

MENTORS MATTER

The Key to MAJOR Success and Freedom
in the Insurance Industry



ABRAHAM KEVIN SPANN

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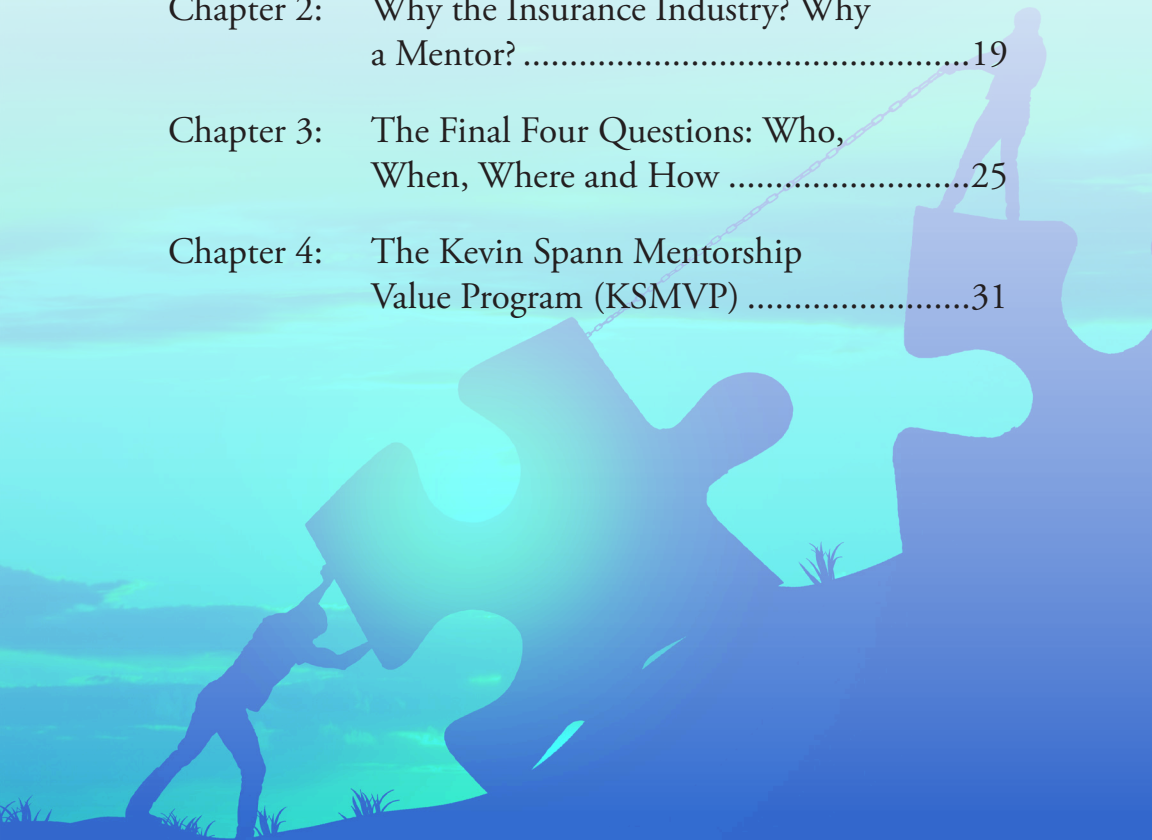
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A TALE OF TWO LADIES

Two ladies find a job with the same insurance company, but their offices are on opposite sides of town. Their backgrounds are strikingly similar in terms of education and work experience. They both pass the state licensing exams with ease and quickly complete the required corporate training. Interestingly enough, their base salaries are pretty much the same, and they both have the opportunity to earn significant commissions if they hit their respective sales goals.

Three months later, they ran into each other, and sadly, their actual work experience turned out to be very different. Aaliyah landed at an agency with a solid onboarding, training, and mentoring program. She worked under the guidance of a talented senior sales agent who showed her how to make the most of her eight-hour day and hit her sales goals consistently.

Amanda wasn't as fortunate. She landed in an office with a hot-tempered agent who had just fired someone else. The day after she passed her state exams, her boss gave

her a phone, a list of people to call, and stated emphatically that if she didn't get off to a fast start, she would be the next one to get fired.

Three years passed before they saw each other again. Aaliyah was thriving and in serious talks about owning and operating her own agency in the next two to four years. Not only was she hitting her sales goals, she was now involved in both recruiting and training new agents. Further, she was driving a new car and had moved into her own place with all the money she was earning.

