

# The Mark Borst Letter

## A Year of Firsts.

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It was October 2015, and I got the call from my mom, come home to see grandma, it could be time - no really...Grandma would be 100 years old November 22nd, 2016. Over the years I received the same phone call more than one time, but normally by the time I got to see Grandma Marge she was spunky and full of life. I would often joke with her that she was ready to take a jog around the park. Grandma Marge was the matriarch of our family as well as a surrogate to others. Over her years Grandma Marge had lived through and seen a lot of things not only in the world around her but also in her personal life. Grandma Marge had Five (5) daughters whose births spanned from 1941 - 1966, the last of which was an aunt before she was born. Grandma helped at the family store as well as take care of the family house which included up to three generations of relatives under one roof. Grandma was known for one thing throughout the land, she told you what she thought, no matter what. Truth Teller! Well, I did go to see

Grandma Marge late October 2015 and it wasn't the same as the times before, she was frail, and we all knew the time was near. November 2, 2015, Grandma Marge Carroll Ingrassia died, she was not sick, her body had just failed from age. A Widow since August 21, 1992, but now she was now back with S. Ted.

Grandma Marge lived a full happy life, which we all came to celebrate on November 6th, 2015 to lay her to rest.

During the viewing before the funeral mass, my mom, grandma's oldest daughter fainted and was taken away by ambulance. The funeral proceeded as planned; It was a beautiful ceremony capped off with my niece singing the Ava Maria.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** - Mark Borst is an entrepreneur and an innovator of the real estate industry. Mark Borst is the creator of the "Value-Driven Approach to Sell Real Estate," and is the Broker/Owner of Versatile Real Estate Solutions LLC. Borst has been called "a committed philanthropist" for his mission to raise/donate over \$10,000 to medical-related charities each year including his own charity Naked Heads Limited started with his Son in mind. Mark is a leader in the Northwest Indiana business community, including sitting on various boards past and present. Mark can be reached at [Mark@OurFreeBook4Charity.com](mailto:Mark@OurFreeBook4Charity.com)

Soon after the ceremony we found out that mom was ok and they were releasing her, that she had an enlarged gallbladder and probably needed it removed.

Over the next few weeks, tests performed, and Mom says that they are waiting on removing the gallbladder until after Thanksgiving. Well, Thanksgiving comes, and after dinner, Mom tells us they haven't removed the gallbladder yet because she was referred to an oncologist. WTH... December 4th, 2015 was the appointment. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 - Bile Duct Cancer which was possibly metastasized. More questions than answers at this point. The next few weeks are a blur. A short hospital stay, then a rehab facility, then back to the hospital for a few more days then home for HOSPICE all before Christmas. Christmas was difficult; Mom was still there

mentally, but she was fading fast. New Years came and went, the downward spiral was moving quicker. Between my sisters and my wife Lisa and I, we were taking shifts/days and nights to help my

dad with mom. By January 10th mom was bed ridden and was not able to communicate very well..given last rights, and her vitals as they were, the Hospice nurse felt it was any time now. We all said our last goodbye's and were at peace with something that was so quick, so crazy. In normal Ginger fashion, she was doing this on her time, she laid in comatose state until January 17th,



2016 Ginger Ingrassia Borst finally succumbed to her illness. Six weeks from diagnosis to death. With the agony that she endured at the end we were grateful it was short, but the fact that it was so quick - painful.

Now for a year of first's for my sisters, my dad and I.

- March 12, 2016 - Mom would have been 75 years old
- July 1st, 2016 - Sister Sue's Birthday with no Mom to sing happy bday
- September 2nd, 2016 - Mom and Dads 55th Wedding anniversary
- September 19th, 2016 - Sister Bobbi's birthday with no Mom to sing happy bday
- September 29th, 2016 - Dad's 78th birthday spent as a widower
- October 17th, 2016 - My birthday with no Mom to sing happy bday
- November 22nd, 2016 - Would have been Grandma Marges 100th birthday - so close to the Smuckers Jar!
- November 24th, 2016 - First Thanksgiving without Mom.
- December 25th, 2016 - will be the first Christmas since Mom has passed.

A Large family filled with events all year long between graduations, anniversaries, birthdays, sports, jobs, significant others, etc. all have been with one less person to be our cheerleader, our shoulder to cry on, our advice giver, our confidant. But we would always hold the memories of years past and try to forget the 75 days of misery.

Mom, we miss you, We Love you.

