, but you, but there is a matter of finding the right kind of fit for you in your business. I think the other point of talking about putting ourselves first, it actually then frees us up to have the right energy. So, when we're in front of people that we're actually performing at our best and in a changing, in a difficult market, which it is, it is changing right across this country at the moment. Whether it be that you've encountered fires or floods at the beginning of this year we've had the coronavirus whether your markets, booming or busting, which is happening there's drought in your marketplace.

**Melita:**

It was our toughest year in 2019 for Toowoomba, a lot of agents left the industry because of the drought.

**Sherrie:**

Which is good, we like it when people leave because then it means more deals for us. Right? but that's quite often true. But it's also very hard when you've got somebody who is selling a property and there's no water on the land and literally, you're photographing it and its dirt. There's no grass, there's no grass there. So, I think, these things are super powerful and super important in terms of how we can really prioritise ourselves and make sure that we are free to put together the deals when things are difficult and challenging. And presenting our energy when we walk into a listing presentation, you need to deliver that

powerfully. And sometimes you need to be a different personality to what you normally are. So, if you're with somebody who is an accountant and they're all about the finite details and you are a social person and you're all about just list with me and everything's going to be great, you've got to change. Exactly. So that really takes a lot of energy and time and I think that's where we need to start putting ourselves first so that you can make the deals. And there are a number of agents that I personally have worked with over the, over the last two and a half, three years that have literally just skyrocketed from slowing down in order to speed up and working out what's right for them. So, I think we just need to have those systems, those templates, we need to have everything all on track. And you've got them, but a lot of them have been in your head because it has just been you and, and a PA. Whereas now you've got a team and we've got to give this structure. But, I think a lot more of this bigger picture and I talk a lot about building your best life, which I know you love. So, let's talk a bit about what your best life really looks like. What like what's your end game? Cause I know that you've got a pretty amazing one.

**Melita:**

Yeah, look, I'd love to live by the water. That's my ultimate, my ultimate goal. But probably, I mean, everything's changed now. Like I just want to spend time with my family. I want to actually have a day off. I can't even, my mum has been asking me now probably for about 15 years to take her shopping for a day just to have mother daughter time.

**Sherrie:**

So, Mother's Day is coming up, just want to say.

**Melita:**

But it's, those small things. You don't think you get so caught up in your own crap.

**Sherrie:**

Well in the world of real estate, we do get very sucked into it don't we.

**Melita:**

We get involved in everyone else's lives. And probably because I've been through so many experiences in my own life, helping people when they're struggling, that hits a chord with me

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because I've been through it as well. So, talking to people with cancer or health issues, I can, I can empathise with them and then I get caught up in their lives and sometimes forget about my own. And that's where I have to retrain myself.

**Sherrie:**

And I think that's really hard, especially if you're a carer like you are. Because, we just want to help everybody and, but we can't actually fix everyone. We can't be a nurse to everybody, and we need to remember that we're not responsible for their problems. We're only responsible and we're not responsible for the market, but we are responsible for communicating that and doing the best job that we possibly can do in those times. But, coming back to wanting to live near the water or wanting to live near the beach. I mean, this kind of sounds like a pipe dream when you're living in Toowoomba.

**Melita:**

I want the best of both worlds; I love living on acreage and I love water. So, we just went and bought a jet ski to try and make us go to the water because water's my therapy place, I call it, you don't need therapy when you live on the water. So, for me that's just a big pipeline dream. But then you said, but you can have it now Melita so it's like, well I can do less hours and I can spend more time with my family and look after my health. So that's, yeah.

**Sherrie:**

And I think when you feel happy, that also does impact your, your health too. So it really comes down to those systems and structures and empowering your, your agents so

you're not coming in and micromanaging them every day that they know what they need to do, that they're stepping up to the plate and that they are literally listing and selling themselves as well. And, and moving, moving forward in terms of their career paths. But I think there's this concept of still being able to live in a different place to where your marketplace is actually quite a new one for I think our industry because society's moved on where once upon a time you had to come to work and you had to work nine to five and be in the office, but it's changed now. We've got our mobile phones and we've got things like zoom so you can still have a zoom meeting with somebody but we're not kind of implementing this and you can still negotiate over the phone. We've got DocuSign.

