

Jeff Turner

interview with

Monthly Musings

*Life is an opportunity,
benefit from it.*

Life is beauty, admire it.

Life is bliss, taste it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it.

*Life is too precious,
do not destroy it.*

Life is life, fight for it.

—Mother Teresa



Meet Jeff

As company founder and CEO Jeff led J.J. Grace, Inc. to the Inc. Magazine list of the 500 fastest growing companies in America and the following year won Cisco's Growing With Technology Award recognizing innovative companies networked for growth.

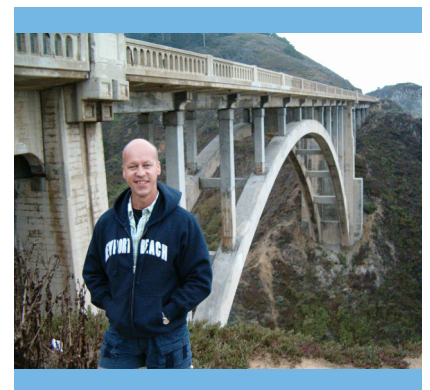
As a senior executive and Group President of Vertis, Jeff brought the needed vision and leadership to a highly diversified corporate Group and integrated the operations, the focus and the spirit of that Group back into the organizational mainstream.

Jeff is President of Zeek Interactive and the Founder and creative force behind Real Estate Shows. He is also widely regarded as a leading thinker on how to effectively use Internet tools and a sought after conference speaker on topics related to emerging technologies.

In his experience, he has recognized and applied the science and creativity of communication to his organizations. It has been instrumental in achieving uncommon successes. His insights and knowledge, both practical and academic, are integral to how he helps his companies deliver exceptional results.

Here are some of the topics we will be covering:

- How do social media and technology follow nature?
- The myth that social media doesn't cost you anything.
- If you haven't started yet, why you may not want to even begin interacting online.
- What is the true meaning of your brand and why should anyone care?
- And much, much more!



Michael Krisa, aka
The Interview Guy

Meet Jeff at www.JeffTurner.info or e-mail him at Jeff@RealEstateShows.com for services, training, tools and expert real estate advice.

MICHAEL: Greetings and welcome to Real Estate Unplugged, the Celebrity Corner. Hi, this is Michael Krisa, founder of Real Estate Unplugged, and this month I get to share with you the insights of a wild man by the name of Jeff Turner.

If you've spent any time engaged in social networking, you have undoubtedly stumbled across or followed Jeff, because when it comes to what's happening in technology and specifically how it applies to social networking, Jeff is on top of it.

Jeff is President of Zeek Interactive and the founder and creator force behind Real Estate Shows. He is also widely regarded as a leading thinker on how to effectively use Internet tools and a sought after conference speaker on topics related to emerging technologies.

Here are just a few of the topics that we touched on in this interview:

- How do social media and technology follow nature?
- The myth that social media doesn't cost you anything
- If you haven't started yet, why you may not want to even begin interacting online
- What is the true meaning of your brand and why should anyone care?
- And much, much more!

So, here's what you need to do next. Download the corresponding interview transcript so that you can follow along, have a pen ready to add notes, and then sit back, turn up your speakers as we go one-on-one with Jeff Turner.

Jeff, one of the things that we talked about here; and I don't want to name names because it's a small community; you know who they are and you're probably on stage with them. We talk about social media. I'll call them snake oil salesmen. There are guys out there who are preaching to be the guru.

And I know how you repel to that word "guru," and I think a lot of it has to do with the negative connotations these people put on it. They are trying to sell realtors a system, a box. It's like Jack and the Beanstalk, "Here are the magic beans to social media." Yeah. And from what we're talking about here, you're talking about vision and you're talking about value. This has nothing to do with tactics.

JEFF: No, it doesn't. Tactics have to flow from that, and without that being assessed first, without you addressing that first, your tactics are of little value. I think formulaic approaches to anything for the most part are wrong. And there are going to be certain people that fit into the box and they'll be successful. People who sell those kinds of formulaic boxes use those testimonials to their advantage to say, "I did this and it worked for me."

Okay, great. You did that and it worked for you. But in general, I find them to be lacking and misleading.

MICHAEL: I think part of this goes back to what is the definition. We talk about social media that agents gravitate toward. I'm just using Facebook because I've just been there myself. Here's my confession. I've been doing it now for the past couple of months, still trying to get my head around this.

And I've made some of the classic mistakes, which is doing little videos because I can, and happy birthday, and mistakenly putting four or five videos up on my wall, which goes out to all my friends' walls, and the next

thing I know bricks are coming at me from different walls, because that's not how you do these things. So, it's a learning experience, trying to be sincere, but it's a learning experience.

But from the other point of view, the guys that are trying to get in on this it's understanding, being sincere, having the vision. But you can still make mistakes.