Words are sometimes hard to express for me, for most people. When I first found out mom was sick, I wrote her a letter. I never had a chance to show it to her, but here it is.

*To Mom (and Dad)*

*I don't even know where to start. I can see you inside of you; I understand that you may not be able to communicate clearly at times...but I can tell you are still ultra-aware of your surroundings. We all love and support you in this time of your need. Please know and be proud of the job you have done raising us into the people we are today...are we perfect? Not even close (some more than others) Just look at the grandkids you are responsible for creating. This is a direct result of how we were raised, and now have raised our kids in a similar fashion*

*No matter if when you broke my ear, smashed my hand in the car or when you would let me ramble on about nothing late at night during my college years...I wouldn't change any of it. You supported me in every hill or valley in my life with the same love and affection - you always tried to make someone else at fault for MY mistakes and let me take credit for all the triumphs. I knew you were always looking out for me and I loved it!*

*Right now you only need to be strong for you, you have been a rock in our lives since you carried us into life. If you let go in an hour, a week, a month or a year, please know you owe us nothing more, you have done it all to the Nth degree. Our gift to you is to strive our hardest to continue the "Borst Way" to develop polite, well-mannered smart ass kids that don't take shit from anyone... and for you (both) to be remembered and in the way that will make you proud as you are watching down on generations to come.*

In a short 75 days, I lost two of the three most important woman in my life. They will be missed but never forgotten. They taught me so much, and I hope they would say the same about me. During this time the third woman in my life, my wife Lisa, was a rock and has taken and carried the torch, which my mom handed her, for the

family with pride and dedication.

No matter how we think we are doing in raising our children, it is in times of stress and difficulty that we can truly see the fruits of our labor. As Mom and Grandma raised all of us and how Lisa and I have raised our boys, I think the integrity and selflessness have been proven time and time again

Shortly after Mom died only 75 days after grandma, Xandru asked me "how are Andrea and Patrice Doing" I follow up with a fine I guess, Why? He says "Well they just lost their mom and sister, it must be hard on them" being only 13 at the time I hope he continues this attitude of giving - it will take him far in whatever he does.

Brogan a boy of few words, but wise beyond his years; I caught in a full meditative state during the wake for mom. I have no idea what he was doing, but I imagine he was saying his goodbyes.



Both Grandma Marge and My mom were very big influencers in my life. During this year, I have not expressed my emotions enough, but I have grieved the loss of my mom, gone much sooner than I imagined and Grandma Marge. These two extraordinary women who gave so much of themselves to make sure everyone around them was in a good place.

One of my goals for 2017 is to continue that mindset in their memories not only within my family but in the community that has given so much to me over the last 16 years.

In the past few months, I have started on this journey in my professional career. I began working with a coach to help me dedicate the right focus on work and help me create a movement that can help change the lives of others in my community. Although I sell real estate, it is not about real estate...it is about so much more. It's about people, it's about community, it's about changing lives in a positive way. This newsletter is part of my journey, but I will also be launching a podcast where I will be interviewing business owners in our community that are problem solvers, that are difference makers, that are influencers! We will also be launching a new website, and introducing a few very exciting concepts to the Northwest Indiana Community. I'm so excited to bring on the new year.



As we head into the new year, let's make sure that the reflection from the year is one to remember. Everyone Have a Merry Christmas, and I Know together we will make 2017 a great year.



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### *MARK's Corner of Incitement*

#### *Quote I'm Pondering*



#### *Recommended Podcast*

*Tell Me Something I Don't Know on itunes or stitcher radio*

# An Informal Interview With The Collaborator.

The book is titled, 'The Value-Driven Approach To Sell Real Estate – A practical guide to protect yourself from Real Estate Greed & bank an extra \$30,000 in profit.'

**Interviewer:** Mark, you're not like most agents. You publish the truth. You're a bit of a crusader, which I want to talk about in a minute. But, with the help of your team, you published the book, "The Value-Driven Approach To Sell Real Estate," a practical guide to protect yourself from Real Estate Greed & bank an extra \$30,000 in profit, in addition, you founded Tri Town Nurse's Only Program®, host a business podcast on iTunes, and are the editor-in-chief of Tri Town Advice Givers® magazine.

Going back to the book. I've heard you say that studying Warren Buffett, your fascination in his investment philosophies, has led to superior results for your clients - could you explain how this is possible... and how it differs from the approaches of other real estate agents?

