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MISTRAL MYERS: Welcome to the Talks at Google podcast, where great minds meet. I'm Mistral, bringing you this week's episode, with the costar of Bravo's "Million Dollar Listing New York," and "Sell It Like Serhant," Ryan Serhant. Talks at Google brings the world's most influential thinkers, creators, makers, and doers all to one place. Every episode of this podcast is taken from a video that can be seen at [youtube.com/talksatgoogle](https://youtube.com/talksatgoogle). In this episode, Ryan discusses his new book, "Sell It Like Serhant: How to Sell More, Earn More, and Become the Ultimate Sales Machine." The book is a lively and practical guide to sell anything and up your business game from one of the top realtors in the world. Moderated by Googler Paul Darrah, here's "Ryan Serhant: Sell It Like Serhant."

[applause]

RYAN SERHANT: Thanks.

PAUL DARRAH: You're welcome.

RYAN SERHANT: Hello. How's work?

PERSON: Hello.

[laughter]

RYAN SERHANT: This is a cool place.

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PAUL DARRAH: It's not a bad spot. We have our own real estate.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. You're the real estate guy.

PAUL DARRAH: I'm the real estate guy. It's exciting to interview the other real estate guy.

RYAN SERHANT: I love doing deals with Google people. It's great. You always know they can close. You know?

[laughter]

PAUL DARRAH: That's right.

RYAN SERHANT: Which is really important to me.

PAUL DARRAH: Well, it's a big talent pool. We have 10,000 Googlers in New York.

RYAN SERHANT: I know.

PAUL DARRAH: I don't think you've sold to all of them yet.

RYAN SERHANT: No, not yet.

PAUL DARRAH: Not yet.

RYAN SERHANT: Not yet.

PAUL DARRAH: Not yet.

RYAN SERHANT: That is the goal.

PAUL DARRAH: So why don't we start--in the book, you talked about your childhood growing up opposite to the guy you see on TV, and I thought that'd be a great place to start.

RYAN SERHANT: Great. Yeah, you know, a lot of people--most people know me from "Million Dollar Listing New York," which started in 2012. I was cast on it in 2010. How I got cast on that is totally--it's like book number two.

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But I wasn't--I think I was kind of like the opposite person when I was a little kid, right, like, the anti-salesperson, which was a big push for me to write the book. Like, I didn't necessarily write it for great sales people out there, who are crushing it and at the top of their class, right? I mean, I think those people should also get it. But I really wrote it for the people who are like me, who are super shy, introverted. I moved eight times before I hit fourth grade. I was really overweight. I had really bad self-confidence. I just liked theater. My parents made me play every single sport known to man, hoping I would get over it. You know, my whole family's in finance. Everyone's very business oriented. And I just wanted to do theater and come to New York after college, which no one approved of whatsoever. And then I ran out of money, right? I mean, that's like kind of classic story. I moved here in 2006. I went to Hamilton College in Upstate New York. I was a Theater major, also English Lit 'cause my parents made me.

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And I gave myself two years on like summer savings, and it lasted me two years. And I ran out of money and didn't know what to do. And it was either go home to Colorado and paint fence for the rest of my life, which was an actual summer job I had, painting wood fence, there's a lot of it in Colorado, or figure out something. I had a friend of mine who was like, "Listen, don't be a waiter. Don't be a bartender. Get your real estate license. The market's insane." This was the summer of 2008.

PAUL DARRAH: Your timing was impeccable, right?

[laughter]

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. Yeah, I could not tell the future yet.

PAUL DARRAH: Yeah, yeah. And as a real estate guy for Lehman Brothers when it went under...

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: I know what your first day of work was like. So you started the day Lehman collapsed.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, September 15th.

PAUL DARRAH: Yeah.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, 2008.

PAUL DARRAH: It was a big--

RYAN SERHANT: Which, for a lot of people, was a really awful day. For me--

PAUL DARRAH: I was one of those.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. And it's tough. I had a lot of friends who worked at Lehman, you know? But for me, I had no money.

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Like, I was either, figure out this real estate thing or go home to Colorado. And I had gotten my real estate license. It didn't really all make sense to me yet what was really happening in the world because, if you're living in New York City trying to be an actor, you're not watching CNBC every day and you have no money. So you don't watch the markets. You don't really know. And I just thought real estate was the hardest thing in the history of the world. I just figured that everyone in New York City lost their jobs all the time. You know, those first two years, I mean, every client I would get, they would lose their job in 2008 and 2009. And they wouldn't be able to afford apartments. So in hindsight, it was the absolute best time for me to start because every broker was getting out of the business 'cause they all called the end of the world. And for me, I was there to kind of like pick up the pieces and just sort of figure it out as I went.

PAUL DARRAH: So you talk about improv as a training ground.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: So spend a minute on that.

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RYAN SERHANT: The most important training I ever did to be a real estate agent was taking improv classes in high school and college. And I still make everyone who works for me take improv because it is--the most important thing you can do as a salesperson is learn how to listen and learn how to act on your feet. And those are two things that a lot of people think they have, but it's a real muscle, you know. To be able to think on your feet and never use the word no is a really kind of hard thing to do 'cause most people will say, "um," "like," "right," or "let me think." Like, that's how we grow up. But to be able to say "yes, and" over and over and over to whatever your client is saying, it was like my--really, really helped me a lot when I first started.

PAUL DARRAH: How many people have taken improv in the audience? Okay, so we have some work to do.