Amanda shared that she was still at the same company but working with her fourth agent in three years. She was convinced that all the agents were having a hard time because the company's prices were too high, and the guidelines made it difficult to write enough new business to make any money. She was still driving the same old car and lived with her parents. At this point, she was thinking seriously about getting out of the insurance industry altogether and trying something new.

Aaliyah felt awful. She thought about her new role with recruiting and training responsibilities. Could Amanda add value to her agency? Would she be open to the idea of working with a mentor? Would she be willing and able to forget her past bad experiences and start anew? Would Amanda be interested?

What would you do?

While this tale is just a tale, similar stories are happening every day. What's the difference between Aaliyah and Amanda's experiences? One word, mentorship.

Mentors Matter is *A Guide to Mentorship and the Key to Major Success and Freedom in the Insurance Industry*.

INTRODUCTION

When I started my business, the last thing in the world I thought I needed was a mentor. I had twenty years of experience in life insurance underwriting, operations management, and a variety of sales leadership positions. I excelled at recruiting and hiring insurance agents to become business owners. Putting together business plans, marketing strategies, hiring staff, and helping agents win awards for their success was fun for me.

If anybody had the resume and the tools to open a business and be wildly successful from day one, it was me. Right? I had all the required state licenses, a small staff that was sufficient in the beginning, and a great passion for helping people. My only glaring weakness was that while I built an excellent career helping other insurance agents and their staff succeed at a very high level, I didn't have any frontline experience. All my consulting ideas were great, in theory, but untested when it came to sitting across the desk from customers. I was scared and needed help.

Fortunately, I had become good friends with a fellow agent, Danny Shindler, who was one of the most successful agents in New York. I called him on my morning drive to work and my evening drive home. The knowledge and wisdom he shared shortened my learning curve immensely and accelerated my growth.

The most valuable lesson I learned from Danny was the importance of having consistent, repetitive processes. When things are going great, don't get too high. When things are not going well, don't get too low. Do the work and stick to the processes.

Danny retired and sold his agency six years ago. To this day, he is still one of my best friends and mentors. Our conversations have shifted from insurance to expense management and investment strategies for retirement. Without Danny, I wouldn't have become "KevinSpann_InsuranceGuru," as I'm known on Instagram today.

Mentorship matters. The worst place to be in business is alone. Without a mentor, a friend, or a guide, you feel alone when challenging questions come up. I'm sure this is true for other businesses as well.

Twenty years of knowledge is a good baseline in any industry. One might think you can trade on that knowledge for the next twenty years. But it's not true. The world has

changed by leaps and bounds since I started my business in 2007.

Think about social media. Facebook was just expanding beyond college campuses and opening to the general public. YouTube was two years old. Instagram and TikTok had not yet existed. Consumer habits also changed drastically. We went from the general fear of using a credit card for online purchases to Amazon stopping by our house every day.

Insurance buying patterns changed as well. Insurance agents with a well-placed retail location built thriving businesses because people would stop by the office for a quote. If that agent was active and well-known in the community, there's a pretty good chance they would write the policy. Today, the search for new insurance starts online, and competitive pricing has become an important factor.

One of the best parts of the insurance business is that agents come from many diverse backgrounds and skill sets: military, IT, hi-tech sector, and young college graduates with finance and business degrees.

A few insurance agents started coaching programs to help other agents adapt to the changing marketplace. After resisting mentorship for about a year, I humbled myself and came to this conclusion: *What I know so far is not enough to carry me where I want to go.* I enrolled in paid mentorship programs, and they changed my outlook on everything!

Suddenly, I was adapting to the new technology and lead generation programs faster than everyone in my area.

Dr. Billy Williams, founder and president of Inspire a Nation Business Mentoring, is one of the first mentoring services I enrolled in. His “How to Build a Ten-Million-Dollar Insurance Agency” program gave me a target to shoot for, and I hit it! Most importantly, he gave me great, low-cost and no-cost hiring strategies that I still employ to this day.

Agents who started around the same time as I did would ask how I got off the struggle bus and onto the airplane to celebrate in the Winner’s Circle. What changed? Mentorship changed my mindset, and my business results followed.

Two months before the pandemic, I started working with a social media coach, Melissa Colleary. When everything shut down, I told Melissa I was feeling lost because all my public speaking and networking events had come to a screeching halt. She replied, “Why don’t you start a podcast?”

“What’s a podcast?” I asked.

