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# IMPACT MARYLAND MONTHLY

*with Eric Verdi*

"HOW TO THRIVE IN EVERY KIND OF MARKET"

JULY 2017



At Impact Maryland Real Estate we live by the philosophy that "Stories are the Currency of our Society." That's why we say, 'We Don't Sell Homes; We Sell Dreams.'

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## Flashback to Salisbury – 1997

I remember it like it was yesterday, standing in front of a class of 30 or 40 students-trying my hardest to just regurgitate what I had learned the past four years. My hands were shaking, and I was sweating so bad there were stains on my armpits. I was just staring at the words in front of me, trying to remember what to say next. *Was I saying it right? Was I relaying all the information I had spent so much time memorizing?*

This is the opposite of a positive storytelling experience. And it is the exact opposite of how our ancestors captured the attention of their audiences. If I had tried this back in the cavemen days, I would have been bonked on the head with a stick.

**I was not telling a story that captivated and connected with my audience. I was not winning the trust of my tribe.**

You know how the saying goes, back in the days of the caveman, before the written word, stories would be passed down from generation to generation (we wrote about this in our book, "*The Psychological Approach to Real Estate*"). You see, back then, human beings had no choice but to craft clever tales of adventure, prowess and victory to hold the attention of the group. They couldn't meander on about what they knew or what they had to offer. They had to engage. They had to connect. This is how modern civilization was born.

Today, the same dynamic is true. Except now storytelling skills don't win you the loyalty and respect of your fellow cavemen – they win you business. They win you profits, and they win you the life you've always wanted to live – **a life you can be proud of.**

If you have friends, neighbors or family members who, like you, are a savvy homeowner who is concerned about how to maximize the value of your investment, and you think they would appreciate IMPACT MARYLAND MONTHLY, I'd be happy to make that happen...and, have it come as a gift from you. Here's how it works: Simply shoot us an email ([subscribe@ClientProfitSecrets.com](mailto:subscribe@ClientProfitSecrets.com)) with your name and the name and address of the person whom would enjoy this newsletter. I'll include a note explaining that it is totally free because you arranged for a free subscription.

That day at Salisbury, I realized something very powerful about the spoken word. I realized that what I was afraid was not public speaking at all. I realized I was afraid of not memorizing all of my lines, not saying the words in the right order or not demonstrating everything I had learned through years of research.

### **I realized I wasn't speaking from the heart. I was regurgitating facts, lines on a page.**

Fast forward to now, 2017, and I have a much greater grasp of the power of public speaking and the power of story.

Just like with any profession, business or way of life, in real estate you are taught there is a set way of doing things. You are taught to memorize scripts, answer questions and approach objects from potential clients (or even spouses) in a certain way and with a certain tone in order to achieve a set result you are told you should achieve.

In my fifteen years in real estate, I achieved success following this set formula for real estate. I was happy. I was secure, and I had a lot to be thankful for. Yet, somehow something was missing. I wanted bigger and better.

Then, in 2011, I met Ryan Fletcher. I can't remember whether it was a mail piece or a Facebook post that initially drew us together. But as I soon as I met him, his story resonated with me. I had been researching Dan Kennedy at the time, and I could tell Fletcher was a student of his – his writing had all the markings of Dan's no-holds-barred, client-centered approach to storytelling (If you haven't heard of Dan Kennedy, yet, I suggest you pick up a copy of his book, "The Ultimate Sales Letter" right now. It is the ultimate foundation in writing to win your audience's trust and respect).

Fletcher and I had already learned the amazing power of storytelling from Dan and how to win over your prospect by speaking their language and telling them a story they could understand, relate to and connect with.

### **We were ready to move on to the next stage of storytelling. We both were hungry for more.**

So that's what we did. Since 2011, both he and I have evolved, along with other members of our group. For us, it's no longer about designing the perfect ad or targeting the right niche. It's not about selling a product or a service. It's about who can tell the most compelling story and (like the top dog

caveman of the Paleolithic era) build up their tribe. It's about creating a movement.