JEFF: Well yeah, but here's the thing. The latest rage is Facebook Fan Pages. I have a Facebook Fan Page, and I don't update it as often as I should. Quite frankly, if you looked at my performance on my Facebook Fan Page, you'd go, "Why is anybody calling this guy a social media guru?"

I don't perform well on my Facebook Fan Page. I'm not even sure I want to keep my Facebook Fan Page, because I'm not certain that there's any value to it for me personally, based upon how I utilize social media and how it works for me in establishing my brand, and how it works in line with everything else that I'm doing.

The question everybody should be asking is, and everybody is claiming that Facebook Fan Pages are the next rage. Are they? Should they be for you specifically? Just stop and take a deep breath.

- How are you going to use it?
- How is it going to benefit you?
- What conversation are you going to have?
- How does it fit within your set of vision and values?
- What kinds of people will interact with it and why?

MICHAEL: That's the key. My understanding of the Fan Page is here is the blatant spot where you can get up on your soapbox and try to sell.

JEFF: Well, who's going to go there? I fan some people's pages. I'm not sure I've ever been back to a Facebook Fan Page. There hasn't been a single Facebook Fan Page for me that isn't either just repetition from what I can find on somebody's blog. And I'm more likely, personally, to go to a blog. Now, I understand the logic that says, "If somebody's in Facebook, they don't necessarily want to link outside of Facebook."

I totally get that logic, and to a certain extent I buy it. But what am I delivering on my Fan Page that has such unique value, that is such an expression of my brand, of who I am and what I deliver, that's going to make somebody want to go there and engage there?

And if you can answer that question, then I think you should be doing a Fan Page. But to just do a Fan Page just because somebody says you should have a Fan Page doesn't make any sense to me whatsoever.

MICHAEL: When you're speaking about that brand, isn't that what we've been discussing right from the get-go, the vision and value? That's what you're sharing in your Facebook account to begin with.

JEFF: Well, theoretically. And again, there is no universal right or wrong with any of this, in my opinion. Again, I'm going to speak for me personally right now. I haven't personally found something that resonates from me that makes me want to consistently put something on my Fan Page. Now, that's me.

Listen, I was drawn by a realtor, a real estate professional who is writing a book on Facebook Fan Pages. I was drawn to it because they said something in the social media space that says, "Come learn what exploded my

followers on my Facebook Fan Page,” and they used the word “exploded.” So I’m like, “Wow! They must be just killing it on their Facebook Fan Page.”

Well, I go to their Fan Page and it’s nothing but an advertisement for their book. And it got 600 fans. That’s an explosion? And I think that’s the problem. There’s so much hype out there right now that I think everyone, agents, business people, everyone; if your filter is built correctly, meaning “I understand what my brand is, who I am and what I deliver,” then the tools that you choose to use will be used appropriately. And if you don’t, you’re simply going to be following the next formula.

MICHAEL: And you’ll just be susceptible to the next product that’s being sold by the next snake oil salesman.

JEFF: That’s it, because you want the quick. You want whatever it is. I find that people who truly understand what their brand is, they’re not going to be fooled by those things. They’re going to behave in a way that’s consistent with that brand.

MICHAEL: And this goes back to what we were talking about right at the beginning. Why is it that you’re getting involved in the first place? What is it that you’re hoping to do?

JEFF: That’s it. What’s the result? What does this allow you to do more effectively than you can do someplace else? Because you really only have a finite amount of time. And so, if you don’t understand that being involved in the social media space demands some time, then you haven’t spent much time in the social media space. And so, when you have a finite amount of time, then you’ve got to make determinations. And so for me, the ROI discussion from a social media standpoint is, if I have this finite amount of time, which spaces are going to allow me to communicate my brand most effectively?

MICHAEL: Let me ask you this then, Jeff. Is not engaging in social media going to hurt you?

JEFF: No, no, no. I totally get it. And let’s use the example of some of the big hitter realtors out there who don’t engage in social media. Is it hurting them right now? No. But they’ve found other ways to have their network communicate about them. It’s not like social networking is a new concept.

Some of the most effective real estate agents in the country aren’t actively engaged in what are the most popular social media spaces. They don’t have active Facebook pages. They don’t have active Twitter pages. They may have a LinkedIn profile, but they’re certainly not engaging with it. They’re utilizing real life social networks effectively.

So, everyone who’s out there saying “If you’re not doing this, that or the other you’re going to be dead in two years,” that’s just crap. That’s crap. People have been networking socially for hundreds and hundreds of years. And the most effective social networkers, whether they’re utilizing social media or whether they’re utilizing real work social networks are always going to be effective.

So, take someone who’s really good at social networking in real life. If they can understand and find a way to translate that into the social media space, I think they’re going to be more effective. I really do. But that doesn’t mean they can’t be effective not doing it. I think they can.