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RYAN SERHANT: It's important, especially because--yeah, exactly, because it's really scary, especially as you get older. I was just fortunate that I took it when I was younger and then thought it was fun. But once you get older, you're more self-aware and you don't like to embarrass yourself. And so that's actually when it's more fun 'cause it's just ridiculous to watch people. And you should just go watch improv classes 'cause they're funny. They have them everywhere. And they're like 5 bucks or 10 bucks. And you just create situations. And in sales, that's what you're doing. You're negotiating people's emotions, and there's no script for that. You're figuring it out as you go, and that's what improv has taught me and taught the team.

PAUL DARRAH: I think the other big observation you have is that, in real estate sales and TV, the first impressions are literally everything.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. And if you're not careful, they're also your last impression, right?

PAUL DARRAH: So give an example of where that moment occurred, where you were at risk of the last impression.

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RYAN SERHANT: Probably when I met you and I didn't look up from my phone, so I apologize. I was just in the middle of something.

PAUL DARRAH: Well, he was eating Raisin Bran, as well.

RYAN SERHANT: Also that. You guys have food here, which is great. I'm a real estate broker. Every time I see food, I'm like, "Ooh, I've just to--got to survive."

[laughter]

You know, just take it really simply. I didn't write the book for real estate agents. I mean, my life is as a real estate agent. But I really wrote it for, like, anyone who just wants to do better and do more, whether they're selling, you know, digital advertising or they're selling themselves to their boss to get a bigger promotion or they're trying to convince their kids to go to bed on time, you know, or they're trying to pay down student debt. Like, I wrote it for everybody. But put yourself in the shoes of you're walking into a store, right, and someone comes up to you and they say--what do people typically say? Like, "Hey, can I help you with anything?" And what do you say? "No, thanks." Right? For the most part, you say, "No, thanks," 'cause you don't really want to be bothered, and it's a salesperson, and it's gross. Like, "No, no, it's fine. I got it. I'm looking at shoes over here." Right?

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And then they'll say, like, "Hey. Okay, let me know if you need anything." And then they walk away. That is every salesperson in every store in the entire world. So you have to remember that every client interaction you have is just like you would be making a friend or meeting a future boyfriend or a girlfriend. I mean, could you imagine going into a bar and like tapping on someone's shoulder randomly and saying, "Hey, let me know if you need anything."

[laughter]

Like, how do you think that would go? You could get super lucky and they could say, "Actually, I do need something," and then that's a one-off deal. But for the most part, everyone is gonna say--you're with me?

PAUL DARRAH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RYAN SERHANT: Okay. So, for the most part, people are going to say, "No, no. I'm okay," or, "That's weird," right? So that's a bad first impression, which is now the last impression you're going to have of that salesperson, right? A different way is to introduce yourself, okay? Introduce yourself and start with something super simple like a compliment, right?

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Most people think about the clothes they're putting on or think about their ridiculous mustache that they grew out to try to sell books or--

[laughter]

Mm-hmm, true story. Or, you know, something, right? Or if they have a kid with them, you compliment the kid. Something small, just to get them to smile and to start a positive interaction.

Swear to you, it works every time. I've gone into stores to buy a pair of socks. Someone has come up to me, introduced themselves, and complimented me on something, and I've left with like a canoe.

[laughter]

And maybe that's just 'cause I'm gullible, but also it works, right? You're building that trust in that first impression, and you have less than 20 seconds to do it. Oftentimes, you have less than 10 seconds, right? Every relationship, even with your best friend or your partner, started with a ten-second introduction. And with the people you know that you're friendly with, it worked. Other people, it didn't work. So I talk a lot about how to make it work more.

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PAUL DARRAH: And then how about, at the other end of the spectrum, the indecisive client because we all have indecisive bosses and associates? How do you manage the indecisive client?

RYAN SERHANT: Good question. I broke down as much as I could--you know how there's like the six stages of grief and then the types of tornadoes? Like, I always, when I got into the business, really kind of thought of sales like the six stages of selling, like what emotional clients go through 'cause they go through their grieving period, their denial period, their excited period. And you have to walk them through all those steps. And the best salespeople are the ones who can anticipate it like an ER doctor. Like, they know when this next emotional phase is gonna hit so you can prepare how your conversation is gonna lead into that moment, kind of like a psychologist, right? But people who are indecisive are people who are insecure about the decision that they're gonna make anyway.

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Like, at the end of the day, a lot of indecisive people we know, they end up making a decision. They're just really self-conscious or insecure about their intelligence or something, and you have to help them get comfortable and figure out how to get there. And a lot of it is just laying out options. So kind of the way I just talked to you about first impressions, and it could have been super boring but I made it relative by talking about dating in a bar. And then people laugh and they're like, "Oh, that is kind of the same way. Oh, interesting." Same thing with people who are indecisive. It's figuring out a way to make it relatable to them. And if you have a client or boss or somebody, you figure out what they like to do personally. So you track them on social media, let's say, and you figure out that they really like cats, okay, or they really like golf, or they're really into the Jets. I don't know, something like that.

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You try to--without telling them that you Internet stalked them, you figure out, in your conversation with them, how to make whatever the situation is you're talking about relatable to something they really like. Like, you know, "I understand you want to take your time, but if Sam Darnold had taken his time in his first game out, he might not have won that first game, huh?" And then that guy's gonna be like, "Dude, you're a Jets fan?" "I mean, sure. Yeah, now I am." "Oh, crazy! Yeah, anyway the real reason I don't want to do this is because of X, Y, and Z," because now it's on a personal level, now they're thinking about something they really like, plus you made it relatable, and it's just how you present that information versus that salesperson who just says, "Can I help you with anything?" "No." "Okay, let me know if you need anything." "Great." That's most people.

