

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Robert Roby's relationships with his clients transcend the normal client bond, allowing him to become one of the best advisors in the country

“FROM THE depths of your soul, what is it that you want?” Bob Roby already knew the answer, but he wanted his client to tell him.

Bill, who had served in the military and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), looked at his advisor and said, “I’d like to repair the relationship with my sons.”

Two of Bill’s kids were Roby’s clients as well, so he suggested facilitating a family meeting. As soon as the meeting started, the agenda got thrown out the window.

“When we first started, Bill got up and he started crying,” Roby says. “He calmed down, and he had this wonderful conversation with his family for two hours. He apologized to his sons and his grandchildren for not having been the father he should be.”

A month later Roby, received a call from one of Bill’s sons, who said, “My father has changed so much I don’t recognize him.” Bill was off his medications and living a great life. “Bill said to me, ‘Bob, I’ve been going to a psychiatrist, psychologists, even the Benedictine monks, and it didn’t solve it,’” Roby recalls. “But this removed all the baggage off of me.”

Tragically, an e-mail from Bill’s wife a few months later shattered that happiness: One of their sons had committed suicide at the age of 50. Before he died, unbeknownst to his family, he had sent Roby an e-mail

expressing his happiness that his parents were moving forward in fulfilling some of their objectives. Three months after their son’s passing, Roby shared that e-mail with Bill and his family. It helped them come to terms with the tragedy.

not about being an advisor. It’s about being a human being.”

A helping hand

At a young age, Roby learned the value of relying on others for help, a concept that

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Shortly after, Bill asked Roby over to his house. He stood beside him and said, “Thank you for saving my life.” He opened his hand, and he was holding a war medal. “He gave me that medal, which I wear every day on my lapel,” Roby says. “Because of that meeting, Bill was able to apologize to his son before he died, and that had given him such great relief; otherwise, he didn’t think he could’ve lived through this.

“This, to me, is what I do for a living,” Roby says. “The money is the easy part. It’s

eventually became the cornerstone of his practice and his motivation as an advisor.

“I was homeless by the age of 16, and I made it through with a lot of hard work,” he says. “And I found that that during that period of time, there were some key people who came out of the woodwork, people I didn’t know, who helped me a lot. Those values have transferred into me over time. That’s my inner motivation: to help people find their own passions, because at the end of the day my clients are providing me with my passion.”



PROFILE

Name: Bob Roby

Company: Roby Retirement
and Wealth Team

Title: Senior wealth advisor

Age: 62

Years in the industry: 30+

Industry involvement: The
fact that I maintained my trust
and integrity throughout my
career, and as a result, my
clients never lost any money
in the markets

INDUSTRY ICON

Roby got his start, like many in the industry, at a bank. But a job that was all about selling product and meeting quota didn't sit well with him. "I had that eureka moment that this isn't what this is supposed to be," he says.

So a decade ago, he started the Roby Retirement and Wealth Team. "My investment philosophy really took hold; my beliefs really took hold," he says.

That investment philosophy is relatively

is just as firmly established as his investment philosophy. "It's not supposed to be about the money," he says. "It's supposed to be about helping clients fulfil their life objectives and then merging the money they have with those dreams."

For example, a client recently came in and said he had decided to put \$1,000 a month into an RRSP. "I looked at him and said, 'No, you're not,'" Roby recalls. "I said, 'At what

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simple and hasn't changed throughout his career. Roby espouses the Warren Buffet approach: buying great companies and holding them for the long term – his clients own shares in the Coca-Colas, Pepsis and Johnson & Johnsons of the world. Roby focuses on companies that pay a dividend.

"Over the years, I've built a huge source of income for my clients from the dividends created by the investments," he says. "I have clients whose dividends are bigger than their pensions."

That's largely because of the education Roby has given his clients, allowing them to appreciate the value of a market downturn and reinvest the dividends when the share prices are lower.

"We always know the market is going back up," he says. "How we act and what we do during market downturns is directly proportionate to the amount of wealth we're going to get, and that's what creates true wealth."

The best is yet to come

Roby's general approach to providing advice

expense?" We did a calculation, and we came to \$400 a month, because the other \$600 meant they couldn't travel; they couldn't live for today. You're living to work for a better future, not at the expense of today."

While Roby welcomes CRM2, he's going above and beyond by updating his systems, relevant software and CRM programs. It's allowing him to open his doors to 50 new clients – the first time he has been able to do so since 2008.

Roby will still meet with every client, but he has also hired an insurance specialist. As well, he retains access to some of the best minds in the industry when it comes to estate planning, law and banking. "I'm the quarterback and I can make those long and short passes to create the whole solution for clients," he says.

And despite turning 62, he's showing no signs of slowing down.

"People say, 'Bob, aren't you close to retiring?' I say no. My goal is to become the oldest advisor in Canada. I tell them, when you come in and I don't know who you are, that's the time to run." **WFP**

ROBY'S KEYS TO SUCCESS

SIMPLIFICATION

"That's the first step of success. Our industry complicates things. Financial plans are 300 pages long. At the end of the day, what do people want to know? How much money will I have when I retire? Will I have enough? How long do you expect me to live? How long will my money last? How much do I need to make? That's a one-page thing."

INTEGRITY

"Integrity is never, ever changing your beliefs no matter how bad the news is, no matter how much stress and pressure there is, but sticking to what you believe in."

TRUST

"Trust is more than just a word. Trust is something you earn every day. You could have a client for 20 years who trusts you, and then tomorrow, that could all be blown by one thing."

PERSEVERANCE

"We're going to persevere with our clients even though we have to tell them something they don't want to hear."