So for me, someone who is really, really good in their social space, they can get just as big a bang out of making certain that their websites are optimized for sharing as much as going and sharing in the social networks. Does that make sense?

MICHAEL: Sure. Let me call you on the carpet here. Can you think of any examples of real people that agents can go take a look at?

JEFF: No, I can't, because again, I spend so much of my time focused on the social media space. I hear from realtors who we've touched who have almost no social media presence whatsoever, but who are making tens of millions of dollars a year, or making tens of millions of dollars in sales per year without ever engaging in social media.

The question I would ask is how much easier would it be for them to make more, if they made it even easier for the people inside of their networks to share, if those people were involved in social media?

MICHAEL: So, I could go in the back here with a shovel and I could start digging a hole for a swimming pool, or I could come in with a bulldozer and get it done a lot quicker.

JEFF: Right.

MICHAEL: Okay, so it's leverage.

JEFF: Right. It's leverage. But I may own a bulldozer that looks different than your bulldozer. My bulldozer may not be social media. Analogies are great. I love analogies. I think analogies are great. But I also think analogies lead us astray sometimes, too. We can get so tied into these analogies, and especially the social media. Twitter is like a cocktail party, all of them out there. I've used them. And it's true, it is. But a cocktail party is also like a cocktail party.

MICHAEL: So at the end of the day, you're not wrong if you don't. You're probably more advantageous if you do.

JEFF: I'd put it this way. Are you wrong if you don't do any form of traditional marketing and only use social media?

MICHAEL: I guess the real right or wrong will be at the end of the year when you're doing your tax return.

JEFF: That's it. At the end of the day, if you can get to where you want to get and only use social media, then more power to you. If at the end of the day you can get to where you want to get and not get engage in social media because you don't want to, you understand, you don't get it, then more power to you.

MICHAEL: So, there it is right there. Agents have to know where they want to go to begin with.

JEFF: And judging success; what is success for you?

MICHAEL: And that can be a whole different conversation.

JEFF: That's a whole other conversation. You will, as a business person, find the opportunities to have business conversations. So, my public space on Facebook is me being social. And it's not fake. It's real. I'm being social. I'm actually trying to engage socially with people. Just yesterday, in fact, I had two separate emails that came through Facebook that were one-hundred percent business focused from people who in that open public space on Facebook, we never have a business conversation.

And so, I think there is a direct correlation to realize, in the sense that if I'm consistent in my behavior, if my behavior matches my words, the things that I say that I value actually come across in my behaviors, it's easier for people to find out. "What is this guy about from a business standpoint?" If I'm interested in finding that out, then it's there. It's easy to find, and that there's the appropriate mix of conversation that's both personal and business in that social context. Then you're going to get your share of the business from those social networks.

I think the biggest mistake is to treat a purely social network as an opportunity for you to be just broadcasting your listings, or whatever other business message you've got and never interacting.

MICHAEL: Not to be crude on this, Jeff, but I almost make the analogy to like going to a singles bar. You're not there to pick up a date. You're here to cultivate a relationship.

JEFF: Let's go ahead and take that analogy to its extreme. Thinking back years ago when it was me, you could tell at a singles bar the guys were there for one thing and one thing only, and you could tell the guys who were there who are actually interested in a relationship. At least, that's what I've been told.

And I can certainly pick that out. What makes people think that you can't pick that out in a similar way on social networks? I think you can. I think people do. I think people make judgments based on that.

The issue here is how you define brand, how it gets acted upon, what behaviors become associated with either you as the brand or your business with the brand, and how you make certain that your actions and your behaviors inside of those social networks are consistent with whatever that brand message is.

Ultimately, that ends up playing a larger role in whether or not you're going to see a return on investment for your behaviors than anything else; that explicit understanding of who you are and what you deliver, and making certain that your communications are consistently delivering that message. Whether it's you talking about your kids or whether it's you talking about a house, those conversations need to have a consistency to them.

MICHAEL: It almost sounds, Jeff, that even before you go there, looking at Facebook as just another tool, you have to have that conversation with yourself to determine what is your vision and value to begin with, so that there is that correlation.

That's one of the things that you're passionate about, obviously, is the behavior, so maybe we start there. Let's talk something about the behavior. What should agents be looking at even before they go to Facebook, this idea of the value and the brand? Maybe we should touch on that.

JEFF: The first thing they need to do is not get sucked in to this 'transparency is everything' notion. Transparency is one of these concepts that, at its base, is a very good concept. You want to be more open. You want people to see who you are. But transparency taken to its ridiculous extreme becomes folly. And what we're seeing is that people are falling into these traps, because Twitter and status updates and everything are so instantaneous.

You see people saying things and doing things that you've got to step back and question what are they trying to accomplish? Is this just transparency for transparency sake? Are they reacting? Are they following? What are they doing?

The opportunity that you have inside of a social media space is to take a deep breath and say, “Is this really something that’s important to me? Is this really something that’s consistent with my personal values, or am I just reacting? Am I just looking for something to say?”