Fast forward four years, and I just finished the fourth season of my podcast, *WineDownWithKev*. This season I asked all ten of my highly successful guests about the roles

mentors played in their careers. All episodes are available on my YouTube Channel, *WineDownWithKev*.

My good friend and fellow mega agency owner, Christina Shaw, told one of the best stories. She was recruited into the insurance business as a college student. Tom Whalen, her mentor, guided her from a paid internship to a full-time sales job, and finally, she advanced into the role of insurance agency owner. Today, she runs one of the most impactful agencies in the nation and mentors other agents in engaging in social media.

This is why mentorship matters. Mentors can take you across the bridge from where you are today to the winners' circle (where you want to be). This brief eBook will answer a few questions that most people may have.

- What is a mentor?
- Why the insurance industry? Why a mentor?
- The Final Four Questions: Who? When? Where? How?
- What is The Kevin Spann Mentorship Value Program (KSMVP)?

CHAPTER 1

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a guide who can help bridge the gap between where you are in your career and where you want to be. Ideally, a mentor is a highly successful, seasoned veteran in a particular field. They've experienced all the highs and lows of various market cycles and business trends. And most importantly, they are willing to share that experience with others who want to learn and grow.

Having a mentor can be extremely valuable at various stages of a person's career. People who have been thinking about joining the insurance industry would benefit from a mentor. If you're new to the insurance industry, a mentor can help send you off to a great start. And if you're a seasoned agent watching the world pass you by, a mentor will get you back on the right track.

Career change is hard, but sometimes it's necessary. School teachers who are overworked and underappreciated

make great candidates for the insurance industry. First responders that retire early from the police force or fire department also make great candidates for the insurance industry. Why do teachers and first responders make great candidates for insurance? Because they are trustworthy. Half the battle in selling insurance is not the product or the price; it's trust. People want to know they can trust you with their car keys and keys to their home.

Family members of realtors and lenders also make great candidates for an insurance career. As the spouse, sibling, or child of the person that sold the American Dream, it keeps all the business in the family.

Ninety percent of people entering the financial services industry fail within the first year. Why is the failure rate so high? The gap between expectations and reality is too wide.

Every established insurance company has experienced the joy of hiring a new candidate. Their initial enthusiasm is contagious. They study hard to get a license, pass the various state licenses, and complete the required steps from every carrier to earn an appointment.

And then, crickets . . .

The family and friends who promised to support them by buying a policy suddenly stop picking up their calls. Instead of working on ways to develop new business, they get down, check out, and move on to their next career

venture. Sounds familiar? If that's you, dust off your license and give it another shot.

A mentor can not only help you generate more money with your license, but they can also teach you how to do it with more freedom and work flexibility than you had in the past. What if you could work remotely? What if a mentor gave you insight on staying where you are but working remotely in a state that pays a much higher wage?

Tenured agents love the good old days when they showed up at the office and people lined up to see them as if they were rock stars. Unfortunately, those days are long gone, like landlines or house phones with stretchy, coiled wires attached.

Reginald Mays is a good friend of mine and a very successful entrepreneur. He gave me great advice about keeping up with technology. He said, "Kev, as soon as something new comes out, I jump on it. I forget about the past. Technology never goes backward."

The right mentor can help an experienced agent engage and adapt to social media, Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRMS), and processes for hiring Gen X and millennials.

Key Takeaways

1. A mentor is a person who advises, guides, and supports people who are considering a career in the insurance industry.
2. A mentor has experienced all the highs and lows of various market cycles and business trends. They are willing to share that experience with others who want to learn and grow.
3. New people entering the insurance industry would benefit from working with a mentor.
4. Working with a mentor is a great way for seasoned agents to re-engage and adapt to the insurance industry.

CHAPTER 2

Why the Insurance Industry? Why a Mentor?

Below are five reasons why establishing a career in the insurance industry might be right for you.

1. Car insurance is mandatory in 48 of the 50 states. Every car you see on the road must purchase insurance from somebody, so why not you?
2. All mortgage lenders require homeowners' insurance. Every homeowner you know needs home insurance.
3. Life insurance isn't mandatory, but everybody needs it. If you like helping people, selling life insurance policies is a great way to make a difference.
4. You'll find an abundance of opportunities. Fifty percent of the current insurance industry

workforce will retire by 2028. Talk about a blue ocean opportunity for Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z!

5. A career in insurance offers a flexible work schedule, a chance to make a difference, and a very attractive salary.

Car insurance and home insurance are self-explanatory, so I won't dive too deep into why they can provide a massive opportunity. Honestly, it's not that simple. Everyone you know pays for some type of insurance, but very few people understand what they are paying for.

