Marki ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/TtlpKweffVAGghtyiLaDNQOgUlvqiC6bx1okv6c4D2aNRUHBMNTtCYXGoKqTqsXE3W8TK7cELBn8tI6FuI_OD4ItSLE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.57)):

You are watching Drive with NAR, the REALTOR® to REALTOR® series, powered by REALTOR® Magazine. Tune in as real estate professionals talk twos of the trade and share stories of inspiration. Get ready to step up your business. I'm your host, Marky Lemon Drive. We'd like to thank NAR Center for REALTOR® Financial Wellness for sponsoring this month's episode. Sometimes life throws a curve ball. Circumstances such as illness, family, emergency or pregnancy may require you to step away from your business temporarily. How do you keep your client satisfied and transactions running smoothly while you're gone? I have two experts here with advice and personal experience you can learn from. Today we have Kayla Johnson. She's an agent with Coldwell Banker Premier Group in St. Louis. She wrote about her experience taken several months off for maternity leave at the YPN Lounge blog. Hi, Kayla, great to have you.

Kayla ([01:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0oU6j-7EsEf9qajLxJnc_YQcSG7E2aBtLol7GYoSuhVN-Q7xRtU8EQx7QwGn8YIRp6Q14D6mXsMidIybziSrEIGK2iM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=62.37)):

Hey, Marky, it's great to be here. Thank you for the opportunity.

Marki ([01:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZvTk733tAgw5HXc1Tx-_GvfSk5dOrr-YxlNmypdAhrxkw5g4LUZVCJzbJ24bPK1BcyNRy8azEPUiDIBhsAo0B3cBPiw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=66.84)):

And we have Candy Miles Crocker, who is a sales manager for Compass and Chevy Chase, Maryland, and a real estate coach who has helped guide agents through business transactions. Thanks for joining us Candy.

Candy ([01:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/T-sEgF-SsYTRIo3ehMNdKVEzOcpDZ6zXIL8qWyTfx0Dh8p5DR-KJFL200vaOKBlUVflMDD-iafhX550dEGp5KopFoT4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=81.21)):

Thanks so much for having me. Mark, it's a pleasure to be here.

Marki ([01:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Ot8gjfrmTJXnIF5ib7SFvaE2wYNH1pIbOK_effEq6Tay7Jszx58cG91wsSjlrocN9WPS6lcsCzCdFUPlsI3Lwg9_Zus?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=84.06)):

We are elated to have you both. So we're talking about how to take a break from your business, and the first thing I think we should talk about is this idea or concept that we should be available 24 7. Many agents tell their clients that they're available around the clock. I would love for you to give us your perspective. How can agents even set themselves up for a break if they claim to always be on candy? We'll start with you,

Candy ([01:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EE0ZosJgY9ckO5L7Pzpimk8RERbRVBwtFznKbVYbRSz1RyYR_kMjZIbMBWcyTu-Lsgiyw_kO9u1QvGAbWLlCw1_p5fE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=116.28)):

Mark. I love this topic because I do hear so many agents say this and they don't mean it because if a client calls them up on a Saturday night at 11:30 at night, they're not taking that call. They're not even available for that call. So what you're doing is you're setting yourself up for failure in the eyes of your client because you're not living up to what you said you were going to do. Just tell them when you're available. Tell them when your phone shuts off. Tell them when you return messages. Tell them when you can email, because when you answer that email or answer that text at 10 o'clock in the evening, now you've given them permission to carry on that behavior and that's on you. And I think the fear is if I'm not saying I'm available 24 7, they're going to go to the next agent who is, that's not how it works. Just tell 'em what you want and they will abide by that.

Marki ([02:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_Ay8OlVL7xb6ITa_hnSyI1Zh4_VBeXCXDZRSJl0TMmc8nr7Edj2THTiEVToV2XAic4v2vnHZCRxn8fK_1ag1WnI422k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=165.54)):

I recall many years ago there was an agent, and on her voicemail it stated, I am not available on Wednesdays. We always wondered what was she doing on Wednesday? But it was very clear to everyone, including agents that she was not available and she adhered to that. She didn't call you back, she didn't text you, she did not email you. And one thing that we recalled is how professional we thought that she was, but she was also a top producer. Kayla, what are your thoughts?