The people who are most successful with this, in my opinion, have sort of these built-in internal filters that are based upon a very explicit understanding of what their values are. And I’m not talking about ethics. I’m talking about values. What are the things that are most important to you? Things like, “I value ideas. I value diversity. I value mutual respect. I value (fill in the blank).” What are those values? What are those key, core values that define who you are and what it is you deliver?

And that’s my definition of “brand,” by the way. Your brand is a commonly held set of beliefs about who you are and what you deliver. And if you haven’t taken the time to sit down and explicitly define what that really is; not what you want it to be, not what you hope it to be, not your dream for what one day you might transform yourself into becoming, but what is true. What is really true about your behavior?

If you haven’t done that, then you’re going to be unfocused in your communications, and you’re not going to present that picture of you that is true.

MICHAEL: Once upon a time it was writing down your mission statement. That was all the rage. Companies would get together and they would carve something on stone and put it up in front of their office door. And I think when you ask real estate agents what’s the core value of who they are, what they believe, do you think most of them have that conversation with themselves?

JEFF: I don’t know that they have it in the context of being a real estate agent. It’s a funny thing about values. As an individual, you can’t help but live your values. Your behaviors are your truest form of communication. Your words either confirm or contradict what’s true.

If you really want to know who I am, watch what I do. That’s who I really am. I can say anything I want. I can tell you I believe this. I can tell you I value this. But if my actions say something else, listen to my actions. That’s who I really am. Right? That’s fact.

So, the question is whether or not in the context of their business they sat down and defined for themselves what is true. What’s essential to people understanding who they are and what really matters to them? Because that ultimately what influences you. You talked earlier, why do people follow me? I don’t know that I have an answer to that question, except to say that I try very hard to be consistent in the presentation of what my values are, and that should come across in everything I do everywhere I’m at.

Identifying those core values becomes central to you being able to present a message that people can latch on to and know “This is what I’m getting with this.”

And this is something I’ve been saying a lot recently, and it seems to resonate with people. The goal of identifying your core values is to align your words with your behavior authentically. It’s not about changing your behavior. I think that’s where this gets confusing with some people. These vision statements and these value statements, often within corporations and often with people, they’re statements of good intent. They’re not statements of what’s truly, authentically the behavior that I know I exhibit consistently. And there’s a huge difference between those two things.

MICHAEL: I think part of it could be, it's almost I'll tell you to eat broccoli because it's good for you, and you'll do it begrudgingly. But until you understand actually why it's good for you and what it can do for you, there is that disconnect, because you haven't taken it in intuitively to really believe in what this will do.

Getting back to what you were saying here about core values, it's one thing to go through the lip service of saying, "This is who I am" because somebody tells you to. It's another to actually sit down and say, "What is it that I believe?"

And it doesn't have to be because you are a realtor. That's just an extension of what you do. It's not who you are. You could be an attorney. You could be a boat salesman. So until you have this fundamental dialogue with yourself to find out who you are, you are almost lost and you'll go anywhere.

JEFF: Well, think about this for a second. It's not what you say your values are that matter. Enron, one of its core values was integrity. Clearly it wasn't really a value. And so, what ends up happening is when you project a statement of value; let's say they used that in their hiring practices, for example, "These are our core values." What you attract are people who want to align with your stated core values.

I always think of Donald Trump in this scenario. I'm not attracted to him at all, and there's a good reason for it. I'm not attracted to his values. But that's okay. Those are his values. And because he accurately displays what his values are; he's not ashamed of them; he's not hiding them, he attracts the people who also share those values. And the people who don't share those values are kept away.

It would be better to be truthful and honest. It probably would have been better for Enron to be truthful and honest, "What we value is making money at all cost, no matter who we hurt," and say that explicitly. What they would have done is they would have attracted lots and lots of people who shared those same values.

And so, in the social media space when you're talking about building a community and attracting people and building alignment, when you're authentic with your behavior, you are actually being who you really are. You're not trying to be somebody you're not. You're not trying to do things that aren't true for what your core values are. Then you attract the people who share those core values. And that attraction is solid because it's not based on some falsity. It's based on reality.

Again, that's why I say this is not about ethics. This is about what's really true for you, what really does matter for you, what behaviors can you consistently deliver, and accentuate those. Make bold statements about those. Those are the ones that you're going to be able to draw people to, and anything else isn't long-lasting. Eventually, the truth of what your values are will come out.

MICHAEL: You said there is a draw. Just like the analogy you use with Donald Trump, people will gravitate toward him because they have a similar belief. They like what he has to say. The same would be true with you. Either they're going to work with you or not, but it's going to be based on that mutual respect that you resonate with one another.