PAUL DARRAH: And so you talk about the four tenets of work, the four Ws.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: So it's the why, the work, your wall, and the win.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: Spend a little time on the wall.

**00:12:12**

RYAN SERHANT: So when I first got into the business, I had no boss, I had no mentor. I went to a brokerage called Nest Seekers, which is still there. There's like 800 agents there now. When I was there, it was like 20. Above Burger Heaven on 49th and Madison. And didn't really have a mentor, no one told me what to do. All the direction I was given was, "Find apartments that are in other cities that look cool. Post them on Craigslist. Use really good pricing. Meet people at Starbucks. Take them to other apartments." Okay? That was the New York City rental broker way of life up until like 2009. And so I didn't want to do that. That seemed super weird to me. And I wanted to figure out how I was gonna actually build a sales business, and how I was gonna build a sales career and not just be someone who lived deal by deal by deal or somebody who woke up a year from now and said, "Wow, last year was great, but it was also the same exact kind of year that I had the year before and the year before and the year before."

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And I had looked at all the top performers in the business and all the top companies, right, like all the Fortune 500 companies. And, you know, they all had really, really strong through lines to how they figured out, like, what they were working against. Like what's Google's kind of through line? Right? They're trying to make the Internet a better place, more searchable, all that stuff, something like that, right? You guys would know better than me.

PAUL DARRAH: Anybody want to cover the mission?

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, I'm sure it's out there. And so, for me, I wanted to figure out, what's that thing that I'm running against as much as possible. And as an individual salesperson, it has to be something personal.

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So for me, the wall is that moment in the summer of 2008, when my debit card was declined at Food Emporium on 59th Street, buying tofu, of all things, and I didn't know what to do, and I really freaked out, and I just took my card and ran out, and jumped on the subway and sat next to some random person, and just tried to hold back tears 'cause that was the moment I was like, "This New York thing sucks. I hate it. I don't like it. I don't want to be here. I just want to go home." And then I decided to get into real estate. And that's the moment I run from every single day. And it sounds kind of crazy, but everyone needs to have that wall, right? Maybe you work at Google, but before this you did another job that you really didn't like, and you don't want to go back to that job because this is now super awesome. You have free cereal. Like, that other job is your wall. Or maybe you just love New York so much and you don't want to move home to Colorado to paint fence or whatever your story is, like that then is your wall.

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Or maybe you were bullied in high school like I was, and you want to show those people who the-- is boss. That's your wall. So for me, it was figuring out that moment on that subway. And I'll run as far away from that moment, for the rest of my life, as possible. And the others are really just trying to get clear with your goals. Like companies have goals. Companies have mission statements. Why shouldn't individual people have the same thing? Why shouldn't individual salespeople have the same thing? You should also have what your win is, right? That's kind of the mission statement. So, for me, my win with doing "Sell It Like Serhant" for Bravo and then writing this book, I think that

I'll always do real estate, but I really have found that like my passion is helping other people increase the quality of their lives through selling because selling is like the greatest career you could have because no one will ever take it away from you and you will never be unemployed, especially in a volatile work market the way we have it now, like, I, right now, am unemployed.

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I don't get a W-2. I get a 1099. I eat what I kill every single day. I'm a very successful unemployed employed person. And that's the greatest thing, 'cause I get fired every week. Clients fire me all the time just because that's what happens in this business. But it's okay because I have other clients and they make up for it. I don't ever want to put myself in a position where everything in my life could be held by one place. And as a salesperson, you have that amazing talent to take that anywhere, whether it's here or somewhere else.

PAUL DARRAH: So in the show, you parlay your real estate sales into supporting and helping people who are in different stages of their life and their state of kind of--

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: How do you pick those candidates? And what's been your greatest success in terms of individuals?

RYAN SERHANT: There was a casting process that Bravo did. I think they sent out casting notices everywhere and then just got lots of submissions from people.

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It was hard to cast because a lot of--because the show only made sense if I was working with really bad salespeople who were literally about to lose their jobs. And then the business had to agree to go on camera. Like, their families had to agree to go on camera. The bosses had to agree to go on camera. So there's a whole process to it. So it was hard to find people that wanted to put themselves out there like that. But I think the most successful person--I don't know if you've watched the show, but there is kind of two. There was one guy who sold wine. His name was Tim, in Millbrook. And he let me know that he was a recovering addict, like, when I first met him, which was really tough 'cause he sold wine. But that was all he knew how to do.

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Like, he got addicted to heroin outside Phoenix when he was 13, meth when he was 14, tried to kill himself when he was 15. Cleaned himself up and sent himself into the Army when he, I guess, was 17, did 2 tours through Afghanistan, and then came back clean, ready to go, wouldn't go back home to Phoenix because that's where all of his triggers were, tried to get a job in New York, couldn't get one, put himself through the New York Culinary Institute, but then couldn't get a job as a chef. And then a friend said, "Listen, I've got this winery in Millbrook. Come work with me, sell wine." Had no idea what selling was, thought salespeople were the worst people in the world, like, legitimately. And I helped him understand that selling isn't taking. Selling isn't being greedy. Selling isn't, like, "Come on. Come on. Come on. Just do this. Do this." Selling is assuring. It's not convincing.