### **For the last 5 years, the power of storytelling has completely transformed my life, personally and professionally.**

Professionally, the business has skyrocketed. There are no cold calls, no chasing, no pestering, no sequential drip campaigns. In fact, we don't sell at all. We create content and tell stories.

What we have done is position ourselves, through the stories we have told (in newsletters, podcasts and magazines) to have a steady stream of natural inbound referrals coming our way every day. Since about 90% of our business comes from past clients or are direct referrals from our current audience these new clients already know our story, how we operate a different model, how we never 'sell.'

And in the rare instance that someone comes to us who has not heard our story, the first thing we do when we meet them is find out theirs. We want to know what makes them tick, what motivates them and what gets them out of bed in the morning. Why? Because when we get them to open up about their fears, wishes and dreams, we open up the most powerful part of themselves and create a perfect foundation on which to connect. Then, we simply share our story with them. We share what makes us different from every other Tom, Dick or Harry down the street.

### **We listen and truly connect on another level. They become our people, our tribe.**

That's why, when we meet with somebody new, we share our story and we want to hear theirs. We might share a story about a client or friend who had a lot of success in real estate (like the couple who followed our game plan to a T, invested in their home and the process, then we scientifically staged their home and they ended up getting an additional \$34,000 than their next-door neighbor), and we might share a pitfall to avoid (like a woman who wouldn't budge on her wallpaper and her house sat on the market for 4 months and had to have 3 price reductions to overcome the wallpaper). But we do this through telling stories and through relating other points of reference to our clients.

### **Thanks to the art of storytelling, our company is seeing an unprecedented level of growth.**

Storytelling is also how Frederick Advice Givers was born. It started with a quick conversation I had

with Fletcher in 2014. Someone had just come to my office wanting me to advertise in a magazine when the lightbulb went off and I had an Aha moment.

I said to Ryan, "Hey Fletch, I want to help other business owners. I want to help other local people share their stories. I want to write for them. I want to help them." I still remember Fletcher's uncanny response. He said "Verdi, Verdi. I love your heart and love what you want to do. But that's too much f\*\*ng work."

He was right, by the way. It was too much work. But here's what he suggested we do instead (which were pretty much doing to a 'T' right now). He said, "Here's what you're going to do. You're going to start a podcast and interview local business owners and entrepreneurs. From there, you will have stories written about them for them to use for their audiences."

So, we did just that. It took about a year to build out, but by March 2015, we launched *Frederick Advice Givers* and have recorded over 100 episodes with local entrepreneurs. In under two years, we have helped over 100 Frederick business owners share their stories. More than that, we have helped these business owners connect with their clients and potential clients.

### **We used the power of story to build up their tribe. We never sell. We always tell stories. We always connect.**

Just a word of caution though: you have to really commit. Once you commit to telling stories, the more personal they can become.

And the more personal they become, the tougher they can be to tell. It can be difficult to open up and talk about struggles you have had, family members who have passed away or tragic events that have happened to you or to people you really care about. But that is real life. That is what people want to hear.

When you open up about these tough times and the lessons they have brought about in your life, people

will open up to you. Quid pro quo. When you are open, compassionate and caring in your stories, people will be open, compassionate and caring in their stories to you. People thrive on connections, and they are motivated by common bonds.

Storytelling creates bonds. No, more than that, it is the only thing that does.

Recently, we started the Impact Club, here in Frederick. It's a movement created and supported by Impact Venture Capitalist (our local members) to support local charities in a more powerful way than any one person can do alone.

As co-founder of the Impact Club, I had to get in front of a group of 200 or 300 people (instead of a small class of 30 or 40) and I had to introduce the concept of the club. I had to get people to understand what it was all about. This there was no script. There was no research. I just got up there and spoke from the heart. I

told a story.