JEFF: Yeah. And I think the weakness in what's happening in some people's approach to social media on both the corporate level and an individual level is that at the individual level they focus on shared interest, and they're not focusing on shared vision and values. And I really don't believe that you can get to that affinity, that community, that network that supports you, talks about you, has your back, is there to trumpet your efforts.

You can't get to community without a clear understanding and shared vision and values between and among that community.

I've spent a lot of time over the past few months, and I used to spend more time in this years ago, but it's becoming clearer and clearer to me that a lot of the lessons from just a behavioral standpoint that need to be communicated exist inside of quantum theory and quantum mechanics and complex adaptive systems, and the new science that has developed.

I did a presentation a few weeks ago in Virginia Beach where I talked very specifically about a values based approach to social media. And I was listening to an NPR broadcast on dark matter and how our galaxy has this odd shape to it. And so, scientists know that it's being influenced by this dark matter, but they can't see it. They can't see this dark matter, but they can see the effects of the dark matter.

And so for me, values are a dark matter of human relationships. We can't see values, but we can see the impact of those values. We can see the impact on our relationships. And we're attracted to people, to those common values. We want to spend time with, we want to be with people who share our values. And our best relationships, our longest lasting relationships, our most valuable relationships are the ones where those values are shared. And our dysfunctional relationships are the ones where we don't share those values with people.

We can have a disconnect and share values with people who attend the same church with us, with people who live in the same neighborhood. It's not about proximity. It's not about demographics. It's not about religious affiliation. It's about true core shared values.

MICHAEL: I'm almost at a loss here, Jeff. Initially, I thought we were going to start off a conversation to deal with technology, but here we're dealing into the inner workings of the human psyche.

JEFF: Yes, but technology and social media technology, for example, is really following nature. You think about how social media works. Social media is mimicking the patterns that are found in complex adaptive systems, where it's self-organizing and each agent is sort of acting within the guidelines of the community, and the community self-polices itself. There are patterns that emerge from all of the transactions and behaviors and everything that goes with it. And so, behavior is at the core of what's driving technology.

Look at the way Twitter has transformed over the course of its existence. When I first went onto Twitter, and I'm sure anybody who doesn't say this is probably not being honest with himself, you had to have said, "I'm not sure I get it."

But the biggest correct thing that the people who put Twitter together did is that they very consciously said: "We're not going to set the rule at the beginning. We're not going to try to influence the community. We're going to let the community come and develop and form, self-organize, and the community's behavior will tell us what we need to do to adapt our system; not the other way around."

And it's been successful. Other social networks have been successful because of that. And so, an understanding of how nature works, how the science of relationships works, for me, is essential to understand how to correctly use technology and how technology needs to go forward. I love technology, totally dig technology. But technology in and of itself is worthless.

MICHAEL: So, when we talk about these platforms now, social media, the realtors that want to get into this now, and they've listened to what we've talked about core values and beliefs and vision, if they're starting out for the first time, where would they go, what would be the sites that you recommend, and how do they get started?

JEFF: Well, the first thing that they need to understand is that you can't be everywhere, and people try to be everywhere, so pick the sites that work for you. But clearly Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, these are sites that could be very beneficial to realtors in establishing and maintaining relationships both globally, locally, and among their close friends and family. Those are the sites that I point to most often.

And that all may change. Yesterday, Google launched Buzz. Will Buzz take the place of Twitter or something else? Time will tell. They'll either do a good job of listening to the community and building the technology around the behaviors that people want to engage in, or they won't. But today, I get more engagement consistently on Facebook than I do anywhere else.

MICHAEL: And each one has their own specific flavor. So when you talked about Facebook, that's more of the personal sharing the true Jeff. LinkedIn is more, would it be fair to say it's almost like an online résumé?

JEFF: Yeah. I think a lot of people compare it to an online résumé. And you can be a lot more, I'll call it blazingly businesslike inside of LinkedIn than you can in some other places.

MICHAEL: And then Twitter, it's still the Wild, Wild West.

JEFF: Twitter is the Wild, Wild West. Twitter can be anything you want it to be. I've seen people be very, very successful on Twitter by simply providing good information. You look at Guy Kawasaki. He's not incredibly interactive with his Twitter stream. The vast majority of what he does is simply broadcast out stuff that's coming from his websites, but people find it valuable for other reasons. It's not all about intense conversation. Twitter is becoming more and more a hub around which communication flows than it is about the individual conversations taking place on Twitter.

MICHAEL: Should you have a strategy? Is there a strategy in play when you're getting involved in the social media sites, or are you there just to have fun?

JEFF: Inasmuch as there is a strategy when you go to network anywhere. And I'm not saying that to evade the answer. Let's use the difference between church and a rotary club meeting. My purpose in going to church is different than my purpose in going to a rotary club meeting. There may be some altruistic reasons for both. Is there a return on investment for my rotary time? Do I need there to be? Or am I'm simply there to develop relationships that might develop into it?

