

VOLUME 7

BE THE *last* AGENT
STANDING



MENTORSHIP

by Terren Moore

FIRE MUST BE TENDED

A Generation's Prayer for Mentors

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A Generation's Prayer for Mentors



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Lonely, abandoned, and without a map. Americans tout children being our future; Our industry needs a present.

The insurance industry is full of knowledge and first-hand experience—85.6% of our independent channel has more than 10 years of insurance expertise. We are an enlightened group of professionals; fully prepared and intrinsically capable of serving our clients through all hardships they may face. Our independent channel has seen every obstacle in every form imaginable. Consequently, who among us will tend the torches to light the path of those who seek to follow?

A recent study conducted by The Big “I” in October 2022 stated, “Finding qualified staff is the No 1 challenge going forward in the insurance industry.” More plainly said, our industry has a substantial mentorship opportunity on its horizon. There is a

perpetual worry for many in business about spending time, money, and resources to mentor employees, as many could become “the future completion.” The heart palpating fear of impending unjust loss. In all elements of life, we put time, money, and effort into new people, no matter the relationship. From business to marriage, we must work hard and hope that the people we care for continue by our side in the future. Our relationship fears as humans are the same in all segments of our world. We worry so much about the possibility of being abused by those we love, whether the damage be financial or emotional. The pain of betrayal from the ones we care for most cuts like a knife. Out of fear do we shake our fists and collectively decide not to invest in the advancement of our spouses, family, children or staff? One might assume it is the easiest way to save ourselves from the inconvenient pain of betrayal. Let us not be too hasty and forget,



those people are our staff, our team, and our industry of brothers and sisters. Each of us is charged with the responsibility of serving clients and in no small part, our communities. With responsibility to our future in mind, is it better to train a team that leaves or keep a team that was never trained?

I wish, in all of this, I could stand on a mountain and proclaim to have the path forward. That some millennial kid from Texas has laid the path, well-lit and well-kept, for all those to follow. I admit I am a bit pompous, just not enough to be proclaimed an ass.

Starting an agency from scratch was unequivocally the loneliest time of my life. I stuck to the paths I knew best, focused solely on sales, marketing, and service. The preliminary stages of agency life were filled with sales and serving my clients. I stuck to the paths I knew, the only ones I felt comfortable traversing. I just kept feeling a question scratch at me, "what more has God called me to do? Should I stay on this path, vision solely fixed to keeping the lights on?"

I found myself asking bad questions, throwing away my time and money as I wandered down lonely roads. The way forward felt unpaved and unkempt. Many of the paths I traveled led to nothing but broken spirits. I had explored ideas in the dark for so long that I had become lost and frustratingly acclimated to the feeling. My mind started surrendering to the dark road and all the clawing questions it represented. The journey forward felt dark and full of terrors.

The moment my fire forward blazed brightest was as I sat quietly in the audience of Soup Live as Shawn Walker introduced the next speaker, Chris Paradiso. As he spoke, my heart began to race as I felt I could not keep seated. The assumed dead-ends of my agency's future exploded open as I could see new ways to forge forward. Chris's speaking lit places in

my future I had no clue could be reached on my own. I describe this moment as staring into the sun. I had questions, ideas, and dreams all in that very instant. What started as blinding has turned into friendship, mentorship, and brotherhood.

In the year that has followed, Chris Paradiso has made me question every part of my business and parts of my soul. I walked in awe up and down the paths he so frequently traveled for his agency. I gazed in amazement, seeing a man working tirelessly to guide all who would follow. For me, this was my call to action: my responsibility is to others! I could never lose sight of the early years of my agency, those late-night feelings of bewildered abandonment. In the last year, Chris has fed the fire in my heart and laid gold nuggets along my journey. He challenged me to be the better version of myself. He has led me towards becoming the mentor I needed when I first embarked on the quest for agency ownership.

One person can change someone's road forward forever. I have had tough talks at key moments of my adventure with my adopted insurance family, the brightest lights I have had the pleasure to meet: Chris Paradiso, David Carothers, Nancy Loder, Daniel Seong, Mike Stromsoe, and, of course, my brother Taylor Dobbie. Without them nurturing and guiding, I know I would surely be lost. I have borne witness to them tending the torches for our industry's future. In the words of Ayn Rand, "The greatest gift a person can give to another is the sight of achievement."

In the present, we all should strive to become a gift to others along their quest. As many of our constituents pray for qualified staff and a stronger industry, I feel God has answered, giving us the opportunity to mentor those we wish to lead. I do not know what others may think or do but I will tend the torches, light the path, and help guide any of those who seek to follow.