Kayla ([03:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MdqC6cdu10E091eDd1RaLs4kewRJdqduwuwGPk_9woMFMRCm0hGT1V5RsocXXUPRg0zV_dL7sWdCpK0fJ-02F-f4KLA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=198.1)):

I think you need boundaries, not just with your clients but with other real estate professionals. I am very, very transparent that I'm not available, and this is why sometimes I explain why, but say in your age and remarks or if you have a listing or something, my remarks always state, if you're submitting something on the weekend, I will not respond before 5:00 PM on Monday letting them know that weekend. You will not hear from me, honey, you just won't. And that was one of the boundaries I put in place directly after pregnancy having a newborn because all those family events I wasn't attending because I was childless, now I'm attending and they always happen on the weekend. And so I also take it a step further. I tell all of my clients that I do not work on Saturday. You will hear from me before 5:00 PM on Friday, or you will hear from me Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon, but that's Saturday. Nothing, absolutely nothing. And it's comical to me when I have a client that needs something on Saturday because I'll preface it and be like, Hey, I know you're not working today. I don't expect a response from you until after the weekend or on Sunday, but I just want to throw this out here for you. And I love that they love the boundaries. I love the boundaries. Everybody's respected and it just works.

Marki ([04:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/c_ZWD5Q5gY7OoWDzX0NitUDTg6_xf6ekrxMXGcrgdr8BV52ClLd0LTEklEU-LNmSQLo3-7o-WehucLg-3ixuRRMdK4k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=287.95)):

What steps should real estate professionals take when they're getting ready to step away from their business? So Kayla, you knew that you were pregnant. What steps did you take?

Kayla ([04:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oDfrx7POgHnyree7ej641TCK5Zujg47fWTo3D5xDVbFXwG9dEFaQKmPkuFyyt7uKQ0nrCF1SuDm7cVQ6X8wNLZkoJLw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=298.78)):

I started my real estate professional dating plan. Who would I be so connected with that they would handle my business? And I mean that jokingly, but you start watching and paying attention to your colleagues and you need to know who runs their business like a business. So I got hyper-focused on paying attention to the ones around me and then pinpointing, Hey, can I have a conversation with you? I've been watching how you handle your business, will you help me with mine? And that worked out phenomenally. These are the same people I reach out to if I'm at a conference and they will be there for my clients. So it's now an ongoing relationship that started because baby was coming, but now these are my people.

Marki ([05:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/O9E4G2OhNyW9YDItocgUDJyp79BnDiTXQtIo-OUEDfog0esP3797sNjhGoruGydsYAsa41s9EALOrgGgGt8rkA4rYno?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=353.56)):

I know that I see you often at next. Also at REALTOR® Legislative Meetings, we know when these events are going to occur at least a year in advance, and they're on our calendars, therefore, we are also planning our business around those. And what I've noticed every single time I get on an airplane, another deal comes. And so we are often joking when we are flying back home how productive we were and how much new business we generated because we got on that plane and went somewhere. Have you noticed that here comes some new business soon as you get to that airport?

Kayla ([06:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/G6UliIyOcOzIOa7KrQC6CoviCVR1dYRZBeiAUWtNPG3YOTMX86Tukml4IfH4DUszXDLj4zPgvI0Oltd5IhUUpJZImA8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=388.85)):

Yes, and I live for it. I look forward to these conferences because I know I'm about to have a boom in my business. And you have to have your systems in place for when you're traveling because as soon as these leads or people come in, you need to be able to be there for them regardless if you're traveling

Marki ([06:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9isW1X0WxlVrInbQICURnMNgI2bglJyWBVZOztw343G9_nvN_Ycw-8eSqp2wjjVeS9qpcnxlTc-fOhSHJze8ghtV3L0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=408.05)):

Regardless. Candy, what about you?