I think intuitively we all make determinations about the return on our time. If I'm going to a rotary meeting because I want to find people to give me referrals, and I don't analyze whether or not my time investment is worth it, then I'm not making very good decisions. If I'm going to the rotary club meeting because I simply want to get back to my community, then I don't have to be as aggressive in understanding what my return on investment is, unless I'm not being very effective in helping my community.

And so the question is, "Why are you there? What's the purpose of you being there?" And if you don't have an affinity toward building relationships over the long haul that don't have an intense, immediate return on that

time, then quite frankly, social media may not be for you because it's not a quick hit approach. It's not like direct mail. It's not like going around and knocking on doors. It's not like some of the more immediate result things and activities that you could be spending your time in.

And the question of effectiveness, you've got people out there saying social media is so much more effective because it doesn't cost you anything. And I think that's just crap. Social media costs you time. Done correctly, it costs you a lot of time. And so, your understanding of what you're trying to accomplish becomes paramount in determining whether or not that time is worth the investment.

MICHAEL: That's where I want to go with this question, Jeff. I've seen all too often, like going to the different bar camps and technology meetings, where realtors gravitate toward Facebook and Twitter and LinkedIn, and they think this would be an alternative to marketing, networking, and they get themselves wrapped up in it. I've seen it so many times in Facebook where they're communicating with other realtors. "Here's what I did. I'm on vacation. I'm doing this (that and everything else)."

In essence, it's a justification that "Today I spent two hours on the computer, so I must have done week today, because I'm tired, and I came in here at 1:00 and it's now 3 o'clock. I can go home."

And they think magically something will come, there'll be some fruit from their labor, and it's a folly.

JEFF: And I think that's the trap. The trap of social media is, "Everything I do inside the social media space is marketing. Therefore, everything I do inside of social media space is valuable." And that's wrong. It's just wrong. And it's not a replacement for the rest of your marketing. It's in addition to. It's a supplement to. There may be some forms of your other marketing that can go away if you're effectively utilizing social media, and lots of realtors who actually work inside of the real estate space can address that way better than I can.

But the ones who are most successful are doing the things that they were doing before and using them also to drive people into the social media space so that they can have a more consistent form of contact, either presale or post sale. They're using it as part of their marketing cycle, not as a replacement for their marketing cycle.

I think that's what's key to understand here. I went and spoke last week to the California Association of Realtors Legal Affairs Forum. Part of that presentation is where you can find me online. When somebody takes my card, it's where you can find me online, because when I've met someone face to face, it's like saying, "I don't need business cards anymore because I'm on social media."

I mean, who would do that? Who would do away with their business cards? Now, I've changed my business card. My business card just has on the front "Jeff.Turner.info." That's all it says. And then on the back, it has "respres" and where you can find me in different social networks. Because my objective, once I've met somebody face to face, is to get them into online space where we can have a more consistent communication in a simpler format where they can see who I am, see what I'm doing, get to it without me having to constantly go and push that information directly to them.

The key here is how do I utilize all of the marketing efforts that I've been utilizing before to do what they were doing before, and at the same time draw more people into those spaces where I can have this sort of ubiquitous presence with them? Because the status updates that I put up on Facebook, I don't have to direct it to three thousand people individually. The people who are there and paying attention see it.

If I'm consistent enough with those status updates and I'm not pushy or causing somebody to want to hide my status updates, which I've done to many people, then I'm going to have some form of presence with them without trying too hard. They're going to be there in front of me too. I'm going to be able to set up some patterns of behavior that allow me to go and communicate with them more consistently.

For example Facebook, one of the things that I do is I attempt to send, and some days I'm not as good at it as others, I attempt to send every person who I'm friends with on Facebook a birthday video on their birthday. Now, it takes some time, but for me, it's like a little mini CRN program. It's at least one time during the year where I get a chance to send them a video and talk to them face to face. And I don't put it on their public wall. I used to do that, but I think that got annoying. I send it privately.

What I've found is my privately sending someone a birthday video gets more responses from people than when I used to put it on their wall publicly, because that's a private communication. I'm saying something to them privately. And now, it gives me an opportunity to touch them, touch base with them, and it has in some cases turned into a business conversation. But I don't care if it does or doesn't. My objective in that social media space is to keep contact with the people that I know.

So, I think there has to be a combination between those two. I've talked about this a lot over the years. I screamed at some people at BlogWorld two years ago that, "Those of you in the social media space who are berating the traditional marketers for not getting into social media space are making some of the same mistakes on the opposite side of the table. You're not doing enough in the traditional marketing space to supplement your social media activities. There's a balance."

MICHAEL: Let's do a complete lay change here. I know you're passionate about technology. Let's step aside from social media for a bit. Let's talk about technology.

