

# THE REMY FORTIER LETTER

STORIES NEWS ADVICE WITH REMY FORTIER

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## READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

My Sanity and Peace of Mind and Knowledge come from my love of books.

The other night I was washing dishes, listening to an Audible audiobook. Anytime I can listen to a book while cleaning I am a happy camper. I wear my headphones all the time, listening to books and podcasts, whenever I'm doing something and can't physically hold a book.

So I'm washing and listening and Mike comes up behind me, and after scaring me into dropping a plate back in the water and splashing myself, asks me why I have the headphones on *all the time*. I think his exact words were

"Alright already with the headphones!" He's a bit tired of talking to me and being ignored because I have a book in my ear.

Flashback to 1988 and you would have found me sitting in my 4th grade classroom at lunchtime, serving detention for reading a book during class. It doesn't sound like a terrible offense at first, but I was typically reading some fiction of my own choosing and hiding it in my binder, tuning out the teacher and the rest of the world. I did it so often that I would get punished for it.

Today I wake up every day and read. I read for joy, entertainment, and knowledge. Though I like my audiobooks while I'm driving or cleaning, I still love the feel of an actual book in my hand. I have no respect for my books physically. I've always been guilty of dog-earing to bookmark pages. I even write notes in the margins of my non-fiction books.

Regardless of how I treat them, I cannot count the number of times reading has saved my sanity or provided answers I've desperately needed. I've read books on communication, negotiations and marketing that have advanced my real estate career and benefitted my clients by teaching me skills to be a better agent. I've literally read thousands of books. Hundreds of different types of books.

My earliest memories are of reading with my mother. She loved westerns by Louis L'Lamor. Every night I would lay with her before bed. She would put on her bedside lamp to read. The lamp had a woven lampshade that gave the room an orange glow. We called it sunset time.

I remember clearly my mother looking over at me holding my book, quietly reading same as she was, and feeling very grown up.

She said, "I know you're not reading."

"How?!" I asked.

"Because your book is upside down, Remy."

Not sure why or how that memory is so clear to me. I was only 3 or 4 years old. I became determined to learn to read. My mom took me to Mr. Mopps, an enchanting, old-fashioned toy store in Berkeley (if you've never been you should make a trip) and bought me

these Richard Scarry books. Richard Scarry's Best Word Book Ever (Giant Golden Books)

They are giant oversized books. The point of them isn't so much the story, as to teach kids to read. They had words on every picture saying what each thing was. The grass, said grass, the sky was labeled sky, and the house had the word house printed on it. In looking up the image of this book for this article, I just read on Amazon.com this book has been in print over 50 years and sold over half a million

copies worldwide. So I was NOT alone in loving and learning from Richard Scarry's books.

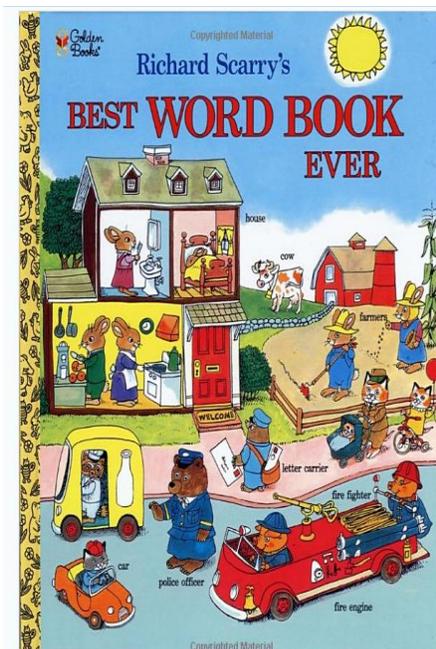
I learned to read from these books, entirely self-taught.

My father had been away for several months and I'd missed him terribly. He'd been in jail. I didn't know that at the time though. I was told he was visiting family in another state.

When he came home I bragged to him that I'd learned to read. We were driving down University Street in Berkeley. He was pretty skeptical.

He said, "I'm sure you can read your baby books but you don't *really* know how to read."

I looked out the window and started reading the names of everything we were passing. The Pink Flamingo Motel. The 76 Gas



Station. The South Berkeley Library. My dad was blown away.