**Mark Borst:** Absolutely... There's no question about it. The right approach can make all the difference in a family's home sale, especially how it impacts their profit. Let me start with an example. And I won't use names for obvious reasons, but you'll still be able to grasp the concept. So Homeowner "A" put their home for \$210,000. On that same day, homeowner "B" put their home on the market for \$240,000... a full \$30,000 more.

Both homes were near identical; both had the same 2-story layouts, were in nice neighborhoods,

just a few blocks of each other, built in the same year and, had virtually all the same upgrades and design features, even built by the same builder.

What happened next isn't what you'd expect.

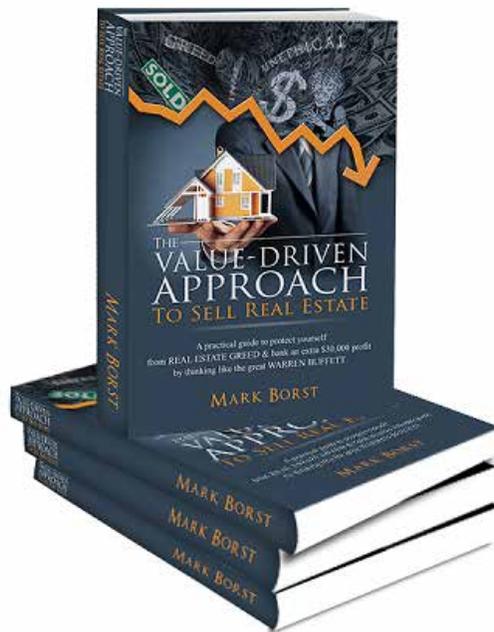
Homeowner "B" sold their home in just days, accepting an almost full price offer. Homeowner "A", on the other hand, despite being priced a full \$30,000 lower... his home sat on the market for months.

Homeowner "A" received hardly any showings. Very few buyers came through the house... the offers he did receive were all low-ball offers too, with heavy negotiations. There were lots and lots of contingencies. In other words, the contracts were written in favor of the buyer, not the seller, which is not ideal...

After 30 days, a price reduction was done. After 60 days, another price reduction. That one for \$10,000 bucks. After 90 days, there was another price reduction. And this continued...

After six-months, Homeowner "A's" home still hadn't sold. Eventually, the homeowner pulled the home off the market altogether. He was frustrated, depressed and, as you can imagine, puzzled... How was Homeowner "B" able to sell his home, for a much higher sales price when, seemingly, he – Homeowner "A" – couldn't give his home away for thousands less...

**Interviewer:** What accounted for the difference?



**Mark:** It had nothing to do with price. It had nothing to do with square footage. And it had nothing to do with the lot size or the design features.

It was simply the fact Homeowner “B” did not make any of the cardinal home-selling sins, or what I call, “Fundamental Mistakes” that Homeowner “A” did. And he made a ton of them....

**Interviewer: What do you mean by Fundamental Mistakes?**

**Mark:** Here’s what I mean. Homeowner “A,” priced his home using a CMA or what is known as a “Comparative Market Analysis” or “Free Home Evaluation.” This is a very common term in real estate, and it’s the approach taken by about 90% of real estate agents.

Unfortunately, it also is the least effective approach when it comes to maximizing sales price and profits, and decreasing time on market.

It sounds counter-intuitive, I know. But homebuyers don’t buy based on “price.” Their decision, almost always comes down to value. So if you can increase the value, at least the perceived value of your home, then, just as Homeowner “B” did, you’re able to legitimately increase your home’s sales price without running the risk of over-pricing it.

You definitely do not want to over-price your home. So this is why a value-driven approach over a price-driven approach is so important, and can account for such a huge spike in profits. It’s a process that starts with a detailed diagnosis of the property being sold, to be able to identify the areas where perceived value can be created. It’s also a process that is laid out in the book, which you can read in detail, starting in Chapter 3.

**Interviewer: How does someone go about taking a value-driven approach? Is there a plan someone can follow?**

**Mark:** There is... and it starts with a total different mindset. First, you have to stop thinking of your home as a ‘home with a sales price,’ and start

thinking of your home as a ‘business with a stock-price.’

We call this the “Value-Driven Approach to Sell Real Estate,” which resulted from studying Warren Buffett’s investment philosophy. And when you do this, it’s possible to extract upwards of \$30,000 more from your home, than other similar homes on the market.

