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Interview with Robert Ringer

AudioMotivation.com: First of all, I just want to welcome everybody to another Audio Motivation live event. My name is Andy O'Bryan. I'm here with the co-founder of Audio Motivation, Josh Hinds. Tonight it is our honor to bring to the stage here Robert Ringer who has just been an incredible public speaker. The author of eight books and three number one best sellers, he has appeared on the Tonight Show, Good Morning America, and Nightline. He has been featured with articles in the Wall Street Journal, Time, and People. He is just an amazing authority and author on just so many amazing personal development issues. It's our privilege to bring Robert Ringer forth here to Audio Motivation Live. Thanks, Robert.

Robert Ringer: Good. Nice to be here.

AudioMotivation.com: Now, first of all I'd like to just start by asking you one thing. There is actually a success story that all of us can learn from when you had self published your first book *Winning Through Intimidation*. Can you maybe share some of that with us?

Robert Ringer: Sure. It's a very long story. I'll give you a very abridged version of it. When I wrote my first book *Winning Through Intimidation*, it was rejected by 23 publishers. Since I believe in the power of action, I decided I would have to take action myself. I self published the book. I didn't know anything about publishing at the time. I didn't know anything about typesetting or printing or covered design or anything like that. I didn't even have running heads on the book. I got 5,000 very ugly copies of the book printed up.

I started running ads originally in the local newspapers. The first ad I ran, I spent \$1,800 and got back about \$180. I lost about 90% of my money. Over a period of time, I started reading some books. First I tracked down and became acquaintances with a fellow by the name of Joe Karbo who wrote the legendary book *A Lazy Man's Way to Riches*. The headline of the ad said most people are too busy earning a living to make any money. He put me onto a couple of books that changed my life; *Confessions of an Advertising Man* by David Ogilvy and *Scientific Advertising* by Claude Hopkins.

I started to learn how to write ads and started writing successful ads. I eventually started running ads in the Wall Street Journal and eventually worked my way up to the point where I was running full page ads in the Wall Street Journal every single week. Over a period of about five or six months, I

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sold about sixty thousand hard cover copies of this book that had been rejected by 23 publishers. From there one thing led to another, Britanos, which is no longer in business I don't believe, but their main flagship store in New York in Manhattan on 5th Avenue was the first bookstore to buy my books and filled both of their front windows with the book. Everything just kind of exploded from there.

From that point Thomas White Crowe who later was purchased by Harper and Rowe, the forerunner of Harper Collins became my distributor and got the book into bookstores. That was in, I guess, early September. Within three weeks after it got into the bookstores, it was on the bestseller's list. It took about six months before it finally got to number one on the New York Times Bestseller List. That was a very short version of what happened with my first book.

AudioMotivation.com: That's amazing. Now, the title of the book *Winning Through Intimidation* kind of caused some confusion over the years. Is that why you re-titled it and updated it to, *To Be or Not to be Intimidated?*

Robert Ringer: Yeah. It was a bone of contention even though the book sold in the millions, I would constantly hear from people. I got a lot of letters. I still have letters. If you go on Amazon.com, you can see even today probably ten or fifteen people making comments that the book was mis-titled. It's misleading. A lot of people would say to me they couldn't even get friends or acquaintances to read it because they refused to read a book that was about how to get ahead by intimidating other people.

Of course, the book was actually mis-titled, which was my fault. It's really a book about how to get ahead by defending yourself against intimidating people. I always dreamed of rewriting the book because it was pretty rough writing. It was my first try. Completely rewriting it and updating it, I said if I ever did I would also re-title it. So, I did that in the early part of the new millennium. I took the opportunity to re-title it more appropriately *To Be or Not to be Intimidated*.

AudioMotivation.com: Now, prior to that, prior to writing *Winning Through Intimidation*, you were a real estate broker. Your book actually reflects many theories that you learned as a broker. One of those is the leapfrog theory. Can you tell us more about that?