When I entered first grade I told my teacher the Dick and Jane books we read in school were boring me. So he put me in charge of helping the other kids read. I felt special and needed.

A few years later I moved in with Stephanie, my next door neighbor, who became my guardian after my parents couldn't take care of me anymore.

This gained me access to her book collection. Another new world. Before that I'd read mostly children's and young adult books from the school and public library. At Steph's I read books on everything from psychology, massage, health, poetry, and literary fiction. I even read the encyclopedia. Remember when every house had a set of encyclopedias? Thank you Grandma Mary Ellen Smith for those Funk & Wagnalls! This foundation gave me a love of reading that has enhanced my entire life.

After moving in with Stephanie when I was 8 years old I didn't see my parents again for a while. During that first year I completely lost myself in books. I needed to escape. TV wasn't absorbing enough for me to escape in. It didn't distract me enough from my feelings and thoughts about being abandoned, missing my parents, and my confusion about the situation I was in. I didn't want to think about why my mom wasn't there. I didn't want to worry about what if Stephanie didn't want to take care of me. I didn't want to worry

about not having any clothes to wear or what happened to all my toys and belongings that I'd left behind. Those topics were too rough for my 8 year old mind. So instead I read.

I read nonfiction sometimes, but I devoured the young adult series that were popular in those days. The Baby Sitters Club, Nancy Drew, Sweet Valley Twins and Sweet Valley High. Stories about wholesome, worry free, young girls whose lives were so different from my own. I read all the time - literally. I would walk down the street on my way to the school bus stop reading, I read on the bus on the way to school, during class I'd have my book in my binder, reading while the teacher was talking. (Leading to those detentions I mentioned before.) All the way home I'd read. After school I'd read and watch TV at the same time. Steph used to have to make me stop reading at night and go to bed. Then I'd read under covers with a flashlight.

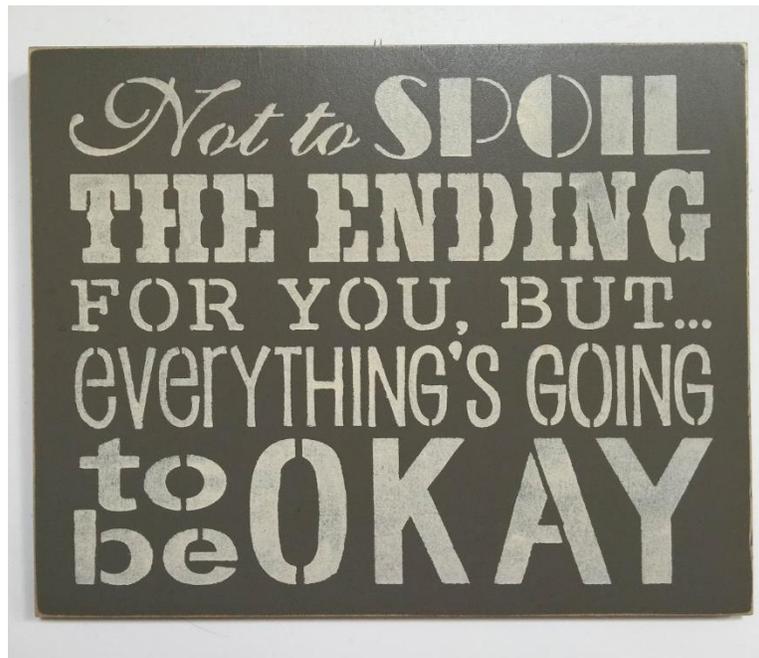
I was so bad about returning books from the public library and incurring late fees that I couldn't pay, I would steal books from the library (temporarily!) and sneak them back in.

When I was about 13 I discovered Historical Romance Novels. Everyone has their favorite genre, some love westerns like my mom, or thrillers, or mysteries, or science fiction. For me it will always be a juicy, scandalous romance. Most of what I know of history has come from reading historical romance novels.

Around the time I became a real estate agent I started to read nonfiction. Now I read nonfiction more than fiction but when I am stressed about anything I still go back to my juicy romance novels. I love the friction between hero and heroine, I love that moment when everything goes wrong and each character thinks the situation is hopeless. Most of all I love a good happy ending. Love triumphing overall.