JEFF: I spend an awful lot of my time dealing with online technology. And so, for me, all technology is moving into the social space. I don't spend a lot of time looking at electric cars and green technologies and things that don't have something to do with social media, quite frankly. My focus and where Zeek Interactive, which is the company that I'm president of, where we focus our time is on web technologies and Internet technologies.

And so, when I'm thinking about technology, it's almost always social, even when it's not about some common social media space. I think the best technologies are the ones that are going to help draw us closer together, and those are the things that I pay attention to. So, I'm not sure I can comment on something that isn't social.

MICHAEL: Let me throw something at you then, in terms of websites. Once upon a time we had a static web page. Then we went to adding the bouncy things using Flash. What about now with the advent of video? How is that impacting the way websites are put together and how realtors can be capitalizing in on that?

JEFF: I don't know that it's the video that's influencing it so much as it is the ability to interact. For me, the best video stuff is when a human being is actually communicating with another human being via video. I gravitate and am pulled in when someone is speaking to me on video. I think lots of people are drawn into that, because it gives you a much better understanding of who that person is. And so for me, websites are built around interaction. Video just happens to be one of those features that now you can do so easily to help enhance interactions.

Again, balance is everything. I'm not particularly drawn to one-hundred percent video blogs. I'm drawn to websites that a good mix of written content and video content. And so, it's really about interaction.

MICHAEL: I guess you'd be drawn to a site that has content that speaks to what Jeff is looking for and what Jeff needs.

JEFF: That's it, a site that allows me to communicate back when I want to. And I don't always want to. I spend a lot of time lurking. A lot of people spend a lot of time lurking. But when I want to, I really want to, and I'm really frustrated by sites that don't give me the opportunity to interact back.

MICHAEL: Let's talk about that, some of the classic mistakes you see, in terms of the frustration factor. What would some of those be?

JEFF: Obviously, any website that doesn't give you the opportunity to comment, that's a frustration. And that's becoming less and less. But even in the real estate space today, and correct me if you have a different opinion of this, even though there's a certain percentage of people that have moved to initiate blogs, there is still a lot of really static content sitting out there in the real estate space that people are pointing things to. And I think that's a mistake.

I think not having and giving people the opportunity to be social is wrong. And so for me, it's almost more important that your destination sites are optimized for sharing than it is for you to be constantly sharing the social media space yourself. Some stuff has been written about it recently.

Look at Apple. Apple's really not involved in social media, but people are sharing their stuff all the time. And they've only recently begun making it easier for people to share their stuff, putting share links inside of iTunes, for example. Those are the kinds of things that I think people need to be focusing on.

"How do I make it easier for someone to talk about me once I've done the job that I'm supposed to be doing? If I'm focusing on delivering value," and that's what everybody should be focusing on, "If I'm focusing on delivering value, doing my job the way I should do it, how do I make it easier for someone to share their experience with me?"

So, the sites that do the best job of helping people share that experience are the ones that win, in my opinion.

MICHAEL: It seems like an interesting switch, because once upon a time when websites were "about me," versus what you're saying now it's more "Here's the opportunity to interact with me," which is completely different. One is kind of standoffish, look in the mirror. The other one is engaging, "Please step in and let's see what we can do together."

JEFF: I would phrase it differently. Websites are not "about me." Websites are about "what I can do for you." "How can I help you?"

Again, it's about really understanding your brand. Unfortunately, there's still this "We've got the best website," or "We're the #1 realtor," or "We're (fill in the blank)." That's not your brand.

MICHAEL: I hear this frustration in your voice, Jeff. It's like you have this conversation a thousand times.

JEFF: I do. I have it all the time. It's because the focus, I think, is just wrong.

MICHAEL: I think realtors, the brand is they identify with their company brand, but they don't realize that their brand is themselves, who they are and who they bring to the table.

JEFF: Their brand is their logo. Their brand is their colors. Their brand is their this. They spend an awful lot of time focusing on a branding statement, a branding message, rather than focusing on what really is their brand. And their brand is their behavior. Their brand is their values. Their brand is that how do you influence someone's belief about who you are and what you deliver? You influence that with who you are and what you deliver.

And there are a lot of intangibles involved in that, that need to be properly defined. And then, the behaviors need to have an outlet. "How do I exhibit these behaviors in the spaces that I participate in? And if I can't exhibit those behaviors in that space, then should I be in that space at all?"

I give an example. And it's okay if people want to do any of these things just because they want to be social. If a realtor, for example, is going to blip.fm and playing music all night long and spending hours there thinking that it's for business purposes, you've got to ask yourself the question, "Is my participation there really displaying the behaviors that help drive someone's opinion about who I am and what I deliver? And if they're not, why am I spending so much time there?"

I guess that's where the frustration comes from. I get into conversations with people all the time about their brand, their brand, their brand. And the conversation always goes to image, "what I want people to believe."

The conversation really needs to be about who you really are and what you really deliver, and accentuating those things. How do you do a better job of actually communicating what it is you really do deliver? It's a hard conversation for some people to want to have.