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Robert Ringer: The leapfrog theory was one of my earliest theories. I've probably gotten more mail on that one theory than any of the other sixteen or seventeen that are in the book. Basically what the leapfrog theory states is that no one has an obligation either moral, legal, or otherwise to work his way up through the ranks. Every human being possesses an inalienable right to make a unilateral decision to redirect his career and begin operating on a higher level at any time that he believes he is prepared to do so.

When you go into a new industry and I found this to be true in real estate, you've got a whole discouragement fraternity waiting to greet you, which means they are going to tell you all of the reasons why you can't succeed. I finally made up my mind that the only way to get ahead of these guys and get them out of my path was to just leapfrog over them and do some sensationalistic things to catapult myself into the stratosphere.

I've done that in several businesses. I guess I did it as an author. I certainly did it in the real estate business. More people have written me over the years and said the leapfrog theory changed their life because they realized they didn't have to follow what the norm was and working their way up the ladder. They could just leapfrog over the pack rather than trying to fight their way through it. It's a lot quicker way to get to the top.

AudioMotivation.com: You have to have a certain mindset to do that, right?

Robert Ringer: You have to have a certain mindset. I also caution people that it's not just a matter of bluffing. You have to actually be prepared. In so many cases, people are prepared. A person may be better than the competition, but he's timid. He's intimidated. He doesn't really know what to do. If you are really prepared and you really feel that you know what you're doing that you can provide a valuable product or service in the marketplace, you needn't work your way up through the ranks and pay your dues over a period of years. You can just choose to find a way to elevate yourself over the rest of the competition.

AudioMotivation.com: Does it take a long time to do that? It's not an overnight thing, obviously, but it is certainly faster than the standard ways of getting ahead, right?

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Robert Ringer:

Well, sure. Nothing is overnight. People like to believe that and it looked like I made it overnight. But, it took over three years from the time my book first came off the press until the time it became a New York Times number one bestseller. In fact, it was close to three years before it was even in a bookstore and closer to three and a half years before it made number one on the New York Times list. Yeah, everything takes time.

In the case of the real estate business, what I did was I came up with this idea to design and produce a spectacular brochure. I was trying to think of how I could get the attention of sellers, owners of large real estate developments, which is what I was specializing in. How could I get their attention in a way that would separate me from the pack?

I came up with this idea to do this spectacular varnished hard cover brochure, which was my calling card. At the time, I think it was about \$5. It cost about \$20 to get produced today. I actually gave one of those away to any seller or any owner of a property who I thought might become a client. It just immediately catapulted me above everyone else. I had a picture of the Apollo space shot of the Earth from the moon or outer space. It was just very spectacular in every way.

AudioMotivation.com:

Switching gears a little, what about the salting the record concept? Is that for getting paid your full commission? How does that all work?

Robert Ringer:

Salting the record—I actually got that phrase from an attorney who did some work for me. He was talking about how you really have to be very careful to ‘salt the record.’ He used the Clintons as a great example. Not to get political here, without regard to what their politics are, he said the Clintons were masters at salting the record. There were never any corpses lying behind in their path. In business you have to operate the same way.

If you are a real estate broker, you have to really cross all your T's and dot all your I's. I wrote an article some time ago in my e-letter *Voice of Sanity in an Insane World* titled *Salting the Record*. That is where that came from. I took my attorney's idea. I had seen an article in the Wall Street Journal about a real estate broker in Nantucket Massachusetts who got chiseled out of...well, he didn't get chiseled out of his commission. He wasn't paid any commission at all. He had represented the

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buyer of about a 15 million dollar estate in Nantucket on Nantucket Island. I went through and related to people what the article had said. I explained where he had fouled up is that he did not salt the record.

In my view when it comes to real estate brokerage, the way you salt the record is...well, in my day, I used to send a lot of mail by certified mail saying I want to register John Doe as a buyer. That way I'm legally on record. In today's world, of course, it's much nicer because you can just send emails and send a barrage of emails back and forth to people so that you have a very well salted record. That is what you really need to protect yourself in business.