This time, unlike the 20-year-old Eric Verdi, the 41-year-old Eric Verdi had very little fear of standing up in front of the crowd. I wasn't nervous at all, and I knew in my heart what I wanted to say about the Impact Club. I knew I wanted to share a story about the Impact Club and how what we do will affect so many within our community. I wanted to share how, through the club, each person has a direct impact on another human being's life. I wanted to share how we take those small donations and turn them into massive impact.

This time, because I spoke from the heart and told a story, I was able to connect. I was able to inspire and build a club I could be proud of with over 240 members. I was able to put those cavemen storytellers to shame.

That is the power of storytelling. It helps create connections between you and your audience and helps to position you in the light that you want to be positioned.

If I can leave you with one parting thought. If you can learn the art of Storytelling, then share this gift with your children it will take them wherever they want to go in life.

Cheers!!

# Don't Forget to Have Fun!!!!

## July Question

Q: What does WD stand for in WD-40?

Everyone who texts, emails or calls in the correct answer by the last day of this month will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to Carabba's, Outback, Bonefish.

## June Question & Answer

Q. Who was the first woman pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic?

A: Amelia Earhart

Congratulations: Chris Popple

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## Happy Birthday

Here are July Birthdays from our friends of **Impact Maryland Monthly**. If you have a birthday in July and don't see your name on this list, please email or call us so that we will include your birthday.

Katie Sillex	July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Lalania Knowlton	July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Caitlin Hamilton	July 21 <sup>st</sup>
Gary Hertzberg	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Heather Quill	July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Wingard	July 21st
Rob Edrington	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Andy Greenwood	July 14 <sup>th</sup>	Tanya Easter	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Phaedran Linger	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Aiden Wingard	July 14 <sup>th</sup>	Owen Cooper	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Tracy Boyd	July 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Linda Ranneberger	July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Paool Majalca	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Rob Easter	July 6 <sup>th</sup>	John Sulmonte	July 16 <sup>th</sup>	Elle Gorman	July 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Jim McClellan	July 7 <sup>th</sup>	Marisa Yeara	July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Ryan Bell	July 24 <sup>th</sup>
Emma Klinko	July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Caroline Ranneberger	July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Soraya Ally	July 24 <sup>th</sup>
Shelley Smith	July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Barb Yeager	July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Steph Delauder	July 26 <sup>th</sup>
Taylor Rawlett	July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Bill Crosthwait	July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Michelle Bitler	July 29 <sup>th</sup>
Terry Hood	July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Chad VanSant	July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Jacki Grubb	July 29 <sup>th</sup>
Aimee Jessup	July 12 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Spenkle	July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Britt Steele	July 30 <sup>th</sup>
Brian Bonadies	July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Jessie Donnellan	July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Allison Jones	July 31 <sup>st</sup>

**Be Sure to Wish these Friends a HAPPY BIRTHDAY if you see them.**

# IMPACT CLUB™

## WITH COMMITMENT THERE IS A RESPONSIBILITY

It's been a great ride these last 6 months as we have over \$41,000, to be exact \$41,400, in committed donations to 2 incredible local charities. The Heartly House was the recipient of the first Quarter Donation. Blessings in a Backpack won the 'most compelling story' vote on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Folks...

Having not been in fundraising before and not knowing what to expect I didn't realize what a commitment it is to pull together this event each quarter. It's basically another full-time job, but it is the most rewarding thing (outside of my family) that I've ever done. The feedback from both Heartly House and Blessings has been unreal.

**Just know that without each individual, without YOU, that Impact Club would not work.**

The premise, as you know, is that every member commits to donating \$100 a Quarter to the Charity that gets the most votes after sharing their 'story.'

What I didn't expect was 'chasing the money'. We had a GREAT turnout at the 2<sup>nd</sup> event, but having 232 members there are going to be some that they event date doesn't work. Vacation, Sick, Appointments, Kids Soccer, whatever it happens. And so many that couldn't make the event reached out to me either right before or right after. "Eric, how do we get our donation submitted?"

I'd tell them to drop off check, mail, or after the event, they could submit to Blessings in a Backpack site.



