

# How to Win in a Ruthless Industry? Try Being Nice.

When an entrepreneur entered a vicious, grueling industry, she approached it differently than her competitors.



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Tami Halton Pardee started out working in Hollywood. “I used to work for Sharon Stone in her heyday,” she recalls. “It was a very difficult job... *I felt so empty as a person. I never wanted to feel that way again.*”

“When I got out of there, I remember thinking, ‘I will always be kind to everyone from now on.’”

Her next move: real estate in LA. Trading one vicious, grinding industry for another, she did just what she promised she would. She was nice to her clients. Really nice. Attentive to their emotional needs, as well as their spatial and financial ones.

Now, usually when you think of big ticket, big city real estate, you think of sharks. You think of the sort of person who would sell his own mother for a shot at an oceanfront listing in Malibu. You don’t think of nurturing, maternal types. But that’s just what Halton Pardee was. So, obviously, she got eaten alive, right?

Wrong.

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“The first year I sold \$32 million. I made about \$750,000 my first year, and I realized I was really good at it,” she says.

So, Halton Pardee took her approach even further. She opened her own firm, [Halton Pardee Partners](#), and instituted a policy of being really kind to her employees. She invested in their well-being. They get ample time off. They feel cared for. They’re not pitted against one another.

In other words, they’re happy -- and that is passed along to the clients.

“One of the big things is teaching them how to connect with the client,” she says. “And in order to do that you have to be connected within yourself.”

Halton Pardee’s competitors may have looked askance at her operation at first, but as business booms, more and more are trying to emulate it.

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“The [other] agents are out there talking, and they're seeing the new cars that my buyers agents are driving, and they’re seeing that they're happy, and they actually have a life, you know? And they're actually having fun within the company, which is huge, too.”

Hear more about her unconventionally kind approach to a conventionally mean business, in this week’s [Problem Solvers](#) hosted by executive editor Joe Keohane.