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Selling is walking people through options so that they pick the best one for them and an option that they otherwise would have picked anyway, but they're just going to do it with you and not do it online or they're going to do it with you now and not do it later, right? And so that was a good one for me, working with him 'cause had a--like, we secretly flew his parents in from Phoenix, and he hadn't seen them since he got back from Afghanistan. Like the whole thing was crazy. "Million Dollar Listing," very different show.

[laughter]

PAUL DARRAH: Yes, yes.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: So in a recent interview, you said that one of your core principles for sustaining key relationships is actually knowing how to give before you take anything.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: And I think you kind of spoke to that a minute ago. But if you--not that we're off camera, but if you were speaking off camera versus on camera, what would you like people to know about reality TV that they may not know?

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RYAN SERHANT: "Million Dollar Listing" takes us nine months to film an entire season, and it airs really, really quickly. So there's a lot of stuff behind the scenes that you don't see just because it's boring TV, unfortunately. Like, I always want to show the deal stuff, the closing cost, the taxes, you know, all the crazy stuff that really drives us crazy. But it's hard TV to show. And there's three of us on the show. It's an hour show, which means there's 44 minutes. There's 16 minutes of commercials, which means each of us get, like, 11 to 12 minutes of airtime. And it has to be cut down into just those big moments, get listing, figure out how to sell it, don't sell it, maybe sell it, little personal item, done. But there's so much more that goes into it, right? Like, I start my day very, very early, and I try to start in the office to prep for the day ahead. And then I end incredibly late to clean up the previous day and then prep for my day ahead. Like, my day starts the night before.

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And that was an important thing that I figured out when I first got into the business. Otherwise, like, you wake up and you're scattered. And you look at your calendar, and you're like, "All right, what do I have to do today?" But by then, your day has already begun, and it's like you're late to the race. But yeah, reality TV is fun. You know, it's been good for me. I mean, I got onto that show by just, like, convincing them I was the greatest real estate broker in the history of the world. And I knew that they were from L.A. and they didn't know anything. And they were like, "Are you sure?" And I was like, "Yes, I am sure." Like, "Really? 'Cause all these other brokers that we're interviewing, they don't know who you are." And I'm like, "Really? It's just because they're jelly." Right? And they slowly whittled it down and whittled it down. And I got to the point where I was just getting friends to help me with things and trying to--it was like, "Call me 50 times a day, call me, call me 'cause I'm with the cameras right now, and they're still interviewing like 15 other people." And, they're like, "What am I calling you for?" So they call me. And they're like, "Hey, Ryan. You told me--" and I'd be like, "Yeah, no. Deal's closing. I'll call you right back." Boom.

[laughter]

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And the producers were like, "This is the greatest real estate broker we've ever seen!" I've been doing it now for eight years, so I'm comfortable putting that out there. And then I got cast on it. And then that was like, "Oh, all right. Now I got to figure this out." My whole life has been just saying yes to everything, and then having to just figure it out.

PAUL DARRAH: Which is a great lead into, you talk about when it's time to let the deal go and how to fail smarter.



RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. I think that--I mean, when I first started as a salesperson, I didn't let any deal go, right, because I didn't really have a whole lot of choice. And some of my first clients were people I definitely should have let go. But it's a time-benefit analysis, right? You're never gonna close somebody who has a great personal relationship with someone else who does what you do.

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Like, as many apartments as I would love to sell, there are always gonna be sellers who grew up with a real estate broker today or who are married to a real estate broker or who have some kind of personal connection. Those are people that I need to really look at the time that I would put into that deal, and probably decide, "You know what? I'm gonna leave them for other people. It's okay, right? I'll live. I'll go find other people." And then there are people too, who are just completely irrational, unreasonable, and those people, you have to cut loose when they don't really move up that emotional ladder that I talk about in the book. Like, if they just stay on hysteric or overemotional or if they're mean, there's a lot of people in the world who are really mean and are belittling, especially in my business. I don't know how it is for you guys. But it is really easy to be mean to a real estate agent, right? And it's easy to take out all your frustration on them, which is fine, and I'm totally okay with it.

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And I get yelled at every day. But if that's their status quo, then those are people that I need to let go. Just to say, the negative energy, it's going to affect me and all of my other deals, and I don't want to bring that into the rest of my life.

PAUL DARRAH: So in the book, you talk about Client X, which may not have been your hardest deal you've ever closed, but it might be. So spend a minute on that 'cause I think it's such an amazing story.

RYAN SERHANT: Oh, man. In the book, I have to call him "Client X" for fear of my life. And I say he's from Atlantis, also for fear of my life. So Client X was a guy who cold emailed me when I first got into the business and said he'd like to invest money into the New York City real estate market. Would I be able to help him? He would use real cash dollars and would need bank account help, okay? And I totally replied.

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And I was like, "Absolutely. I can help you with bank account help. And absolutely, we take cash money dollars. And how much are you looking to spend?" And he was like, less than \$10 million. And I was doing, like, \$2,000 a month convertible, three rentals in the West Village to Jessica, Jessica, and her friend, Jessica, at the time, so--

[laughter]

Who were coming from Murray Hill with their guarantor father. And so a guy who, all of a sudden, just told me \$10 million over the Internet, I was like, "Boom, jackpot! This is New York City real estate." And I got super excited. And then he wanted to talk on the phone, so he was like a real person, sort of. And I just sent him a bunch of listings 'cause I didn't know. And he picked one at 45 West 67th Street, Apartment 15ABC. I remember every address. And he said, "I would like that one. Make offer, \$8 million." And it was asking \$8.5 million.