AudioMotivation.com: I'd like to spend a little time now talking about your latest book called *Action: Nothing Happens Until Something Moves*. I love that title. The premise of the book as I see it is that you can prepare all you want, but in order for a result to occur you must take action. Can you kind of expand on that a little?

Robert Ringer: Right. I got the subtitle *Nothing Happens Until Something Moves* from the greatest scientific mind of the 20th Century Albert Einstein. That is an actual quote from Einstein. When he spoke, he often had a little twinkle in his eye that sends you a signal that what he was saying had a double meaning. *Nothing happens until something moves*. In science, we certainly know that to be true. That is self evident and of course has been proven over and over again. It's truly an axiom.

It's also true I realized in every day life. Nothing in my life had ever happened good until I actually took action. You can have the greatest ideas in the world and do all the planning possible, but until you add action to the formula, nothing is going to happen. People really ought to be careful about, very careful, about over preparation. A certain amount of preparation is good, but no matter how great your idea is and no matter how much preparation you do, it's all useless without action.

Action is the starting point of all progress. By the way, I looked action up in the dictionary some years ago. I had never done it before. When I was getting I was getting ready to write this book and the dictionary definition says it all. The dictionary says action is the causation of change. If you want something to change in your life, there is only one way that is

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going to happen. That is to take action. Even if you buy a lottery ticket, you are taking action, which isn't something I recommend by the way. You have to take action. It's self evident.

AudioMotivation.com: You know so many people just would go and buy a book or listen to an audio or take some type of course. Then that's it. They wonder why nothing happened afterward. It's because they didn't act on what they learned. That happens so much. How would you...why do people hesitate so much when really it seems like action is such...it seems like it would be the obvious thing?

Robert Ringer: You know I talk about that a lot. I talk about it in most of my keynote addresses. I really attribute that to a phenomenon known as homeostasis. Homeostasis is technically a scientific term, but it's used metaphorically in the field of psychology. Homeostasis is the tendency to live with existing conditions and avoid change, which when you think about it is a terrible way to live your life because it defies both the laws of nature and the laws of the universe.

We know the universe is in a constant state of change. That is a scientific fact. Our sun is burning out and all the other stars in the universe are either burning out or exploding into novas or supernovas. The same is true here on Earth. If you look around you, everything is in a constant state of change. Mountains are eroding. Riverbeds are drying up. The weather is always changing. Technology changes so fast. We can't keep up with it. The economy changes and laws are changing. The reins of power change in countries all the time whether you live in a democracy or under a dictatorship.

The real question is what is the cause of homeostasis? Why do people go out of their way to avoid change and take action? I think that one of the most common reasons, if not the main reason, is because people want to know the what if's and how's of everything. They try to think of every conceivable problem in advance. I always tell people, "Look, I've got news for you. The reality is no one is omniscient." No one can know all the problems in advance let alone all the solutions.

I love what Paul McCartney said one time in an interview on television. He certainly is not a great philosopher, but I think what he said is very interesting. The interviewer asked him how the Beatles got started. He just had kind of a quizzical

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look on his face. He shrugged his shoulders and he said, “Gee, nobody knows how to start a band. You just do it.”

To be honest with you, Bill Gates did the exact same thing. Microsoft never had a business plan and Google the same thing said they never had a business plan. I think people overrate planning, especially in today’s fast moving world. Take action. Don’t worry about what you are going to do on step two or even what step two even is because things might change by time you get to step two. The important thing to do is take step one.

AudioMotivation.com: Ok. There is a character in your book. There is a picture of it on your website. It’s the tortoise. Tell us more about that.

Robert Ringer: Well, the tortoise...where do I start? The tortoise has been with me since my first book. The tortoise is really has become kind of my alter ego. What I like to say is it came from the tortoise and hare theory, which I talk about in *To Be or Not to be Intimidated*. It says the outcome of most situations in life is determined over the long term. The guy who gets off to a fast start merely wins the battle. The individual who is ahead at the end of the race wins the war.