It's the ones' that haven't followed through on their commitment that make running Impact Club a job. Yes, we have processes for following up with members to make sure that they fulfill their commitment to the charity, but that process is tedious and time consuming. But that's ok, that's what I signed up for being co-founder of the Impact Club.

**Ultimately, if individuals don't fulfill their commitment we will revoke their membership.**

I can't have people that don't follow through, that don't make their quarterly

donation.

The charity is the one that loses out. Not you. Not me.

For example, Blessings in a Backpack, their mission is to feed kids from low income families that get support through the schools during the week for meals, but NOT the weekends. Blessings fills that void. Guess what? It takes \$100 to feed a child for an ENTIRE school year. And each member donates \$100. SO, quick math. Each member basically feeds a child the entire school year. How incredible is that?

If we end up short of our \$23,200 commitment to Blessings, then I will pay it out of my pocket the difference. I can't have these kids go hungry because of members that wouldn't fulfill their commitment.

**So, I ask. Are you in or are you out?**

PS – Keep checking [www.ImpactClubFrederick.com](http://www.ImpactClubFrederick.com) for updates on the next 'Epic Night of Entertainment.'

"We Interview Frederick Business Owners, Entrepreneurs, and Thought-Leaders To Bring Frederick Residents The Best Advice



From Our Community's Brightest Minds"

**FREDERICK**  
**ADVICE GIVERS**  
**PODCAST**  
Interviewing  
Our Brightest Minds

with host:

Eric  
Verdi



## Advice and Insight from our Brightest Minds

(Listen on iTunes, Stitcher or [www.FrederickAdviceGivers.com](http://www.FrederickAdviceGivers.com) – want to be interviewed, apply at [www.FrederickPodcastBooking.com](http://www.FrederickPodcastBooking.com))



**Mark Trager** – Episode 108 - Mark Trager grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and earned his degree in teaching and art. He began teaching art and later found himself working with a campaign director of a fundraising agency, and fell in love with the job. He then became a campaign director for the firm, and began raising money. Three years later, Mark opened his own fundraising

firm, and has never looked back. Mark says he enjoys his job because he wakes up every day and helps someone in someway. His past led him to stumble upon employment at The Heartly House, where he can help people who were taken advantage of in abusive ways. Mark has been with The Heartly House for over 60 days, and is the newest Director of Development. The Heartly House in Frederick alone, gets 600 calls a month, that's 20 calls a day. It offers counseling, legal services, emergency shelters and more to create a safe haven for those who've been abused. Just \$100 can help bring food, shelter, and safety to one person for a day. To donate or find out more: [www.HeartlyHouse.org](http://www.HeartlyHouse.org)



**Adam Cubbage** – Episode 107 - Adam was born and raised in Philadelphia, went to Penn State, and served in the military for over a decade. When Adam got out of the army, he began defense contracting. Finding himself out of work a few years later, he began to reinvent himself. Adam wanted to make an impact in the community by helping small businesses. At the time, more businesses were closing than opening, he realized it was the short term successes that led to the failures. He wants CenterPoint to help lead small businesses to success, teaching them to reach their goals and soar even higher. CenterPoint is designed for the people, by the people, designed so that small businesses can grow, achieve and thrive. *CenterPoint Strategic Business Services* is proud to be an **ACCREDITED SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTANT** by the AASBC. Find out more at [www.CenterPointsBS.com](http://www.CenterPointsBS.com)



**JoAnna Price** – Episode 106 - From being a corporate guru to becoming a stay at home mother, JoAnna jumped back at the opportunity to get back into the workforce. Working at a company in Frederick for over 10 years, JoAnna wanted to pursue her passions and become her own boss. She stumbled onto Nerium International and swiftly became a brand partner. JoAnna believes Nerium provides more than just products, it builds relationships and community. Nerium International focuses on anti-aging, health and wellness. They began solely in the United States with 1 product, their anti-aging night cream, and within their first year, they reached \$100 million in sales. In their fourth year, they reached \$1 billion in sales! Nerium has now expanded into 8 countries ranging from Canada to Hong Kong. Nerium's products are all patented, have exclusive ingredients to the brand, and holds extensive research to the legitimacy of each product. JoAnna also mentions that Nerium is the biggest sponsor for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Connect with JoAnna on Facebook