Candy ([06:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/6Kd1CsqLSMnsXKgPkf8fylL0T2oZ87p-FvrbaED1lADbO9lGzkTEZgyQEr4bUd5yMVoCS29OCa8pLeci9UZkzhKf-R8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=411.2)):

I believe that real estate agent should plan a quarterly vacation for that very reason because the minute you think your business is going to slump, go on vacation and it will pick right back up. And before you even have a major life event or a big travel event, take a look at the agents in your office, in your brokerage and say, who's a good fit for me? And then do it on a trial basis. In the beginning, you can still be in town, but work transactions together to see if you guys vibe, if you have the same work ethic, if you have the same kind of connection with clients. So when you do go away, you can go away with confidence knowing that your business is going to be handled by someone who is much like you, who handles the business like you, who has that good follow-up, who has a positive attitude, who is the calm in the middle of a storm and knows how to get stuff done when things go south, have those systems in place. And oftentimes we don't get those systems in place until it's too late. Then we get in panic mode and we get stressed out. But even just take a day any day of the week and just start saying, how do I answer phone calls? When do I answer phone calls? When do I answer emails? How do I handle open house leads? What is my system for every little piece of my business? So when you do bring that other person in, you can hand 'em your playbook. And every business needs a playbook.

Marki ([08:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7CVHv0KoIknT5kmv3pnivWyOb6R-04-u7HGomYz-ikPQOg0EQERk9HTpJetPpVGG94b7jnAQ4mnK-Ck_R2EvuKXRpww?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=491.36)):

I would agree with utilization of technology. There's one too that I absolutely love that from your browser, every time you click it will basically write a manual for how to implement any step in your business. All you have to do is actually sit there, click, click, click, and it's saying click on this page and the URL and what the steps are that you've taken on that page. So we do want to create those manuals because they put us in a position to be able to retire and to take those periodic breaks from our business. The Center for REALTOR® Financial Wellness, October webinars will show you how to double your business in 2025 with powerful referral strategies and guide you in selecting the right business entity, elevate your success with actionable tips and proven techniques. Technology can help you automate certain tasks in your absence, but you also want to maintain client relationships authentically while you're out of the office.

([09:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Oc4hbkinAsvNB-UwvahFIsaaDbvxKZJiu7IC-U7WIKxxG_8yebn3Vz5z8Q7gs4ixowxtxyGTfMcjSug3Tu4rle-6eV8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=554.16)):

What's your recommendation about how much to lean on technology during a break from your business? Everybody knows I love technology. I rely on technology heavily. Three years ago I took 93 days of paid time off because I had three surgeries over 65 days. And the first thing I implemented was payroll to make sure that every two weeks I received a check and that my taxes were being paid. We set up all of our email sequences, we automated all of our follow-up, we put our out of office response on. And so for me it is having those systems in place because I like to be able to take breaks. I like to get my hair cut every two weeks and I go to the spa and I go to the doctor for God knows how many annual appointments and I'm realizing everybody doesn't have the ability to even step away to go see their primary care physician. So what does that look like for you?

Candy ([10:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/O5xQ_EpaB_1LRpUpv8TLtpX74sVT713fKoaoDQFUIoisH9Q9Dk2kxANKR7mE1xNYhDiYAdswbqF4OWK38zPK3ZF2_o0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=619.11)):

So with Marky, people get into real estate because they want to have that flexibility, right? And then once they're here, they don't utilize it or they utilize it poorly. I am like you and I'm going to say something very controversial here. Real estate is not an eight hour day job. You can get that job done in four to six hours any day of the week, but you have to stay focused. I believe in time blocking. I believe in all of that because that helps keeps you focused and anything that keeps you focused, it's going to make you more efficient in your business. And when you're efficient, you don't mind taking time off. And if you're just taking time off and you're like in your case, a medical time off and you have someone who is helping you in your transactions, then if you have a new client who comes in, you can jump on a Zoom call with them so you can make that introduction so they don't feel like they're just being pawned off on somebody else. You say, Kyla will take very good care of you. If she has any issues, we will address them. You're in good hands. And then do that handoff.

Marki ([11:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/X8rYPsYBhCMfBFTzTq8FZ9gxTjq2wvEFA1dmwTrkvKsyLoqV13d1pdTsWGaPQzEplKLXWxaXAvHU9PCgr7a37oN8aNE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=674.73)):

Kayla, what about you?

Kayla ([11:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/v1549g0UkocQzC0pkm5PhGZ1toLTUxJ4sPFINIrypRrWfkmH_4hu-HgQy5Rx9oZgD3IRTw03x10TISsZ0_xceXwCjSY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=677.31)):

Automation, automation, automation. My CRM does it all. My CRM also has an AI virtual assistant, and I also use different tools and websites that you can schedule an appointment with me and it's not just a regular appointment, it's a virtual zoom appointment. And I bring in my different affiliate partners to also be on those Zoom calls because that's going to be the person that you reach out to even if I'm not there. So that could be somebody from a title company, that can be a lender, that can be somebody that's a part of one of the programs that your state or local offers, like maybe down payment assistance or if you have a live where you work program, I have all those people on that initial consultation. So you never feel like you didn't get all of me that first round. And also, once that happens, I am able to take a backseat if I need to.

