

Success Story

INSPIRATION

Overcoming Adversity

A health scare didn't stop this pro.

When a doctor asked Sharyn Fuller whether she would consider switching to a profession other than real estate, the question took her by surprise.

Fuller had started her real estate career with a bang in 2005, registering \$3.5 million in volume in her first 12 months. Even as she lay in a hospital bed a year later—being tested to find the cause of pounding headaches and severe dizziness—she was handing out cards to nurses and doctors.

Fuller, it turns out, had suffered a stroke. What doctors had already told her husband was that she might never be able to walk again.

It was August 2006, and her prognosis wasn't good: life in a nursing home, unable to walk or care for herself. When that doctor had asked about Fuller's work, he may have been looking for a way to break the bad news to her.

Five days after the stroke, however, Fuller confounded the experts. She awoke in her hospital room to discover she could sit up under her own power again—and that she could walk. Her health prob-

lems weren't over; doctors had found a hole in her heart that required surgery. But she pulled through with flying colors.

Today Fuller, 52, is back at work at Fonville Morrisey Realty in Raleigh, N.C., and serving as a role model for how to overcome adversity.

She has reached \$1 million in sales this year, and she listed a \$550,000 house in May. Fuller's renewed success is thanks in part to her star turn in two episodes of "Buy Me," an HGTV show that matches "determined real estate agents" with "disenchanted home owners and a pressing deadline."

In late 2006, still recovering from surgery, Fuller visited a colleague's open house where an episode of the show was being taped. While there, she learned the producers were planning to do nine episodes in her area. She spoke with the TV crew about her interest. In January, she got a call from a producer.

Fuller was still trying to get her sales back on track and had to find sellers who'd pass the show's criteria: They had to have a compelling story and be motivated to sell. When neighbors said they were moving, Fuller approached them—and her reality TV career was launched.

Leslie Bradford, the seller Fuller worked with on her second "Buy Me" appearance, says Fuller helped her understand the importance of square footage in pricing. "I don't believe I would have sold the house so quickly without Sharyn," Bradford says. "She priced it properly and she did a great job of managing my expectations."

As for Fuller, she's happy to be back on her feet and practicing real estate. "She is an inspiration to a lot of people," says Kathy Eaton, the vice president and sales manager at Fuller's office. "She naturally has a very positive attitude about life."

Says Fuller of her comeback: "I just never let any negativity come into my mind."

In fact, she says the stroke and heart problem changed her for the better. Her advice to others: Be good at what you do, but don't obsess over it to the point where you ignore your family and your health. "It will catch up with you." *By John N. Frank* ■

Sharyn Fuller stayed positive through two medical scares and, today, is healthy and selling real estate again.



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