We’ve also been testing this approach in different markets throughout the United States and Canada, sharing the approach outlined in the book with other consumer-focused agents. In fact my buddy Steve Sunseth, up in London, Ontario Canada, just sent me this update, in regards to how the approach worked for one of his recent clients:

“It [the home] hit the market Friday, had an offer Sunday and a second Monday. Sold in 3 days in multiple offers for \$12,000 more than I would have recommended if I went by the comps alone. Based on the comps we should have expected a sale price of around \$228,000. We got \$240,000.”

And see, just by adhering to the approach, that’s an extra \$12,000 in profit. Not every home has the \$30,000 of additional profit in it, but the approach works as it was designed – to maximize profit that is possible. And \$12,000, extra cash in hand, is certainly nothing to sneeze at. Needless to say, his clients were happy.

**Interviewer: To most people, that sounds almost too good to be true. Where do we begin?**

**Mark:** Let’s start by taking a look at these people’s mindset, and how most people approach the sale of their home. I’ll give you an analogy about business, and then we’ll loop back around to how this applies to real estate and someone’s home sale.

If you’ve ever sold a million-plus dollar business, you know you don’t just wake up one day, put a “for sale” sign in the store window, and have someone write you a check. This kind of “shoot from the hip” tactic, is a very bad approach if you want to maximize profit.

Most businesses are prepared for sale, 6 to 8 months in advance at minimum, and typically 12 to 24 months.

During this period, the business owner often documents every detail of the business. The

marketing costs, the profit margins, the lifetime customer value of each new customer, the cost to acquire a new customer, the operating expenses... and so forth. They often, during this time, also, start fine-tune their procedures and systems for inventory, management, and sales.

In short, there are many different factors the business owner seeks to improve, during this time period to make the business more attractive to a potential buyer of that business. Why?

The higher the perceived value, the higher the “stock price” that business, or company’s stock can command... Hence, the story above, this is how Homeowner “B” prepared his home for sale, as a business, as an investment, as a means to Homeowner “A” on the other hand, did like most people. He thought he knew it all, did none of what is recommended in the book, and it cost him big time.

**Interviewer: What do you mean by that? Can you explain?**

**Mark:** Sure, let me clarify. I talked about it earlier, the death of client profits, is making Fundamental Mistakes. You simply can’t come back from it. Especially in real estate, you don’t get multiple shots at it.

In this case, Homeowner “a,” his first Fundamental Mistake was the assumption that all real estate agents are the same... the kind of thinking that says, “any one agent is just as good as another.”

So here’s what Homeowner “A” did. About 2 weeks before he put his home on the market, he interviewed 3 different agents. Each agent came to his home, sat at his kitchen table, and each one did their listing presentation. They all showed him their CMA: Comparative Market Analysis of the neighborhood. And they all gave him a price-range of what his home might be worth, based on the sales in the neighborhood.

Since each of these home evaluations came in pretty close to each other, as you’d expect, Homeowner “A” assumed he should price his home somewhere in that range. And probably close to the middle... And see, this is what led to Fundamental Mistake No. 2. He never asked or even bothered

to question, what if.... the agents he interviewed, were using an inferior, ineffective approach in the first place - to gather the data - that he was looking at, that ultimately he would base his decision on...

It’s funny, because in business, a consultant is universally known as ‘someone who can teach you 112 ways to have sex, but can’t get a date on Friday night.’ In other words, he has all the answers, but then isn’t able to actually put anything into practice. And, for the most part, the same is true in real estate, which is what complicates things.

Going back to our business analogy, the businesses that sell and yield their owner the greatest profit, are the ones - behind the scenes – where there is almost always a “consultant” providing that business owner invaluable advice and direction.

The challenge of course is, how do you find that person, whether selling a home or selling a business, capable of providing you that invaluable direction? It’s not easy. There are many wolves in sheep’s clothing. But that’s why I wrote the book. It’s based on research. Homeowners can do their research and due diligence – to be able to tell the difference between a superior and inferior approach.

**Interviewer: I’m curious... I know you got to run, we’re running short on time, but if someone wants to learn more, or has a question, what is the best way for readers to contact you.**

**Mark:** It’s pretty easy. If someone wants to learn more about the “value-driven approach to Sell Real Estate”, and so forth, they can request a free copy of the book by visiting: **www.**

**OurFreeBook4Charity.com.** Or email works too: **Mark@OurFreeBook4Charity.com**, or you can always try my direct line as well: 219-714-2399.

**Interviewer: Mark, thanks so much for taking the time. I really appreciate it.**

**Mark:** You bet. It was my pleasure.