A mentor can do more than teach you how to make money in this industry. They can also teach you how to use insurance to impact people's lives. Wouldn't being known as the Education and Awareness Insurance Agent be nice? The one who is always talking or posting about things that people need.

One of the many differences between the wealthy and the underprivileged is life insurance. The wealthy leave an inheritance for their children's children. The underprivileged are financially devastated at the loss of a loved one and are often unable to meet the expenses of day-to-day living.

What if a mentor could help you educate your community on the importance of life insurance? Maybe English is your second language. Would people benefit from having insurance explained in their language?

Are you a member of a certain ethnic group where your community has never seen or heard of an insurance professional? I'm an African American from Wyandanch, New York. While growing up, 95% of my community looked just like me. My agency, however, is in Middle Village (Queens), New York, where 95% of the community and my clients don't look like me.

I love working in an industry where product, service, and professionalism are more important than race, ethnicity, or economic background. The insurance industry takes great pride in giving back to the community. In 2017, I received the Ray Lynch Award for being the country's number one Community Service Agency.

We were and still are heavily involved in the fight against cancer, supporting youth sports, Kiwanis, and other non-profit activities. What's important to you beyond making money? What if a mentor could help you make a difference? Is working remotely, flexibility, and financial freedom important to you? A mentor can do more than help you break into the insurance industry; they can get you placed in your chosen career.

You can have an excellent insurance career from the comfort of your own home. My current staff includes a stay-at-home dad, a mom who homeschools her son, and a customer service representative who lives on her beautiful coffee bean farm in Puerto Rico! My operations manager lives 100 miles away in rural Upstate New York. My sales team includes two expecting dads that also work remotely. The remote staff is strongly supported by a diverse, in-office team that lives and works near the office. This includes three part-timers who work nine to thirty hours a week, with flexible days to balance their family/work life.

Seasoned agents reading the description of my hybrid staff are now questioning the very essence of my operation. They are thinking, *Does everyone work from nine to five?* Of course not. Traditional business hours have been replaced by the twenty-four-hour cycle in which consumers live, work, and conduct business. Flex schedules are essential to meet customers' needs.

Does this flexibility make the insurance industry sound more attractive? Or perhaps you're wondering how you can learn to do a job if you're not physically at the job. Old school! Two answers—technology and mentorship. I have agent friends nationwide looking for remote office employees to fill positions in their insurance agencies. So

what's the issue? The pool of licensed insurance candidates in the country is too small!

As I stated previously, a large percentage of people who are currently working in the insurance industry will retire by 2028. Although a career in insurance sales is off the radar for most Gen Xers, millennials, or Gen Zers, it shouldn't be. With this considerable demand just on the horizon, partnering with a mentor presents an excellent opportunity for people new to the industry or those considering re-entering the insurance industry.

A mentor can bridge all the gaps between what you think you know about the insurance industry and what you don't. A mentor can help you find your "why." Once you find your why, the how becomes easy.

Key Takeaways

1. The two main insurance products (home and car insurance) are mandated in almost every state.
2. A career in life insurance can make a big difference, and the opportunity for advancement is wide open.
3. An insurance agent can help the general population and be a key player in serving niche markets.
4. A mentor can help you find an insurance sales career offering *flexibility* and *financial freedom*.

CHAPTER 3

The Final Four Questions: Who, When, Where and How

At this point, you may be thinking, *A mentor might be able to help, but I still have doubts.* You're not sure where to look and who would be a good mentor. Naturally, skepticism also has you contemplating when you should start the mentoring process and how much it will cost. A bigger question is: How are you going to fit a mentor into your already overbooked schedule?

I'm very familiar with the final four questions that creep into your mind whenever you're making a big decision. Who, When, Where and How? Mentally, you must overcome these internal objections before you take the next step.

Having a mentor is the next critical step to becoming the hero in your own story. Agree? You've checked all the other boxes. You've worked hard. Studied hard. Perhaps you've already passed your State Insurance Licensing Exams, but there is still a wide gap between where you are and where you want to be in your career.

Let's talk about changing that. Give the internet credit for making the world smaller and providing easier access to everything. All you need is your preferred device (smartphone, tablet, desktop, PC, MAC, Surface, or laptop) and a strong Wi-Fi connection, and you're in business.