MICHAEL: It's almost like trying to take a physical thing. We're talking about a thing, versus an emotional experience or an essence. It's what do you want to have that person feel and think about you after you've met and they're walking away?

JEFF: Well, yes. And again, take it back to even a more base level. What's really true about you? What's really true about the experience with you? What's really true about your behavior inside of a transaction? What's really true about your communication skills? What's really true about your affinity to people and certain key values that you may proclaim but don't really live? What's really true?

And stop projecting the things that aren't true and simply start accentuating the things that are. Read Harvard Business Journal. Search through the Harvard Business Journal, in terms of a values based approach to leadership. We're talking about authenticity. We're not talking about pretty statements. We're not talking about stuff that doesn't matter. We're talking about the stuff that really does matter.

If your values are "We value productivity and profitability," then find a way to define that clearly, and find a way to describe the behavior in a way that allows you to reward people whose behaviors are in line and punish people whose behaviors aren't.

How do you attract the right kind of people to you? How do you attract the right kinds of clients? How do you attract the right kinds of businesses to partner with?

There's only one way to do that, and that's by appropriately articulating the things that are important to you, and then acting consistently in a way that sends that message out.

So, if you want to be involved in social media and social networking, your participation in that social network becomes impactful and effective when that social media site helps you communicate the things that are true. Because then, it's consistent from one form of media to another in your traditional marketing efforts, in your face-to-face time, in the way that you communicate internally with your employees, in the way that you communicate with your clients, and in the way that you communicate in the social media spaces.

And when those things are in alignment, when everyone is clear and everyone's behavior is consistent, those are some powerful companies. Those are powerful individuals. Those are the people that you want to be around because you share their values. And just as clearly, the people who articulate values that you don't align with, you don't want to be around them. And that's okay.

MICHAEL: And you know that it's almost a visceral response. It either pulls you in or it repels you.

JEFF: That's it. And the mistakes that are made are when we buy into people who say one thing, and then we find out that's not who they really are. Think about that for a second. When have you been most disappointed by your interaction with a company, by your interaction with an individual? Same experience: "The company says this, this, this, this and this, but my interaction with them was not my experience at all."

They had a brand message that was not consistent with what they really delivered. In the end, what was really their brand? Their brand is what they really deliver, not their brand message. And the same is true with people.

MICHAEL: Yeah, because you tell your emotion. It's almost like a betrayal, that you feel that you've been led astray, misled. And that will come back to bite them exponentially.

JEFF: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. And there are lots of voices out there who are speaking using slightly different words, but along the same lines. The guys at 1000Watt Consulting, I think they get this. I really do. When I read their stuff, they're really talking about the same thing. They're talking about what it is you really deliver and aligning yourself with it.

And stop with the chest pounding and braggadocios behavior about you being this, that, or the other thing. Stop. Stop. Figure out what your real value is. What is it that you deliver? What real message of value can you place out there into the marketplace, that when you step foot into that business battlefield your behavior exhibits those statements in spades? That's brand.

MICHAEL: Let's take that message, Jeff. If I were to stick you on an island somewhere with a bottle and a pen and you had to craft that one impactful thought to the listeners today, what would that be?

JEFF: Oh, man, one impactful thought: Behavior is the truest form of communication. And that's not unique to me. One of my long-time mentors, Bill Leider, and a business partner at Real Estate Shows and someone who I respect intensely, he said that to me three or four years ago standing in a hotel in New Orleans at the National Association of Realtors Conference. We were talking about vision and values, and he made that statement and it stuck with me. And I've written about it several times.

Behavior is the truest form of communication. Our words either confirm or contradict it. It's so simple, but it's a powerful concept. And if you can latch onto that both with your personal life, in your business life, in your corporate life, and understand that the more consistent you can be between the words you say and your behaviors, the more powerful you can be.

That's it for me.

MICHAEL: Jeff, I've found too often that the simplest thought is the most impactful and can sometimes also be the hardest thing to try to work on and to do.

JEFF: Absolutely. And I'm just like every other human being out there. I've failed miserably often at doing a good job of aligning my words and my behavior.

MICHAEL: I think I have to throw it back and say that rather than you being a human being, you're actually a human doing. There's a difference.

JEFF: Well, that's a good one.

MICHAEL: Jeff Turner, my friend, I want to thank you. I know you're a busy guy between just trying to keep up with your social networking and everything else, for you to take this time aside today and share it with our listeners. I really appreciate it, my friend.

JEFF: Well, I hope we haven't been all over the place, but sometimes when you're impassioned about something, it leads you in funky directions.

MICHAEL: I think Shakespeare said it best, "through indirection, direction found."

JEFF: That's a very complex, adaptive system way of looking at things.

MICHAEL: You can use that, too. Thanks again, my friend.

JEFF: Thank you.

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