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And I was just like, "Holy mother of--\$8 million offer. This is what it is." I am now the greatest real estate broker in the history of the world. I asked him to send me a proof of funds, and he sent me a DHL. Right, remember that? He sent me a DHL the next day with, like, a photo of an accountant

with a letter that legitimately said, "Mr. X does not commit to things that he does not commit to." That was his proof of funds. And I was totally okay with it. I was like, "This looks good to me! Cash money dollars in New York City!" And we negotiated this deal over the Internet for \$8.3 million, and I was immediately thinking about the commission in my head, and thinking about how long I would be able to stay in my apartment with all that rent money and everything and craziness. And taxes didn't even come into the conversation. And then he disappeared off the face of the Earth for like a month. And he had had a contract, and I had introduced him to an attorney, and he just never replied ever again.

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But I followed up, like every day, because this was my one big fish. No one else in their life had ever talked to me about spending that much money on an apartment. And then he eventually writes back, like a month later and says, "Sorry. I've been a little busy." I'm like, "Okay, no problem." And he actually signs the contract. And then he has to send a deposit. And then the deposit never comes. And now I got the seller freaking out, other brokers going crazy, and like, months go by. So we have the signed contract, and it doesn't mean anything. And then the attorneys tell me that what's basically happening is that this person takes a signed contract--and this happens all the time in New York City, and they shop it around the world. And they say, "Listen, this is this apartment. It's probably worth \$10 million. I've got it for \$8.3. Give me \$20,000. Come in on it with me." And they'll sell the contract over and over and over to unsuspecting victims, and they'll steal people's money. So it's a scam.

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And so then I was like, "You know what? This business sucks! I don't want to do this anymore. I'm the best broker ever, but now I'm the worst one because I'm involved in some money laundering scam between some crazy person from Atlantis. I can't believe I responded to this guy." And I think it was, like, two months go by, and then the attorney calls me and says, "You're not gonna believe this. I just got an \$830,000 deposit from Bank of Atlantis." And I almost had a heart attack. I was like, "Are we in contract?" He's like, "Yeah, you're in contract." I was like, "Holy mother of God! \$8.3 million for an apartment. I sold it over the Internet!" And then there's this thing in New York City called a board package, right? You have to do an application. And then there's this thing called closing, which you have to do. And he vanished off the face of the Earth, stopped responding to everything for like six months, right? So imagine signing a contract for something and then disappearing for six months. Okay, so now you've got different attorneys looking to sue everybody. But who do you go after, right?

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Now it's just about keeping that deposit and holding the deposit back. But I followed up. It's my whole life is follow-up. I wrote about it in the book. There's a whole chapter. It's really invigorating, okay?

[laughter]

I will follow up with you until the day that you die. I followed up non-stop, just checking in. Just saying, "Hey. I know you're probably getting those documents together. Still need to do this application." And then I had some genius idea to-- 'cause I had looked him up initially, and I'd seen that he might be attached to this house that looked expensive in Paris, okay? And so I sent him this email that said, "Hey," in total desperation, "I'll be in Paris tomorrow. If you want to meet in person, we can go through the documents." And he wrote back in like one minute, after six months of nothing, and said, "Sure. 10:00 p.m.," and gave me a location. And now I'm like, "Well, shit. The biggest deal of my whole life, that I still haven't done, now I've got to figure out how to do this."

**00:28:32**

And so I used all the money I had, and got an Aer Lingus flight through Dublin. And then I think I took Ryanair, which was super fitting for me, to Paris to try to find this magical person, all the while, like, kind of telling my parents what I was up to, kind of not, 'cause it's a little bit sketchy and probably really dangerous. And then 10:00 p.m. rolled by, and the guy doesn't show up. I'm crying in my baguette. And I think it was like 1:00 a.m., 'cause I had nowhere to go, and I didn't plan on getting a hotel or anything. I just thought I'd, like, wing it, you know, and then just go right back to the airport. And then 1:00 a.m., he shows up with, like, a line of people. So now I know he's real. And all he really cared about was getting me drunk. And he just wanted to watch me drink. And I was the opposite of who he was in every way, shape, and form. And I drank a significant amount of tequila. And he like sort of looked at the papers a little bit.

**00:29:30**

I got him to sign two things, and I would just fill out the rest. So I took it as a win. Went back to New York City, very sick, and then he had to come close. And he'd disappeared off the face of the Earth again. But at least now I knew that he was a real person. And then to make a long story short, even though it's long, he randomly, one day, again, months later-- so this is, like, a year-long process, says, "I'm in New York City. I'd like to close." Like, "Are you crazy? It's like 11:30 a.m., well, you can't just get a closing together, right? Oh, but fine. We'll figure it out." Because everyone was--they were trying to sue for deposits. It was crazy. I was like, "Where are you?" "Mandarin Oriental." I went up there to wait for him, doesn't come down on time. Finally comes down, with like 15 people and this fleet of black Escalades pulls up outside the Mandarin Oriental, completely tinted out and crazy. The minute that happens, I text my mom and I say, "Goodbye."

[laughter]

This is, again, like, the only deal that I've ever done other than just rental deals on Craigslist with people that I'm baiting and switching, okay?