**In my youth I learned to escape with books. In my career I have discovered my love of books can still save me, but in a much better way.**

I learn skills to solve problems. I read something uplifting or motivational when I'm down, learn tactics to improve my business, and learn about marketing and negotiations. Here are some of the BEST I've read this year and what I learned from them.

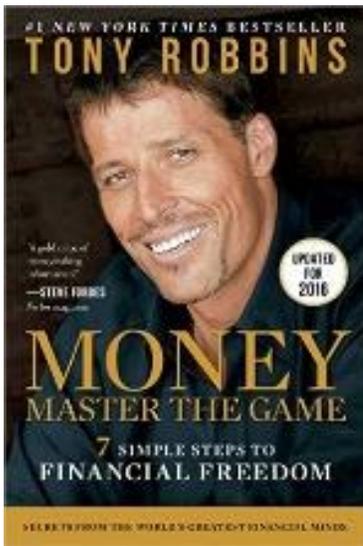


[#AskGaryVee](#) by [Gary Vaynerchuk](#). Gary is a business development and marketing master, especially when it comes to use of social media. His latest book is a goldmine. I could go on and on about what I've learned from his

books and podcasts. Gary preaches self-awareness, the importance of knowing yourself, strengths and weaknesses. The most

important take away for me is how and why we should create content. Content is how we deliver our message of who we are and what we have to offer with our goods or services. This newsletter, my email blog, social media posts, and podcast are all a part of my content. I make every effort to put out good interesting, useful, and authentic content. Authentic to who I am as a person and as a professional.

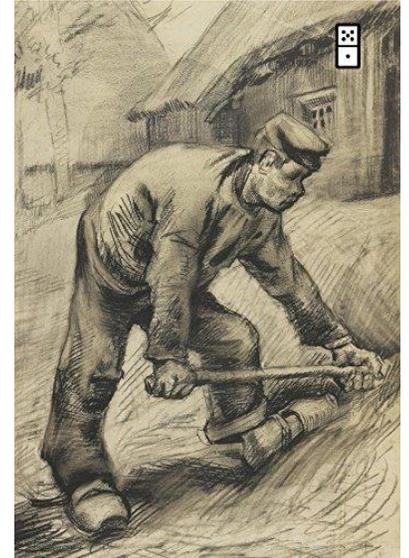




Money Master the Game, by Tony Robbins. Tony is known worldwide as a motivational performance coach, but in his latest book his goal is to give financial education to the masses by interviewing the

richest in the world. I've worked with variety of real estate clients at different life stages. Some are first time home buyer's trying to decide how much of their savings they can afford to invest in a down payment. Some of my clients are investors looking for positive cash flow on a rental property. Reading Tony's book, I gained a deeper understanding of financial markets and personal finance to better guide my clients with real estate investments.

Steven Pressfield is a writer of historical fiction, nonfiction and screenplays like The Legend of Badger Vance. His non-fiction work The War of Art & Do



The Work, by Steven Pressfield, are tools for writers and creatives of all types. He breaks down and then breaks through, resistance to creating and finishing any project or endeavor you take on. What holds us back from completing the best work of our lives, and how to fight that resistance. I reread parts from these two books at least monthly, any time I feel stuck - which is all the time.

## UNION CITY ADVICE GIVERS

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# SUPERVILLAINS OF REAL ESTATE

**The Gatekeeper. He is angry and filled with resentment for homeowners, that he is no longer their primary source of property-information...**

This month, we conclude this three part series. In previous newsletters I've written about *The Cheetah*, as well as *Dr. Ego* – a villainous creature whom always chooses his self-interest over the best interest of the client.

So today, let me introduce you to yet another Real Estate Supervillain, a terribly resentful creature. His name? *The Gatekeeper*.

This is the most insecure of all Real Estate Supervillains to the point his insecurity defines him. He feels so commoditized and so interchangeable, by his prospective clients, that he's devised an "evil scheme" to restore the balance of power. He is, as his name describes, *The Gatekeeper*.

Want to know the details on a specific property? Just want to know the price of a home you're interested in? Too bad – you must contact *The Gatekeeper*.

