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‘Serve from the heart’ urges Rock Thomas

“I light up when people realize how great they are,” says Rock Thomas. “The definition of courage is not being unafraid – it’s taking action in spite of fear.” By Susan Doran

Rock Thomas, who in 1997 bought Montreal’s Re/Max Royal Jordan franchise and went on to transform it into one of the largest and most successful offices in Quebec, says that at one time he “was a loner, not very coachable.”

Nor, he says, was he any good at public speaking.

It seems hard to believe now that this real estate veteran and self-made millionaire is a top motivational speaker who travels the country and the world, letting real estate professionals and others in on the secrets to success.

But Thomas has always been a go-getter.

“Maybe because I grew up on a farm, I kept putting myself in a position where I was forced to step up,” he says.

He learned not to shy away from hard work and after a year of university (studying philosophy) he threw himself into a string of jobs ranging from driving cab in Australia to picking tobacco, to hiring and training flight attendants.

In “classic Rock Thomas” form, in the ‘80s he started off as a ‘gofer’ on the movie Meatballs and wound up landing a small part “jumping off a boat and necking with a girl,” he says.

Perhaps this isn’t exactly what he means when he tells his audiences today to “step into your own greatness.”

When he first got into real estate in 1990, he says he had a lot to learn. At the time he thought he would “clean up” in the business financially. Then, despite 80-hour work weeks, it took him eight months to make his first sale. But he began to take some personal development courses and to learn how to model himself on successful people.

Before too long he was the top agent at Re/Max Royal Jordan.

In 1996, he recalls setting a goal for himself (he’s a huge believer in goals, “Make a Plan!” being one of his mantras). Before the end of the year, he determined he would “play

100 games of golf (he’s a six-handicap golfer) and sell 100 homes.”

He fell just one game short on the golf. And on December 31 he sold five houses, putting his sales for the year at 104.

The next year, he bought the company.

When he sold it three years ago, it had grown from three offices to six, with 270 agents – almost triple the number he’d started with.

A big believer in the importance of real estate agents having access to quality training, he loved mentoring and inspiring his employees, teaching them to overcome their limits and their fears. He wanted to do it now on a broader scale.

“I light up when people realize how great they are,” he says. “The definition of courage is not being unafraid – it’s taking action in spite of fear.”

After selling Re/Max Royal Jordan he began (with friends), a quest for knowledge, traveling the world, spending more than 1,000 hours and \$700,000 attending seminars with leading motivational speakers such as Tony Robbins (with whom he’s worked as a trainer) and Deepak Chopra.

“I’m a voracious learner, capturing the essence ... and passing it on,” he says.

He then started his own company, Rock Thomas International, and began giving empowerment seminars. Last year he was approached by Peak Potential Training and now leads seminars for that hugely successful company as well.

His advice to real estate agents?

“Truly serve from the heart. Service is what real estate is about. When people are relaxed they can make decisions. When they are stressed and fearful they back away.

“Have a good line of communication. You need to cultivate a deep sense of trust and respect with clients ... to follow up and finish what you say you’re going to do,” he says. “When you foster that environment, the phone will ring non-stop.”

It’s “a mindset,” he says. “I don’t



Rock Thomas

talk about ‘surviving’ a tough market. I talk about doing it. People take themselves out before they get going... Ask the right questions. If you’re desperate you don’t create confidence.”

It’s important in this market for real estate agents to “provide value,” such as free information. Don’t pressure your clients, he advises. Give them what they want.

He says: “Real estate is not a part-time position. Like an airplane, it needs full throttle at first. After two or three years of time and attention you will reach cruising altitude ... business will come to you ... and you can throttle back and enjoy life.”

It’s key to “focus on the future, not the past,” the performance coach and author reminds his audiences. “Oprah has 27 secretaries,” he says. “She focuses on what’s going on today.”

He believes that the main reason most people don’t succeed is they’d rather be right than open to learning.

“You’ve got to let it go. Be effective, not right,” he says.

In this changing market, the ability to learn is the greatest skill a real estate agent needs, he says. “Those who don’t will get left behind.

“People wait for things to get easier,” he says. “You’ve got to get better. Then it will get easier.”

Rock Thomas is offering a one-day seminar called *Supercharge Your Mindset* on November 18 in Toronto. For details visit www.rockthomas.com.