



## Austin McFarland - Newly minted and nowhere to go but up

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by Ellen Baragon

You may be having a tough time working your way through this pandemic. But imagine if you finally got your Realtor license, and boom! Three months in, the coronavirus shuts down the entire global economy and you're not supposed to leave the house let alone work with clients.

Would you say, this is a bad omen and it's time to quit while you're still ahead? Maybe. But not if you're Austin McFarland. You could say the newly minted Realtor has no reason to quit in spite of the pandemic barriers. He's 25, smart, happily married with a first child on the way and healthy enough to be preparing to compete in Iron Man Canada, not to mention the love of a mini Labradoodle pup to round things out.

In spite of a full plate of new responsibilities, when I asked Austin if the coronavirus pandemic is affecting his outlook on the new real estate career, there is no hint of regret.

"I'm a fairly positive person so I see the good side of things. I am quite resilient and will keep pushing forward. Also, reaching out to other agents to find out what they're doing has really helped."

Austin chose to be a Realtor for two key reasons.

"I love helping people and I was really looking forward to working with clients one on one, getting to know them, finding out what they like or don't like, and then delivering on the place they want. And then to look back and be happy with the experience."

The other reason he was drawn to real estate is the flexibility it offers.

"Right now I'm cultivating my business to be unrestricted so I can work when I want, how I want. That's living to me. Working at 6 am, or 1 am, I have that flexibility to do what I want. As long as you're being productive in what you're doing, that's the main thing."

Austin was licensed last May but was committed to finishing out the year working with a house cleaning company. Previously he worked for a painting franchise where he learned the scope of the business from production management, and systems, to sales and customer service.

So his real estate career didn't begin full-time until this year. He is working with Macdonald Realty in South Surrey. Austin is working with clients now who are motivated and he's doing what he can for them. He's also putting a lot of focus on refining his CRMs and taking it one day at a time.

"I'm getting more into the guts of the business and setting it up to be very customer oriented. I want my interactions with clients to be as seamless as possible."

"Everything's just up in the air right? Things are changing all the time so it's key to keep up with what's going on."

He said his work experience service taught him how much he liked running into former customers.

"There's such a warm feeling around remembering the transaction. I always have that in the back of my mind when making decisions and working with the buyers and sellers in real estate. There's that quote: 'They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.'"

Austin says that he is emulating agents who put the customer first because he says that's not only the key to financial success but also fits with his personal values.

He likes to hang out with other Realtors that he used to play soccer with in his younger years to share ideas and perspectives.

"I don't like to talk about real estate all the time, but we just talk about life, about our values, and how they're pushing themselves to be a better version of themselves, and treating people well. That's the kind of group I want to speak with and hang out with."

Austin is well aware of the public health protocols and is making every effort to work remotely and when necessary deploy masks and gloves at private showings. He's not ready to succumb to the coronavirus any time soon.

"I am 25 now, so I see myself as building something for the long term. In the grand scheme of things, you can easily work until you're 60 or more, so in terms of the length of a career, this is something we can get through. I'm not too worried."