Congratulations! Since you are reading the *Mentors Matter* eBook, you're already here! Now what? Use the powerful tool in your hands or at your fingertips wisely. You're free to surf, browse, and travel online without leaving the comfort of your own home. There is a wealth of information and guidance right in front of you. Actually, everyone has access to a plethora of information, and that's why it's so important to have a mentor guide you along the way.

Where do you start? Webinars? Virtual classes? Live training events? A mentor can help you cut through the maze of information overload and give you the GPS guidance you need. And just like a GPS, if you make a

wrong turn (and you will), a mentor can course correct and re-route you in the right direction.

Who is the best mentor for you is a different question entirely. Some of the best agents I know are third- and fourth-generation insurance agents. Their grandfather started the business. Dad kept it going, and now they have taken over. If that's you, you probably grew up with a mentor at the kitchen table and don't need to look for outside sources.

However, if you're the first generation in your family to pursue this career path, that's a different story. Your family may not understand why you're working so hard and have so little to show for it. You'll want to select a mentor who has experience mentoring people who have started at the bottom and navigated their way to a six-figure income or built a multi-million-dollar mega insurance agency.

The "who" question can be answered by searching online for a potential mentor or mentorship program. Do they have a strong social media presence? Check out their posts and videos. Do you feel any connection? If yes, you may have found the right person.

So when should you start working with a mentor? Great question. What separates the top five percent of earners and doers from the other ninety-five percent of the population is that they take action. Immediate action. Massive action.

The top five percent earners in every industry are successful because they have overcome their fear of failure. In fact, they embrace failure and believe in failing fast and failing often.

In the aftermath of the tragic loss of Hall of Fame basketball player Kobe Bryant, everyone liked to post memes about having the “Mamba Mentality.” The Mamba Mentality is a mindset that you’re going to overcome all obstacles. Kobe is famous for his preparation and relentless hard work. But here’s something you might not know about Kobe Bryant and the Mamba Mentality. Do you know who has missed the most shots in the NBA? Kobe Bryant. He missed 14,481 shots throughout his career.

How many shots at great opportunities have you missed in your career?

Michael Jordan said, “You’ll miss one hundred percent of the shots you don’t take.” And Michael Jordan was Kobe Bryant’s mentor. Do you see where I’m going with this?

Michael mentored Kobe. He encouraged him to work hard and be relentless in pushing himself and his team in pursuit of excellence. They both played for legendary Hall of Fame Coach Phil Jackson. Michael mentored Kobe on dealing with Phil Jackson and his well-documented “unique” leadership style. Have you faced the challenge of working for a boss with odd leadership techniques? Better

yet, are you working for a company that has lost its way? The right mentor can help you navigate these difficult waters.

How much will it cost to work with a mentor, and can you afford it? Let's ask the same question in reverse. How much has *not* having a mentor cost you, and can you afford to keep going without one? Think of mentoring as an investment, not an expense. It's an investment in you. How much are you worth? How much are you willing to invest to change your life?

Becoming a doctor or lawyer can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The six-figure salary these professionals earn is often crushed by the weight of student loan debt.

What if I told you that you can become an insurance sales professional by investing less than \$1,000 in your pre-licensing education and state licensing exams? What if you can turn that \$1,000 investment into a \$50,000-per-year salary and an opportunity to earn more with commissions and other incentives? That's 50 to 1 odds. Do I have your attention? How about if we reinvest a portion of your salary into your training, development, and career path? You're now grossing over \$4,000 a month, but you didn't come this far just to come this far.

Usually, you can start with a small investment of \$100 to \$200 a month on a mentoring service that can change

your career trajectory and earning potential. If you want more (private coaching a few times a month), you can expect to spend more. As with everything else in life, you will get what you pay for.

What if a mentor could guide you on a journey from being an employee to an insurance agency owner? The benefits of owning an insurance agency include unlimited earning potential and the peace of mind that comes with being in control of your own time. Does that sound like a place that you would like to visit?

Key Takeaways

1. Who will be my mentor?
2. When is the right time to get a mentor?
3. Where do I begin to search for training?
4. How much does it cost to work with a mentor to guide me through the insurance industry?

CHAPTER 4

The Kevin Spann Mentorship Value Program (KSMVP)

I wrote this eBook in less than twenty-four hours as a part of the pre-launch for my new mentoring program. For the past two years, I've been working on creating a program to help people enter and thrive in the insurance sales industry.