**Michael DeMatta** – Episode 105 - Michael's creativity began at the early age of ten when he played on Twisted Sister's drum kit. His father worked in production and Michael swiftly followed in his father's footsteps. After graduating High School, he began working on his business. Michael has always been his own boss, following his dreams and working his way up the career ladder. MD Films focuses on creativity and production. He can do anything from visual content for corporate giants or physically working on concert animations and venue production for artists. Michael makes each of his clients a priority, giving each a detailed service and attention to detail. He prides his business on thinking outside of the box, and using different lenses to visualize each company to its fullest extent. To connect with Mike check out to [www.MdFilms.net](http://www.MdFilms.net)

# 'STORIES FROM THE STREET'

**Stories from the Street** is a series monthly articles using real life examples, told in 'story' format to give you knowledge of what actually happens behind the scenes of a Real Estate Transaction.

## Reality? Really...

I turned on the TV the other day to catch Caribbean Life on HGTV. Yes, I am in real estate so I find these shows entertaining, not in the way that you probably do, but I watch through a different lense because what they try to depict as 'reality TV' I live on a daily basis.

**Each episode starts the same.** They introduce you to the buyers. The husband has some strange profession that you immediately question if it is real, a cricket breeder or an organic life coach, and the wife's job is something that most would consider a hobby, a vintage napkin collector or a reclaimed wood advocate. You get the idea

Then they show the happy couple looking at 3 different houses. As they walk through each of them, they complain about things like paint color or flooring choices. The house on the beach is too small and they want something newer and the new house is too far a walk from the beach. These people are typically looking to escape and get away to paradise.

After the 3 showings, they sit down at some island cafe with an island drink to discuss their 3 choices and "decide" which house they want. Of course they always get their first choice and they NEVER pay what the house is actually listed for.

### It is garbage, all of it.

What this show portrays is nothing like what people experience when looking for a house. But, it is meant to be entertainment, not reality.



**I wish I could have a film crew follow me and my clients around all day. Hey that's an idea maybe I'll do just that.**

Don't get me wrong, I love what I do and there is no feeling better than handing the keys over to a buyer at closing, but the journey to get to that point isn't always as glorious as the folks over at HGTV make it look like.

One couple we worked with recently can attest to this. Had to submit offers on 3 different properties. They were starting to get discouraged. They thought they were doing something wrong. They weren't, but because of the type of financing they were doing there were limits on what they could offer. It didn't take them long to realize that buying a house was nothing like the couples on *Caribbean Life*.

**Thankfully, we were able to locate the perfect house and unlike the previous offers, this one got accepted!**

I'm not even going to get into the hurdles that we had on the home and septic inspections. The sleepless nights they had to navigate through all the perils of buying a home. We tell everyone in the beginning that this won't be a smooth process. There WILL be bumps in the road. We WILL have hurdles to overcome. But we WILL work through them!

One of my most important responsibilities is to set the expectations from the start. I want them to have fun. I want the home buying process to be enjoyable. But I need my buyers to know that buying a house is nothing like *Caribbean Life*.

Have a great month! Stay Cool.

# IMPACT MARYLAND MONTHLY

*with Eric Verdi*

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## Testimonials from recent 'IMPACT Maryland Monthly' Members

- We have never worked with a [company like Impact]. They were organized, direct, and got the job done the first time- the right way. They went above and beyond and were true to their word. They always did the right thing and we felt confident being part of the process even though we were halfway across the country. This company is amazing. -Ian and Heather M
- Impact is a class act to work with , no worries—Craig D
- This is my third house I've sold and I've never had such a positive experience. [Impact agents] are very knowledgeable of the market, realistic, honest and has the best interest for their clients at all times - Carl and Amy G.

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