

Note to Self

27<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Dear Owners and Investors,

Life is funny, when you are young you are bullet proof and nothing is impossible. There is a time that creeps up on us all, and you realise that you aren't 20 any more, not even thirty! I have come to the realisation that I am not Wonder Woman.

I used to think that I could do it all, and could work the long hours, seven days straight for months on end - that is starting to change as we go past the decade mark. Of course there is the other problem, I have grown sideways and no longer fit into the uniform, seriously I have realised that I can't do things at the pace that I have been doing them. If I do, I will not be any good to you, Ramon, or our tenants.

We have been saying for years now we are going to slow down, and I think 2013 will be the start of this. We have a new person at the Property Ladder Realty team. Her name is Maureen and just like Cheryl the Angel Book Keeper she has come into our world and will make my life so much easier.

Don't be thinking that I Ramon and I are going off into the sunset on a cruise ship. Sadly you are stuck with us for the next 3 - 5 years. If the market improves quickly, we will get parole and be able to head off early. Until then, you are all stuck with us and the way we do things.

I think because Ramon and I fell into property management, rather than wake up saying we are going to start a property management company - we have essentially made it up as we have gone along. The things that are important to us are essentially three simple things:

The rent is paid on time without the need to chase up the tenants - this is frustrating and time consuming

The property is looked after well - a good tenant will leave the property in exactly the same condition or even better sometimes, and they may have been there for years.

They don't wind up the neighbours - this pretty much goes hand in hand with the other two. If a tenant causes issues for the neighbours, they aren't normally paying the rent or looking after the property.

Because we live and breathe the business all day, every day of the year - we know it inside out. It is only when someone new comes along into the business that you truly get an understanding of just how different we do things. Maureen has been busy meeting the tenants and seeing the properties. Unlike some other agencies, we don't just set a time, complete a Notice of Entry and then go in whether it is convenient or not for the tenant. We have called each of the tenants and structured the viewings around when they will be home. It is important for the tenants to meet Maureen - and vice versa. This way when Peaceful Lover (don't ask) calls, she will know where his unit is, who he is and what he is like.

I have taken for granted just how many great tenants we have, many of them are long term tenants and many of them will not leave our company. They have been with other companies, and realised just how easy we are to deal with. Now that the rental market is starting to tighten up, we are starting to see many of our old tenants want to return or giving our number to friends that are looking for a place. It does make our lives easier when great tenants return and want to rent a property we have - we know they will look after it and pay the rent.

Yesterday I was at the office when I noticed a people mover van move up. I saw the people that were in there and was silently hoping they weren't coming to our office - sure enough the gate opens up and they walk up the stairs and ring the bell. I put my smiling professional face on, but didn't invite them into the office. There was a male in his late 20's, two small children under 4, a female that again would be in her late 20's and very pregnant and then a huge man with dreadlocks that would be their "case worker".

Now there are some things that you should say when looking for a rental property, and then there are others that you definitely shouldn't. The first words the male said to me - and I am not making this up "My Parole Officer said to come and see you for a rental" It took a moment for the words to sink in and fortunately we have no rentals that would suit them. I did tell them to keep an eye on the website and if something does come up they definitely need to call me to arrange for an inspection!!!

To finish off, it won't be a tenant story, but a story that was sent to Ramon recently. I do hope that you get something out of it, just like we did.

Hope you are all happy and well in your world.

Linda

*A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.*

*The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.*

*The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous 'yes.'*

*The professor then produced two Beers from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.*

*'Now,' said the professor as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things - your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favourite passions - and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else - the small stuff.*

*'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life.*

*If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.*

*Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.*

*Spend time with your children. Spend time with your parents. Visit with grandparents. Take your spouse out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and mow the lawn.*

*Take care of the golf balls first - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.*

*One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the Beer represented. The professor smiled and said, 'I'm glad you asked.' The Beer just shows you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of Beers with a friend.*