In 2022, I worked with an outstanding online business coach, Michele Davis. She helped me create a curriculum for becoming a leader in the insurance sales industry. I was ready to introduce my program, but something strange happened. I got a call from Joseph Puckett, Co-Founder of the Craig Wiggins Coaching Program. They offered me the opportunity to coach established insurance agents determined to take their agencies to the next level. I've known Joseph and Craig for years. I've been a member of

their coaching program since its inception in 2017, so I leaped at the opportunity to jump on board.

Fast forward—I've learned so much by coaching agents across the country, and it reinforced the need for my mentoring program. The biggest challenge all my clients have is finding qualified candidates to work in their agency. What's the problem? Simply put, the first 90 days make or break the employee-employer relationship. Employees work hard to get licensed and have lofty expectations of setting the insurance world on fire.

Employers easily invest ten thousand dollars into recruiting, hiring, and training new employees. They expect a fair return on their investment: the employee works hard to earn while they learn. Like personal relationships, these employee-employer relationships end quickly when the gap between expectations and reality is too broad.

How will the Kevin Spann Mentorship Value Program (KSMVP) help? First, if you're interested in an insurance career but unsure how to get started, we can point you in the right direction. We'll lead you through the basics of getting licensed and appointed with a carrier. Most importantly, we'll empower you with six key skill sets to guarantee your success no matter which insurance company or independent agency you work for.

Listed below are the six key skill sets:

- Calendar Management
- Product Mastery
- Customer Service
- Everyday Networking
- Leadership
- Business Growth

Visit the Kevin Spann Mentorship Value Program (KSMVP) website to learn more about the six key skill sets at www.kevinspann.com. Anyone that enters the KSMVP will be coached and mentored on the unwritten qualities that can make or break your career. Those that master these techniques will be very successful.

Are you already licensed? Did you have a bad experience as a former agent that left a sour taste in your mouth about the insurance industry? The KSMVP can mentor you into a new mindset. If your initial vision of making money and helping people is still there, you just need a mentor to get you back on track.

Lastly, existing insurance agents should tap into the KSMVP to build their bullpen. Most highly successful agents are just one step away from their key employee leaving and their business falling apart. What if you parked

a good candidate in the KSMVP? They could learn the business before being added to your payroll.

Before I share my mission statement and launch date, I'll list a couple of other key things:

First, I'm not leaving my primary agency. Full disclosure, my namesake and eldest son and I are having succession-planning conversations. I've been mentoring him his whole life, and he is fully qualified to lead my agency while I pursue my passion of launching this mentorship program.

Secondly, I love working as a coach with the Craig Wiggins Coaching Program and will continue to do so. The tools available on the www.craigwigginscoaching.com platform are unmatched by any corporate training program in the insurance industry. If you would like to work with me as your private coach, visit my personal page on the CWC Coaching platform at www.craigwigginscoaching.com/Kevin

What's the KS MVP mission statement and launch plan?

My mission is simple. **“I want to help a thousand people help a thousand people.”**

That's it. If I help 1,000 people help 1,000 people, I will have a chance to impact a million lives in the fourth quarter of my career. That's the dream. That's the vision. That's the mission.

How can I mentor 1,000 people in the KSMVP?

More importantly, how can I help these 1,000 mentees help 1,000 clients? That's the challenge I'm embracing right now, and I love it!

The plan is simple but by no means easy. I'll need to do a ton of pre-launch work before I take the show on the road. Right now, I'm scheduled to make an appearance at the Earn Your Leisure (EYL) Investfest in Atlanta at the end of August, and I'm booked to speak at the September Craig Wiggins Live Coaching event in Las Vegas.

Fortunately, I'm working with a mentor who will guide me along the way. This journey requires digital, social media, and marketing skills that I could either learn slowly by myself or more quickly by working with an expert.

We're living in a DIY world. If you want to prepare a wonderful meal you've never made, there's a YouTube video that can teach you step-by-step. If you want to try a new business venture, Google and every other search engine will have information on how to get started.

These are both positive aspects of the digital age we all live in. However,

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, hire a mentor.” That's a modified version of a quote you've probably heard before. It's also a motto I live by, and it has carried me a very long way. Simply put, you can rush into

anything you like. However, if you're looking to master a new craft, take your time and get a little guidance from someone who has succeeded in this field before.

Congratulations on finishing this book! You've joined the company of the top 35% of adults who have finished reading a book this year. If you agree that mentors matter, I encourage you to join the Kevin Spann Mentorship Value Program (KSMVP) and feel free to share it with others who might benefit from the value of my mentorship as well.