You say where did you actually or who do you actually equate the tortoise to? He is kind of the unglamorous plodder who always seems to find a way to come out at the end. That is where I always saw myself and I think so many people can relate to it.

The tortoise is the quintessential antihero. I always use examples of antiheroes I like. Remember Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*, which was a classic film? He was the classic antihero. He was a shy stuttering boyfriend. He lost every battle all through the movie, but in the end he won the war. In this case, the spoils of winning the war was Catherine Ross, which wasn’t too bad. Colombo from the old TV series the fumbling stumbling detective played by Peter Faulk was probably the ultimate tortoise.

That is who the tortoise is. He’s been my alter ego now for a good thirty-five years. I think a lot of people feel like they are tortoises. You know they may not be the tallest, the strongest, the fastest, the smartest, the handsomest, the prettiest, but the important thing is to find a way to win in the end.

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AudioMotivation.com: Now, I've read and seen the email letter that you published. It's amazing. It's now one of the few that I actually open and read from beginning to end. How often does that come out and what does it cost? How can our listeners get access to that?

Robert Ringer: They can go to RobertRinger.com. In the upper right hand corner, they will see a box where they can sign up for a free subscription to the letter. I think they get some kind of a valuable bonus on top of the free subscription. We try to come out with it at least three times a week. Sometimes we don't make it and it's only two times a week. What we are trying to work up to is five times a week. It's normally an article of an idea or some kind of an insight by me. I do all my own writing.

We occasionally have guest writers, but it's primarily thoughts by me sometimes commenting on the news, commenting on a book I'm reading, or something I may have seen on television, or just a personal real life everyday experience. What I try to give people is what the title of the website says. I try to be a voice of sanity in today's very chaotic upside down world that leaves a lot of people totally perplexed as to what in the world is going on. What can they do about coping?

AudioMotivation.com: Well, I encourage everybody to go to RobertRinger.com and sign up for that. Like Robert said, it's free. Boy, it's just amazing and very profound. I look forward to it. You talk about taxes and dirty tricks as stifling action. Can you tell me, Robert, what a people tax is?

Robert Ringer: I'm sorry. I couldn't hear that too well. You kind of broke up.

AudioMotivation.com: I'm sorry. Taxes and dirty tricks is a stifling action. You talk about that. What would you say is a people tax?

Robert Ringer: Well, a people tax I would say is any person who is in your life who drains you of time, energy, sometimes even money. These are all personal resources; energy, health. You can waste a lot of time and a lot of effort and energy as a result of having people like this in your life. So, when you suffer a significant loss of any of these valuable resources, your ability to take action is impaired. I can picture everyone on the phone shaking their head up and down because everyone has at one time or another these kind of people in their life.

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It's like it really is like being taxed. It really stands in the way of your taking action. If action is the causation of change, action is the starting point of all progress. Then you need to get obstacles out of your way particularly people who stand in the way of your taking action. These kinds of people prevent you from taking action.

AudioMotivation.com: But, you know, a lot of times they're family and friends. How do you do that?

Robert Ringer: Well, everything in life is a tradeoff. If a friend becomes too much of a tax or too taxing on your time and your energy and what you want to accomplish in life, maybe you ought to reevaluate whether this person is really a friend or a worthwhile friend or not. When it's someone in your family, that is real tough question. I wouldn't want to sound brutal because we all put up with people in our families who maybe we wouldn't put up with if they were somebody on the outside. I don't think anybody family or not really has a moral right to stand in your way of trying to better your existence.

AudioMotivation.com: You know the entrepreneurs out there...I mean it's kind of a lonely quest sometimes. People who don't understand what you are trying to do can stand in the way because they kind of act like they are doing you a favor by doing that. Actually it's just holding you back. Would you say that that is true? Would you agree with that?

