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## When Realtors Cry

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Recently there was a televised program about how to make ends meet in these financially challenging times (they actually used the "R" word -- RECESSION).

I was in between doing one thing or another, e.g., checking email while I straightened some transactional paperwork about my home office, or some other trivial pursuit, (a story in itself), when the snippet caught my attention. I paid attention to the backdrop story, about fifteen minutes or so.

The ideas seemed right on, but nothing so foreign to anyone who applies a little common sense, e.g., "...cut out waste, cut back on lavish expenditures, moderate your lifestyle, save wherever possible, sell what you don't need or use, tighten the belt, conserve, and watch your priorities..." among a few interesting things one can do to improve their lot -- (recycling?).

However, what really surprised me the most about this program was the casual remark made by the presenter about the guest couple's profession -- they are a husband and wife Realtor team!

The sad commentary is that this couple could well be the "poster children" for all Realtors. Many in the profession find themselves in a free fall without a parachute, not knowing where their next check will be coming from, let alone how to make ends meet. This was made abundantly clear in this program, and

although the real estate profession was not the topic of discussion, it was a troubling commentary of the type of trouble anyone of us might find ourselves in due to the changing economy.

I am certain this couple didn't write the good doctor to expose him or herself in such a troubling position, but it is pandemic that the tough economy is affecting us all, and Realtors are no exception, as exemplified by this otherwise "normal" couple.

Interestingly, the advice given by the "expert" panelists was, among other interesting things, to find anything you can do to tide you over. But nothing was mentioned about what that might be other than to give examples of "jobs" persons in these predicaments might resort to, e.g., delivering newspapers, telemarketing, collection representative, etc.

This is something that might make any Realtor cry, and when the Mrs. on the show was told to cut out tuition for her children's private school, she did.

I don't pretend that I have any new twist on the way real estate is sold, however, I got a glimpse of where we're all doing this business a bit off kilter when you compare what we do, how we do it and what we settle for in the process.

**Question** when you call a plumber, as an example, to stop a leaky faucet, do you doubt you'll have to pay her? How about a Taxicab? Do you believe any taxi driver will take you to the next block without running the meter and you have you pay for that? How about a home inspector (or even a city building inspector), might they be willing to come inspect your house without so much as an expectation of getting paid an inspection fee or their full day's hourly wage(s)? Are you starting to see what I see? A major reason Realtors are in such straights is because Realtors DON'T GET PAID! Who made that rule up?

As a Realtor you bring a tremendous value to the table (speaking of those with experience and specialized training, of course). Why settle for anything less than what this is worth? Stop giving free advice. Stop being a free tour guide. Stop playing into someone else's perception of your lack of worth or value. And mostly, if you can exchange your time (delivery newspapers???) for the \$6.00 an hour, you might want to start figuring out what you expend in time and knowledge to any client who seeks you out and bill them. In attorney's parlance, "billable time".

This is a revolutionary and foreign concept to most Realtors only because we're so used to the way things have always been done. Obviously, challenging times require creative solutions and paradigm shifts. In case you haven't noticed, there are many online service providers that are doing something similar.

Let's stop crying and let's start re-thinking and re-working our model to make it make sense and compensate us for the time and effort we "invest" each and every time we "serve". You doubt that it can happen only because you're thinking someone else will do it for nothing. Don't be that someone else. We all deserve to earn our keep and we do plenty to that end -- even if escrow didn't close, right?

I believe the time is at hand for all Realtors to make that stand and take control if not of the transaction, which is still at the whim of the situation, the lender, the appraisal, the competition, etc., then of our (billable) time. Imagine that!