**Melita:**

Yep, and owners are so time poor, we forget that that they work, and they've got kids and they've got their own things to do. So gone are the days where it's like, well, we need to sit down and talk because I can tell you, most of my clients don't want to sit down and talk, they just want you to ring them and be straight up with them and just tell them over the phone.

**Sherrie:**

And sometimes that actually, if anything can do your relationship damage when you're trying to force on them to get in front of them, when in fact that's actually really what they do not want. And they've communicated that.

**Melita:**

And that's a question that I'll ask all my owners, how would you like me to communicate with you? And I can't remember the last owner that said that they wanted to sit down, sit down with me. The older generation yes. Like when I'm selling for 80 and 90-year old's, technology's not there, not their thing. So that's a big important thing for me is to find out what they want from me and then what I can help them with. And if I can't then I'd rather not. And that was a big thing for me, because I'd say yes to everyone, but if they're not the right client for me now, it's okay to let them go.

**Sherrie:**

Yeah. To pass them on to someone else and maybe get a referral fee, which is also really lovely too. So, knowing what now, because obviously you are a great performance. You know

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how to write the business, how to do a deal, how to hunt and find an opportunity and put all this together and that requires working a lot of hours. We're now reprogramming in terms of how to actually build the right EBU, how to build it profitably, but also get them working in the business as well. So that you're not micromanaging everything, but so all of this that you, that what would you do differently if you were to have your time over again?

## **Melita:**

I'd start a team straight away and have those structures in place first because then I wouldn't have had to do 80 hours a week back then and because I do limited hours now in my team for that to happen, and that's where you came along and said, well, hang on a minute. Let's just send these emails and do this and do that. You don't need to work all those hours to earn the same money and that took me bloody 10 years. So yeah, that would be a big thing. Yeah. For me it's to sit down and actually take the time to work on my business, not just working in my business, actually on my business, to have those structures in place to help people. And what, it's okay to have a coach. And I'm not saying that because you coach me, but I always thought I could do everything myself. But I, I don't think there'd be any million-dollar performer that does anything by themselves. Because you do need that help and support.

## **Sherrie:**

Exactly. And sometimes too, you also need that reset because you are all involved and sometimes you can't see the forest for the trees, and you need somebody objective to point things out and to learn a completely new and different way. But also, we do tend as agents to think that we, we know best. But having that sort of reset and even myself, like I have people that I, I see like I have a sports psychologist who makes sure that keeps me working in being a performer and keeps my mindset right. And I certainly have a, a business coach and so forth. Cause I think you can always be learning and there's different things that different people can bring to the table. And for a certain period of time, they're going to be part of your journey. And then there might be a time where it's like onto the next one and there's nothing, nothing kind of wrong with that.

## **Melita:**

So, one thing I've learned is, especially this year, the less hours that I actually work, the better I am for everybody. For my clients, for my staff and my family, I'm not stressed. I'm not taking all the problems home with me. So, it's, yeah, but I mean, okay, it's not a good scenario that I've got MS, but it is what it is. It's helped me. It's helped me be the person I am now.

## **Sherrie:**

We're really, it's forced you to stop and take stock of your life. And there would be a lot of people listening today who would be in very similar situation to what you have been in. I know I meet a lot of these agents as I mentioned earlier, I really wanted to take a moment to just acknowledge you being so raw and so honest about this today because everybody is battling, quite often when I meet agents and they want to start coaching, they're kind of to the point of they want to give up their career because they're just so broken and burnt out and then wanting some sort of change. And they think that there must be some answer, which there is, but they don't know what it is. And I think you've been truthful about that today and sort of saying, yes, this is what I have achieved, but this has also been the sacrifices that it's taken to get there. So, thank you. So I look parting, parting words of wisdom for anybody who is in that same position that you've been in, where you're writing really great figures, but now really saw that you wanted to take time for your family and have more of a longevity in your career and take some time off. What would be your words of advice?

## **Melita:**

Sit down and work on your values. That was a big thing for me is to actually work out what I wanted from my life from, you and I can tell you work wasn't number one when I got sick. So, whereas I thought work was always number one and get a coach, just get someone else to do the work for you because I wouldn't have done what you, you've done for my business. So just putting all those systems in place, just actually spend the time and sit down. And because

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if you take a week out of your business and work out what you want, where you want your business to go, it'll change your life.

**Sherrie:**

Yeah. Lovely. Melita, thank you so much for joining us today.

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