By attempting to control the flow of all real estate-related information, this Supervillain establishes himself as the "necessary middleman," standing between you and what you want to know. And, just as is the case with most insecure people, this Supervillain jokes excessively, can't enjoy silence, and is overly authoritative – all in a desperate attempt to make himself appear important.

But make no mistake. It's the role of being the "middle man" this villainy character most relishes.

Secretly, he resents information-seekers. He hates this new "Information Age" and the Internet, which has made it so easy for people obtain the property-information that was once reserved only for Realtors®.

"What happened to the 1970's?" he says to himself, (in his angry voice) "When *only* Realtors® had MLS information and EVERYONE had to come to me?!"

This Supervillain, it's quite obvious, hates the fact that his role as a primary information-source has been decimated – that his importance has been reduced to nothingness. So, he strikes back by protecting every last shred of information that he can think to safeguard.

And this Supervillain is EVERYWHERE. You need not look far, or search too hard, to find *The Gatekeeper*.

Want to see that latest list of foreclosure or bank owned properties? "Tough luck!" says *The Gatekeeper*, "Not without coming to me first. Call this #... Or text this # to... Or visit my website..." – where of course, another "gate" awaits you.

Even the smallest of details that might interest you, like, “how many bedrooms or bathrooms? what is the square-footage? are there any more pictures?...” again, you find the *The Gatekeeper* standing between you and what you want to know. You will never get the info you seek without giving up your phone number or email address.

And truthfully, as the middleman, this Supervillain is more annoying than dangerous and, as much as this Supervillain desperately wants to feel important, and have power – being a “control-freak” – he doesn’t realize how “small” it makes him look.

Salesman. Middleman.

It’s the role he plays perfectly, and it comes natural to him. And, it should be noted. This Supervillain’s secondary personality-type is that of *The Cheetah*.

So as a word of caution, should you decide to engage *The Gatekeeper* – start running – because now that he has your contact information, he’s coming...

This Supervillain is dual threat.

But what truly puts the ‘super’ in Supervillain, with this one, is his need to control and “keep” information from you – in his mind, it’s the only way to keep you “dependent” on him. To keep you “needing” him. It’s sort of sad, but the simple concepts of trust and relationship are foreign to *The Gatekeeper*. Precisely, what make him so dangerous...

You just never know if he telling you the whole truth. He may be keeping a vital piece of info from you, because he thinks that is what makes him important and necessary – that he has information that you do not.

The solution? When you spot *The Gatekeeper*, and it’s not hard, realize you have someone in front of you who can’t be trusted.

Information is everywhere, you shouldn’t be held hostage simply to obtain what is readily available. If *The Gatekeeper* were smart, perhaps he’d pioneer a new approach to sell real estate, through research and testing, so legitimately he could better serve his clients.

He could even put those findings in a book, the accepted method to document knowledge. Not to mention, a much better way to convey value.

Of course, I’ve been saying that for years now. And for years now, this Supervillain has never changed course. So I doubt he ever will.

Again, thank you for reading this column.

I speak about the Real Estate Supervillains in a way that is, hopefully, entertaining and a bit tongue-and-check. But I’m also quite serious about the frustration and danger and annoyance they cause. Protect yourself. ■

## Monthly Pet Cuteness!

Send Pics to [Remy@RemyFortier.com](mailto:Remy@RemyFortier.com) to have your pet featured!



*This Month we pay tribute and say goodbye to Bella. Bella was a sweetheart. A loving and loyal friend. She is survived by her brother Miles. She is missed terribly by the Mendoza family: Alex, Nikki, Mia and Cruz. Rest in Paradise Bella!*



### About the Author

In addition to operating *Union City Advice Givers* podcast and blog, where she seeks out and interviews the East Bay's brightest minds, business owners, Entrepreneurs and community leaders. Remy operates a successful real estate business where she shows homeowners how to extract up to \$30,000 or more of additional profit, through what she calls "The Value-Drive Approach To Sell Real Estate," the title of her latest book. Fortier is committed giver donating through food and clothing drives to those in need. Her business remains focused on three pillars of impact: Philanthropy, Business, and Growth.

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