**00:30:30**

The New York way. So we get in the car. He's got, like, an espresso assistant, totally crazy. And I'm like, "Listen, Mandarin Oriental, 45 West 67th Street, it's right there. Do you want to go do the walk-through? I'm sure you're really excited about this apartment." He's like, "No, no, no. We go to JFK." So we went to JFK. And we went to the back of JFK. And we pulled up, and there was this big 747, and he got outside, and he bought it. And he got back in the car, and now I'm totally confused. Now I don't really think I'm going to die. Now I'm just really--I don't know who this person is. And then we go back into the city, and he signs the papers, and he closes. And all he cares about is taking a selfie with me for his BBM profile, if you remember those. And turns out that he prints about a billion dollars a month. And he's, like, wealthier than Gaddafi, and just wasn't concerned with this little apartment.

**00:31:24**

And the only reason that he moved forward was 'cause he thought it was super amusing to watch me consistently, persistently follow up.

[laughter]

Right? And the fact that I actually went to Paris--and he knew it was bullshit. Like, he knew that I wasn't going to be in Paris, right, is one of the reasons he went through it. And since then, we've done, like, \$300 million together, just as a way to diversify and move money around. Every deal has been super painful. And that's the power of "Yes, and," right? And it didn't take money of mine. Going to Paris costs money, but other than that, follow-up, following up with items of value, staying on top of him, everything, every deal is a deal. You're just trying to see which salesperson is gonna quit first, right? Just like kind of every race. And I always equate selling to a race. You wake up

every day. That's why I say "ready, set, go" all the time, 'cause my dad told me to say it every day before I leave, when I was in third grade.

**00:32:22**

You know, before I step out of the house, before you cross over, one foot, "ready, set, go," 'cause it sets your mindset up for running a race. You just have no idea what kind of race you're gonna run. It's going to be a marathon today. It might be a sprint, and then it's a marathon. It might be hurdles, and then it's, like, a 6K. You don't know. But as long as you're prepared in that moment, the moment you leave your house--I'm going to run a race today. I'm gonna--win it in some way, shape, or form, it just sets your mind to be ready to go for anything, to say, "yes, and" then figure it out.

PAUL DARRAH: So before I ask the next question, if anyone wants to line up to the mics. And we'll open up for questions in a minute. But it's a great pivot to the next question, which is, explain your Get FKD theory, and why it's one of your most valuable secrets.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. You're going through, like, the whole book right now, huh?

PAUL DARRAH: Yes. It was a great book, you guys. Literally, great book.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. So FKD--again, I was on "As the World Turns" and got killed off, okay?

**00:33:22**

That's where I made the most money before getting to real estate, other than hand modeling. I hand modeled. I held cell phones for AT&T. They were everywhere, by the way. If you Google my name and hand modeling, it's awesome. I held Nespresso capsules like this. I'd have to move the metatarsal of my pinky. I'd have to get hand massages and everything. So that's my background into business. So then when I got into real estate, I didn't know--all I knew was you post ads online. You meet people. You try to convince them to sell, to buy, to rent. And I wasn't rich, and I'm not from New York City, and I don't go to the synagogue. So I am shit out of luck. My nicest clothes were cowboy boots and khaki pants, right? And so when I made that decision of, "You know what? I'm going to figure this out, and I'm to move against the grain here in New York City, and I'm going to be the best broker ever. I've got to figure out how I'm going to do it." I didn't know how to structure my day.

**00:34:18**

And that was the one thing that really would get me depressed and would really kind of hurt me was, "Okay, I have one appointment at 3:00 p.m. What do I do the rest of the day? What do I do at 9:00? Do I cold call people? Do I ask people for help? Do I post ads? Like, how do I structure my day?" And I think people are creatures of habit. So I looked at big companies. I said, "Okay, every big company out there that's super successful has a CEO, a CFO, and a COO." I have no idea what they do. But for me, I think it's important that, part of my day, I have a CEO brain on. So that, for me, was my finder time 'cause I had looked at CEOs and I said, "They find business for the company to work on." All right, that's what they do. They prospect business for the company to work on. Yes, they deal with problems and all that stuff. But CEOs really, they are there to move the ship forward and give the company a lot of stuff to work on.

**00:35:09**

"Okay, so from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., every day, I'm going to put 'Finder.' And those are my hours where, every day, now I'm booked from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., I'm not waking up with nothing to do until 3:00 p.m. 8:00 to 10:00, that's my finder hour or two, when I just focus on RyanSerhantRealEstate.com, like my own, little personal business, and how I'm going to sell more, grow more, and brainstorm my career." And it's amazing if you just spend some time every day and just think about yourself that way, and about your business, and how you're going to do better, you

will come up with ideas that you never would have come up with, just 'cause your brain is capable of things that you just don't know, right? Keeper was the CFO time. So that was like 12:00 to 1:00. And I would just think about all the money I didn't have. And if I had, like, \$10 to spend that day, I would budget because I knew it was important to invest back in your business. So I would say, "Okay, \$10, that gets me how many stamps?" And I would send out letters to one building that day.

**00:36:07**

Or "It's going to get me an extra latte, and I'm going to go to Starbucks, and I'm going to try to find pregnant women and sell them apartments 'cause they need more space." Right? Like, that's my thing today. True story. Some of my first clients were pregnant, and they needed more space. It's a real thing. And then my COO time was my doer time, so FKD. That was the rest of my day. That's when you put all of that stuff into action. So that's when I was stamping things. That's when I was going to Starbucks. That's when I was doing the appointments. And I still do that to this day. Now the times are shifted. Now I spend a lot more of my time in that finder time period than I do in the keeper and doer. But it's important to think about yourself, as an entrepreneur and as an independent contractor and as a salesperson, as somebody who runs a large company. Whether it's true or it's not, the only way it will be true, eventually, is if you think to make it so. Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: Great. Go to the audience.

