

# Sharing the Blessings

*Realtor Heidi Faulkner brings real-life experience and compassion to her clients*

*By Jim Brumm*

One of the ironies of life is how our biggest challenges can become our biggest blessings. Such is the case with Coldwell Banker Realtor Heidi Faulkner.

Raised in Marin, Heidi spoke tenderly of her parents, whom she described as loving and kind. In fact, she attributes much of her success in life to them.

“My parents were huge givers, of their time, their resources and their love.”

Her parents imparted that spirit of giving to their daughter early on; young Heidi delivered food to the elderly in her neighborhood every night.

Her father was a San Anselmo Fire Chief and their family car was the official fire car.

“Whatever the family was doing, when a call came, we all piled in and went,” said Heidi, laughing. “Firemen have a strong sense of camaraderie, friendship and loyalty and I learned that from my father. From my mother I learned the value of giving, of watching out for others.”

After high school Heidi obtained her cosmetology license and worked as a hair stylist. One day, she said with a smile, she met her husband, Bill, “on a street corner.”

“He was a contractor and was here for a week from Texas,” she said. “He asked me for directions.” Three months later Bill asked Heidi to be his wife. Heidi quit her job to become a homemaker and they settled down in Sonoma County and had three sons together.

But then came the day that changed everything. At work, Bill was hit on the head by a piece of machinery and his retinas were detached. He was blinded, out of work, and the couple had no health insurance.

Heidi’s cosmetology license had long expired. She went to work in restaurants to earn money for the family and the medical bills.

“All the money went to the hospital,” she said. “There wasn’t enough for anything else. It was a scary time. I started praying.”

One day she spotted an ad for Real Estate training. She put the cost of the training on her credit card, and threw herself into her new enterprise with everything she had. After earning her license, she soon became a top producer.

“I had to grow up in a very short time,” she said. “It was a crash-course in being a provider. I learned to believe in myself and I was surprised at my strength. It became a blessing.”

But her success didn’t come without challenges. Heidi struggled to find her identity as a Realtor.

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Heidi Faulkner and her family take on a ropes course challenge together

“I was comparing myself with other Realtors,” she said, “what they drove, what they wore . . . I didn’t fit. I had a crappy car and older clothes. Finally, I decided to just be myself. I learned if you do that, people relax.” She paused and looked away for a moment, then looked up again and said, “I don’t know *how* to be anything other than myself, and my clients feel that. People tell me that they’ve been nervous around Realtors in the past, but that I feel like one of the family.”

Soon, she was successfully supporting her family. Her husband Bill became a stay-at-home dad.

By the way, Bill required *twelve* surgeries after his accident. But one day Heidi told her story to members of the local Lion’s Club and they enrolled Bill in a program called The Lion’s Eyes Foundation which paid for every surgery. Bill’s eyesight was restored and today he is able to see his sons again and his wife’s sunny smile. He remains a happy, stay-at-home dad.

At a seminar she attended later, Heidi shared her tale of near-tragedy and redemption, winning the National “Inspirational Agent of the Year” award.

“I learned how to mentor after that,” she said. She became a business coach,

helping others find strength in themselves. “I had so many blessings. I wanted to give back to people. I showed others how to do it and now, I do that for my clients.”

In fact, Coldwell Banker, recognizing her gift, gave her the position of Regional Trainer for Northern California.

Heidi, a straight-talking, earnest woman, helps her clients clarify their vision and create a plan to make it become reality.

“People come to me because they need who I am,” said Heidi. “Realtors often come in with ‘all-about-me’ attitudes. I go in prepared to listen, and I tell the truth, whether it’s what they are hoping to hear or not.”

Sometimes, she said, there’s an emotional reason a client wants to buy a particular property and sometimes it has nothing to do with reality.” Heidi can find that out—often before the client does.

Heidi is passionate about this subject. She leaned forward, becoming animated as she spoke. “Listen,” she said, “this is *not* about buying or selling houses; it’s about peoples’ *lives*. My core mission is to inspire and bring out those gifts and

talents in others, to help them be who they were *meant* to be.”

Heidi talks with her hands and is quick to laugh and to share her smile. She is full of stories about helping others find their dreams.

“I have a *lot* of fun with my clients” she said. “I tell them to be prepared to have fun, to not take this so seriously, and for some frustrations. We usually end up friends.”

But helping clients requires more than intuition and compassion. You have to know what you’re doing too. Heidi has extensive training and years of experience with problems that can appear in every transaction. She understands zoning, country property, septic systems, wells, regulations, laws, and all concerns and questions regarding any part of the property in question. Plus, with her wide array of contacts, she knows where and who to go to when problems do arise.

“I approach problems with an attitude of, great, let’s find the solution,” she said. “Everyone involved in the transaction hears from me daily. I make sure I ask the right questions, listen to both sides, and look for a win-win for both buyer and seller.”

From homemaker and mother of three, married now for eighteen years, to successful Realtor, loved and respected by clients and peers, Heidi’s journey was possible because of the care and vision she brings to each client, and that she helps her clients find in themselves.

“My philosophy, my enthusiasm, it’s a tribute to my parents,” she said. “They taught me kindness, to always believe the best in everybody. I never heard them speak ill of anyone. As I said, this isn’t about buying or selling houses. It’s about the *people* in those houses. I always keep that in mind.”

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