Robert Ringer: Well, you're talking about people who give you unsolicited advice?

AudioMotivation.com: Yeah. I think or just say if they try to bring you back down to Earth so to speak, their Earth that is. They just say are you sure you're doing the right thing and try to discourage you from going after your dream of maybe owning a business or things like that. I know that the people out there 90-95% of the people in the world just don't get the whole entrepreneur concept.

Robert Ringer: It's the kiss of death for an entrepreneur to talk to and certainly take advice from a non-entrepreneur. What I call the negativism tax is often levied by those who are closest to you, particularly family members. So, it can be an especially difficult tax to cope with. If the friend or family member who offers advice, there is no question they might be well meaning

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in some cases at least. But, their observations could also still be incorrect.

Just because somebody is offering advice, it doesn't mean they're right. Because of this danger, you have to condition yourself to make tough decisions when it comes to not allowing even the nicest negative people to come into or stay in your life. If you need inspiration to accomplish this, just ask yourself how many times you've achieved successful results when you were in a negative state of mind? We become the kind of a product of the people who surround us. You have to be very, very careful who you let into your life.

AudioMotivation.com: Ok, that's true. I'm sure most people out there would agree with that. One of your three number one bestsellers was *Looking Out for Number One*. I understand that is due for a new release soon. Is that right?

Robert Ringer: Yeah, but we don't have a date. Yeah. That book is just about been totally rewritten even more than *Winning Through Intimidation*. That will ultimately be published right.

AudioMotivation.com: Excellent. We'll watch for that. When that comes out, I'm sure you will update your website about that.

Robert Ringer: For sure, yeah.

AudioMotivation.com: Now, the tortoises fifteen point scoring principles—I learned about that from your site. Are these lessons from the tortoise you were telling us about earlier?

Robert Ringer: Well, yeah. Everything is of course tied to the tortoise. That was just something that I produced that had a list of some of my rules to live by. I don't have those fifteen rules in front of me. There are a lot more than fifteen now. I probably have come up with like 150. Yeah. It was just something that I made up and some of my life guiding principles.

AudioMotivation.com: Now, Robert, I actually don't know...we actually have some time here to take a few questions if that's ok?

Robert Ringer: Sure.

AudioMotivation.com: Before we do that, I'd actually like to make sure people know about your website. Maybe tell us some of the things that are on there that people can find. I know they can get your back

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articles. If you want to maybe just say a few things before we open it up for a Q&A here.

- Robert Ringer: The website is RobertRinger.com. You can sign up for a free subscription to...hello?
- AudioMotivation.com: It's RobertRinger.com. I encourage everyone to go there. It's such a huge resource for all of your work.
- Robert Ringer: Yeah. I've also come out with the *Best of Robert Ringer Volume I* and the *Best of Robert Ringer Volume II*, which are compilations of many of my best articles in the past.
- AudioMotivation.com: I'm going to try un-muting here because I know people are going to be interested in asking some questions. If anybody has any questions, the lines are actually now open. You can ask Robert Ringer your question.
- Listener #1: Yes, I have a question.
- AudioMotivation.com: Great, what's your name?
- Listener #1: Hi, my name is Mary. I'm in Los Angeles California.
- AudioMotivation.com: Welcome, Mary.
- Listener #1: Yes, Robert. You were talking about the goal setting and the business plan. You said that most of these other big icons had done it without and basically was saying there is too much said or a lot overdone about that. Can you kind of reiterate a little bit on that?
- Robert Ringer: What are you wanting me to comment on?
- Listener #1: Just reiterate what you were saying in regards to the business plan and how too much is said about it.
- Robert Ringer: Oh, yeah. You know somewhere I think it's probably been a few years ago already I think it was Fortune magazine had a cover story right on the front cover that business plans are becoming obsolete. It gave some statistics and in all honesty I don't remember what it was. It was some big number like 30-40% of 500 Fortune companies no longer are making up long term business plans because the found that they were useless.