**00:37:04**

PERSON: So in "Million Dollar Listing," you have a lot of one-on-one interactions. Now, obviously, it's edited, and perhaps that's not how the rest of your day goes.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PERSON: But now you have a team of several hundred brokers. How do you manage them? Do you try and spend one-on-one time each of them? Do you have lieutenants or other people? How do you structure it?

RYAN SERHANT: The team is 62, not yet at 100.

PERSON: Oh, okay.

RYAN SERHANT: But it's--but thank you.

[laughter]

I try to spend as much time with them as I possibly can. They're all really busy, and everyone's different, right? I let all of them know that I'm there for them all day long. There are certain people on my team who need a meeting with me every single week. There are certain people on my team who need to talk to me every day. There's other people on my team who do really well, who I have to go after for updates, right? And that's just sort of the way they work. And so I'm not a big fan of creating rules and then making team members stick by them. I want people to be able to move flexibly, to be as successful as they possibly can be.

**00:38:03**

And then they just have to set those expectations for themselves. So at the end of the year, I'll have a goal meeting. In my goal meeting, I don't create numbers. I have them tell me how much money they want to make next year. And they have to make the number. It's not me, right? If they say, like, "\$5," we have to move it up. But they have to set the number, and then we back into that how much they have to sell to get there. That's now their base salary. Everything else they sell above that is bonus. If they sell under the number they just said they want to sell, and they don't

come talk to me by June or July, saying, "Listen, the year is terrible. New York City real estate market has fallen through the floor" or something like that, then they can't be with me. But I talk to my team more than I talk to any other client. And I really view teams as, like, football teams. You know, I'm awful at every sport known to man, but I do know how football teams work. And it's important that everyone can be their own individual rock star and be successful and be great at what they do.

**00:38:59**

But you're not all gonna win unless you're able to play well together and work together and talk to each other and figure it out as obstacles come at you, like the New York Jets, you know? I hope that answers the question. I don't know.

PAUL DARRAH: Okay.

PERSON: First, thank you for being here.

RYAN SERHANT: Thanks.

PERSON: I think the "Yes, and figure it out" mentality mindset very much resonates with most of us in this room, because we invented a category 20 years ago. And I think, in some ways, we're still doing that.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PERSON: Personal story--I met Fredrik...

RYAN SERHANT: Oh.

PERSON: In Starbucks, like eight years ago...

RYAN SERHANT: I'm sorry.

PERSON: And I've been here for a while. Well, he was--

RYAN SERHANT: I'm just kidding.

PERSON: He seemed to be a very different person eight years ago than he is on the show today. So I was kind of expecting him to be a douche, and he wasn't. He was very nice. But I've been in sales for 20 years, and I recounted a story to him that I had used a line that I heard on the show on a client...

RYAN SERHANT: Oh, wow.

PERSON: And it worked. And the line was--I was working with a very big telecommunications company, and the line was, "If you have \$7 million, you have \$8 million."

**00:39:59**

RYAN SERHANT: Yes.

PERSON: And I closed an \$8 million deal, so I owe that to you guys. So thank you.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PERSON: I have moved out of sales after 20 years...

PAUL DARRAH: You're welcome.

PERSON: And I'm now on a team that's responsible for training 10,000 sellers at Google on how to sell. And we're at this inflection point between being a trusted advisor and being a competitive seller 'cause it's a very fine balance. What do you think are the most important attributes of a seller, as they balance being a trusted advisor and a competitive seller?

RYAN SERHANT: Endurance, empathy, and enthusiasm.

PERSON: Ooh. Three Es. I like that alliteration.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, it's in the book.

[laughter]

PERSON: I'm buying it.

RYAN SERHANT: Like, you didn't just tee me up for that, but you did, sort of. But it's what I look for in every salesperson that I hire. And I do that by--they have to have enthusiasm, right? So I ask them to tell me the story about the greatest day in their life.

**00:40:56**

And if they tell me, like, "Well, Christmas when I was 10 was great," they cannot work with me. They have to have empathy. So I ask them to tell me about the worst day they've ever had in their life. And if they're like, "My dog died," they cannot work with me because the ability to be enthusiastic with a client and the ability to empathize with a client, that's the only way you get sales done. There will always be sales that just come down to numbers. Like, there will always be those conversations. And those are great. That's your base salary. Those are the deals that are just going to happen because the numbers make sense and the product's good. Everything else is empathy, enthusiasm, energy, education. All words that start with E. Yeah.

PERSON: Thank you.

PERSON: Hello.

RYAN SERHANT: Hi.

PERSON: So I'll use this opportunity 'cause I definitely don't have the money to ever work with you directly.

**00:41:53**

So if I was an investor and looking for an area in New York where I'd likely see the most upside in the next five to ten years, what would you recommend I do?

RYAN SERHANT: Bushwick.

PERSON: Okay.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah. Bushwick, Bed-Stuy, right? I think that Bed-Stuy is already kind of getting expensive, and people are already trying to go there. I think that Bushwick--anyone who buys in Bushwick today will do incredibly well in five years. And yeah, super simple.

PERSON: Do you have any listings?

RYAN SERHANT: Yes.

[laughter]

Listen, I am here to sell homes to all of you. Let's not--I don't want to meet any--I'm going to remember all of you. I don't want to meet any of you on the street or in Starbucks ever, and you're like, "Oh, I just bought a house. But I didn't know if maybe it was too small for you or I had this friend." No. I am here for a purpose, and it's to sell all of you homes or help you rent homes, okay? Just I want to make sure that that's super clear.