Marki ([12:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Niw-o5-5wA9DoCUr3FNio63LX9A5fwnBKDqSPZXFikkoh2Vcz-9QPWxaFENP93Cv6bdC29gTDX3fE73DpXS_8EcqBIU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=740.02)):

The fact that you have a team call with that buyer that allows you to differentiate yourself, but also to let to delegate responsibilities for this, you call this person for this, you call this person because oftentimes they're going to call us for things like practicing law without a license that is not in the scope of our job and it's something that we shouldn't do. But if we have that attorney on, if you utilize an attorney in the state where you're located, then we can say, Hey, when we get to this point, this is the person that you reach out to. So they feel as if it is a team effort that actually allows us to demonstrate more value. What if something goes wrong with the transaction during your break or a client has an emergency and needs immediate assistance? How do you handle that?

Kayla ([13:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xCv7pNc2SEHwOnBoAkT0jkjyxWRWHXDTDSwctpa0z_v_mz-_uwUHgLY2IGkph9td2GWYOx6SwdKWxr7OfG_RaKRV_EI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=791.23)):

Been there, done that. Something came up in the inspection with my buyer and the person who was helping in my absence, they had a family emergency. So what do you do? You take the baby. And we went and walked the property and I eased all of her concerns. And quite frankly, she had so much more respect for me that my dedication to her in that moment. And I had to have a conversation with myself and with my partner on if this is appropriate. And ultimately I decided is appropriate for me in this time. I am still a phenomenal mom. I'm still a phenomenal agent. Let me go help my client. Once I was off of maternity leave, he went with me to everything. I've taken him to a state conference, we've done listing appointments together. This kid, he is going to need a real estate license here shortly. I don't know if they give them away to two and a half year olds, but for those emergencies, I've always told my clients, Hey, you might see me and Elliot if it's something I do not have time to prepare for. And they're just so understanding and look forward to seeing him every time.

Marki ([14:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tiEQ2Q5SY6DT9TyVzwfyh3Pff4MMNdC18mcq6QHy560mfk59Y-XDGQ26WDz6t3lDYVIbcvMY-_-ycjTNL2zbPKoKWEM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=866.56)):

Well, you know what? My association, the Chicago Association of Realtors is a very child friendly association. So on any given day, at any conference, at any meeting, you might see three to four of our children there. But let me also say this. My oldest son, Skylar, was a very friendly child. My youngest son was not. He's an introvert and he didn't, people wasn't any reason for me to bring this child anywhere. So I had to figure that part out. But it is great when associations and companies actually support us in our parenting role. Candy,

Candy ([15:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EvycB-GekxU_SRmIDGvlI7QnFCdRmK0vKb6XIma5XyTywWRlwTcL5hjuO8rAdM7cc3juE6fLgHIp7FqKZxH6ohJuIdI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=904.7)):

When I started in real estate, my children were two, five and eight. And I got into real estate because of my children because I wanted to spend more time with them at the school and volunteer in sporting activities. So I set boundaries really, really far in advance in the beginning of my career when people thought I was crazy not working 24 7, not working every weekend. And so at my listing appointments and at my buyer consultations, I literally told buyers and sellers, at some point, you're going to meet my children because it may be daycare was closing early school was early, maybe my husband wasn't available. So I just brought the kids and I would say, sit on the couch, don't move the muscle. And they would sit there. And my clients actually enjoyed meeting them because they were an extension of me. And so the other part of it is I managed the expectations at the very beginning of our relationship.