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The world is changing so fast that by the time they get to the end of the plan, it's a totally different world. If you look at the landscape out there, thirteen years ago there was no Amazon.com. Amazon.com changed the world. If you look just a few years in the past five, six, or seven years ago, there was no Google. Google has changed the world. Things are just changing too fast.

I find that all the time that a certain amount of preparation is a good thing. As they say, perfect is the enemy of good. If you try to foresee every problem in advance let alone every solution, you may be able to make up a plan that looks terrific. The problem is you are going to go broke because until you take action you are not going to bring a dollar through the front door.

I do emphasize that Microsoft and I am very familiar with Gate's whole story. Microsoft did not have a business plan when they started out. As a matter of fact, for several years people rarely hear about this, Bill Gates was doing everything including sweeping the floors. He was writing all the checks by hand. You can't wait to get everything beautiful and set up. You can't beat taking action. Just get out of the starting gate and worry about step 2, step 3, and step 4 when you get to those steps.

AudioMotivation.com: That's a great answer.

Robert Ringer: You know I always like to quote Mark Twain when I talk about homeostasis, which is the resistance to change because I think he summed it up perfectly even though he probably never heard of the term homeostasis. Mark Twain said, "Twenty years from now you will be far more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do." I try to live by that motto.

AudioMotivation.com: That's a great thing to live by.

Listener #1: Fantastic, that's good.

AudioMotivation.com: Great question, thanks. Next question? I had to mute the line. Here is the question. For a newcomer to your works, to your body of work, where should they go first?

Robert Ringer: You know I hate to say it but I've got to go back to action because nothing happens until something moves. So no matter

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what else you do right and how much you do right, you're still not going to get anywhere until you take action. I always liken it to a rocket ship sitting on a launching pad. It can be the most beautiful rocket ship in the world; great logos, high technology. It's not going anywhere until you apply action to it. You do that when you put fuel in the tank and then you shoot the rocket off. You can have the greatest idea in the world, but an idea is an abstract. An idea is really nothing that you can do anything with. It's only when you apply action to an idea that you convert that abstract into something concrete. It's converting basically an idea into a reality. That's how you do it. You convert it into reality by applying action to it.

AudioMotivation.com: Ok, thank you. That answers that listener's question. Robert, actually, I think we should probably wrap up. We've been having some technical problems here obviously. I would just say to everybody go to RobertRinger.com and sign up for the e-letter and also go and really immerse yourself in what Robert has to offer because it's such an amazing body of material. You can truly benefit. Robert Ringer, I appreciate your patience and your willingness to come onto our program here. We had a lot of gremlins here tonight. I'm glad you hung in there with us.

I hope despite the technical problems tonight that you all got a lot out of this. **Josh:** I was just going to say that the technical difficulties will be corrected. Like I said, this is the first time we've dealt with it. I apologize to everyone. For everybody on the call, please do visit Robert's site at RobertRinger.com. If you are on there drop him an email and let him know that you enjoyed hearing from him. If everybody would do him the honor because it really was a big deal for him to get on this call and even in spite of the technical difficulties that unfortunately we had, he still gave such an incredible amount of ideas and information.

One of the big things that I'll take from it and I hope everyone else will as well is the importance of action and really applying that to everything that you're doing. It makes a humongous difference.

If anybody wishes to or hasn't already, really give some good thought to considering signing up for his newsletter. It's one of those that I personally read. Andy mentioned that he reads it. I'm sure that a lot of people on this call that are listening to me now do as well. I know if they could speak as well, they would

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affirm how good it is. So, everyone please visit him. We hope that everybody will stick with us and come back next week for our next guest where we assure you the technical difficulties will be corrected.

We appreciate everyone coming with us. We hope to see you back next week. Everybody make it a fantastic week. By all means, use action. Put the ideas that you learned from Robert and visit his site. Everybody just have a fantastic week and start making it great. Take care. **Andy:** Goodnight everybody.

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