**00:42:49**

PAUL DARRAH: So on the left side, we're going to line up for people that want to buy an apartment. On the right side, we're doing the book signing.

RYAN SERHANT: Yes.

PAUL DARRAH: Just so you know.

RYAN SERHANT: Yes, yes, yes.

PERSON: Ryan, one question, like, given the variety in your background, how much, in your career, has it been about what you've wanted to do versus who you want to be?

RYAN SERHANT: Whoa. You Googlers.

[laughter]

I made a decision when I was younger--and I think this is important, because I talked to a lot of people who have this problem. They want to be a really great X, right? They want to--you want to grow up to be like me, like an actor, right? Or you want to grow up to be a successful banker or a successful engineer or something. And then when that doesn't happen, it's like a brick wall to the face and life is over, right? And then they go off and do something else.

**00:43:44**

There's a lot of people who run into those situations, where their whole life they wanted to do something 'cause they wanted to be that person. But, for me, whether it sounds crazy or not, I always just--I wanted to be successful. I wanted to squeeze as much out of life as possible because I knew life was short and I knew that I didn't want to leave potential on the floor. Like, I didn't want to be in the cemetery and be one of those people who was like, "Well, if he had only just done X, Y, and Z, we might know that he did that." Right? And so I chose success first, career second. And that's an important thing to put out there because a lot of people think it sounds weird and crazy and that it doesn't make sense. But if you choose career first--I could have done that with acting, and I wouldn't be here today. And I'd still live in my 300 square foot apartment at 38 West 31st Street, sharing a bathroom with 17 people.

**00:44:42**

Not that that's a bad thing. It's an honorable thing, maybe. But it wasn't what I wanted for myself. And I wanted to have a better quality of life because, again, life is super short. So I chose success first, career second. And I think when people do that, then when things don't work out, like when I was killed off on "As the World Turns," right, it wasn't this brick wall that I was hitting, where my life



was over, and I had to move home. It was, "Okay, so that career didn't work out. Let's see what else works. And real estate sounds awful, and real estate brokers are the worst people ever, but you know what? Maybe I'll try to change that and figure it out and do it in a different way." And-- does that answer your question?

PERSON: Definitely. Thanks.

RYAN SERHANT: Okay. Cut it.

PAUL DARRAH: All right.

RYAN SERHANT: Sometimes I just start going off in my head.

PERSON: Thanks so much for being here. Big fan.

RYAN SERHANT: No problem.

PERSON: I was wondering if you can maybe share about your castmates on the show? I know you've had some friendships, not friendships.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

**00:45:41**

PERSON: Would you consider them friends now and maybe something unexpected about the other brokers who appear on the show?

RYAN SERHANT: Listen, I have been on the show from the beginning with Fredrik. And so we have a love-hate relationship. Like, we're competitors. We go after the same projects, the same listings all the time. And it took us a while to figure out. But I think, in the last couple of years, maybe it's just because we're getting older, like, we just realized that we're a lot more alike than we thought. I think I'm better, but we're both equally competitive, and we want to do as best as we possibly can. But we're also in this crazy thing together, you know? Like it's that show--at least, when it first came out, it was watched by 25 million people around the world. And that's crazy to us. You know, we get fan mail from Korea and Iran.

**00:46:38**

How those people would ever know that I'm a real estate broker is beyond me. And I would never be able to afford that type of advertising. And so, listen, Fredrik and I are friendly now, but we're still very competitive. I haven't talked to Michael Lorber in forever. He was Season 1. Luis, I talk to a lot more now than I have in a long time. And he's actually back in the city. And I haven't told anyone yet, but I'll tell people at 3:00 p.m., on Instagram. He's gonna moderate my book signing at Barnes & Noble on Thursday, and it's going to be his first public appearance in like two years. And I've always been close to Luis, and he was at my wedding and everything. And then Steve--Steve is new. Steve is super pretty.

[laughter]

And so yeah. But Steve is great. Steve is a total sweetheart. He's great at what he does. He's a lot more sensitive than people probably think. Yeah. I don't know if I have any--

PERSON: Did you try and get him to join your team?

**00:47:38**

RYAN SERHANT: I did. We filmed. They filmed a scene with me, after "Town" crumbled, of me trying to get him to come to the team and figure that out 'cause I thought it would work. With Fredrik, it wouldn't work. But with Steve, I thought we could probably do more together than separate. And he thought about it. And then Corcoran just made him a really great offer, and then they just cut that whole scene.

[laughter]

PERSON: Thanks.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah.

PAUL DARRAH: And that's reality TV.

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, exactly. Yes.

PAUL DARRAH: So on behalf of the 10,000 potential sales that are in this building and the next building...

RYAN SERHANT: Yes!

PAUL DARRAH: Thank you.

RYAN SERHANT: Let's do it. Thank you.

PAUL DARRAH: This has been great having you. Definitely, we'll have people lining up to have you sign their book.

**00:48:21**

RYAN SERHANT: Yeah, I'd love to.

PAUL DARRAH: You can clearly follow Ryan on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and his YouTube channel, which highlights a day in the life of Ryan, which is actually interesting to watch, as well, so--

RYAN SERHANT: Oh, good. Thank you.

PAUL DARRAH: Thank you. Great having you.

[applause]

**00:48:40**

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[mellow music]