([16:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/b2V-zuH5Szl8KSYl3RpuBUcKwFeLtXyPGu7pYZES0RIoo1iF6_Tt3mo138-tAH_U65SOr7BCI56l8DDu4GA_4f7Bxys?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=961.73)):

I told them what to expect. I told them at some point, you're going to meet my kids. So when they met them, it wasn't a surprise. So this is all part of me, and I always say, this is what you get. I want you to know what you get when you work with candy. And so if it doesn't work for you, that works for me, but you're going to get all of me 100% of the time. And my kids, they all know real estate. They all know condos versus co-ops versus single family versus they know the lingo. And a funny story, I was showing my girlfriend a house and my son was with us, and we got down to the basement. He says, this is not the right house for you. And I was like, oh Lord. So, but in fact, he was correct and she appreciated his candidness. So kids can say things can get away with it that we can't say. And so sometimes it's a benefit.

Marki ([16:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3pVE7N59y7qVJS8KZb2lbMrwKgqIL0Kzp3--cbEq-xfog5w8ROap0i9bL16sC8iEaQgWJn3jZ0p5SN4L995DlHT4g_I?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1013.33)):

There you have it. So we've been talking about this in the context of needing a break or for a special or unforeseen circumstance, but the truth is real estate professionals like everyone need to take vacation and regular breaks from their business to recharge. And I think that you mentioned this already, candy, but how often do you think agents should temporarily step away? And is there a difference in how you prepare for that in your business?

Candy ([17:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/q-BLDANcPEeg5zExkghom8dCKCSZAmL3b_YH_anFYAn9Cd16lJjKPiaJI9LcwfMCB-OdQ_xpqaQFsjxyPcTbw4EoTWU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1045.43)):

I think you should step away at least once a quarter or at least a week. A week. We are not saving lives here. I hate to break it to people. You can take a vacation because you have to restore yourself because we give so much. We give and we give and we give and we have to refill in order for us to continue to give. And so when you have your systems in place, you have backup. I was always a solo agent. I always had another agent in my office who would look after my business when I was away and I would look after her business when she was away. We didn't do a payment. It was just known that when you're going, if I have to write an offer for you, I'm writing an offer, you'll write an offer for me. You go to a home inspection, it was reciprocated every step of the way. And so find that trusted individual in your brokerage that works like you has the same work ethic. Like I said earlier, I always tell agents who I see on Facebook or Instagram, oh, I'm in Hawaii, but I'm still doing business. That's not a badge of honor. That shows that you are unorganized and you're not willing to let go if you're on the beaches of Hawaii. Enjoy the beach.

Marki ([18:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/mxCHU55rO8Ve-pEOGMSoBZhs-50gNQee9driE21Rnq6cfws2mf88absIQmjT4NlZ2GPQNIVgmx4YxPuFRZJLugdjk8M?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1112.97)):

I took off the entire month of July. It was the best thing I did for myself. I knew back in the spring you need to take some time off. And July is kind of that month for me. What about you, Kayla?

Kayla ([18:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VmnpASBJAJiemjVneJMT3zEoXvoj1oTNa_wv6ICpdPCbVHlO42Jsuc5Wnve1wXIWKmlUuxUoYFztVkuu55hfeVRH-64?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1128.18)):

I know a lot of agents don't always talk about their mental health or where they're at emotionally, but for me, I always make time to just decompress. I went through perinatal depression, I went through postpartum depression, and once you get back in the business, all that starts to compound and it feels like burnout. And this is not a career I ever want to burn out from, and I also don't want to feel burnout with my family. So I look forward to when I know I might have a lull and then I'll plan out. I'll really lean into it. So this year I took a step back the month of August and just taking a step back for my own mental health and everybody else around me. They don't want to see me when I'm manic or just so stressed. I am an advocate for taking the break. You need it. And you'd be shocked and surprised amount of clients that you retain during this time because you're healthy. And so when you're healthy, your business is healthy. That should be a quote. I'm putting it on T-shirts.

Marki ([20:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Pb_krjKcQjMylCtBdEdmRXHRnAe1S3p_m2Cy6v7f9MTFGPZHgmwfmzW4BP7Cj2NRJw0D6S33IVYKEBt7yv4hauQMXvU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1207.14)):

I would wear that on a T-shirt. And I believe it's not just physical health, it's also mental health. So what I'm hearing you ladies say is that we need to implement technology, have a great customer relationship management system set up, ask for help when needed, and plan to take off one week every single quarter, whether we go somewhere or not. We want to thank you for tuning in today. Thank you for joining us at Drive with NAR, the REALTOR® to REALTOR® series. Tune in every month at magazine.realtor/drive or subscribe wherever you watch your podcast. Find more tips to boost your business@magazine.realtor.