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**Dr. David Phelps** 

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- David Phelps: Good day everyone, this is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Today with, I'll just call him a high flyer, because he is a pilot. Mr. Rob Swanson is with me today, and I'll tell you what we're going to talk about in just a second once Rob and I have figured it out. But Rob, thanks for being here, sir.
- Rob Swanson: Hey, absolutely, man, David. It's going to be so much fun to have this chat and spend a little time with you.
- David Phelps: Well, Rob, we don't spend a lot of time together. You're very active boots on the ground, you've got a company, you have a business, you're entrepreneurial, I'll give some of your background in a second here. But I was telling you before, we share a lot of common values, I think in philosophy, about life, about business, about government politics. And a lot of things are in common here. And I think that's why we're all here. You have a company called FreedomSoft, I have a community called Freedom Founders. So there's some commonality right there. Let's

just knock it out of the park, brother. So let me tell you a little bit about Rob. As I said, his company is FreedomSoft. He has trained thousands of real estate investors to find and profit from real estate deals all across the country. He's an expert in lead generation, which is a term for marketing.

If you're going to be any in kind of business you've got to know how to market, he's a guru there. Also in cashflow, investing remotely, he has bought, fixed, flipped, and held real estate in over 20 plus States and 33 cities. FreedomSoft is again, a lead generation and phonebased sales CRM for real estate investors with built-in workflow and followup automation. As an active real estate investor, rob focuses on buying properties for cashflow and has designed the success and support teams at FreedomSoft to help people start, grow, and scale their real estate investing business. He's also been interviewed multiple times on CNBC by Forbes magazine, the Wall Street Journal, Money Magazine has been quoted in countless newspaper, magazine, and radio programs throughout the country. So Rob, let's just start out with, what was your foray into real estate? Give us a little bit of your background, when did you first find real estate? And let's just take it from there.

Rob Swanson: Yeah, you got it, man. So my background is I was an engineer, a civil engineer by training out of college. When I was 15 years old, I got in my mind that I wanted to become a civil engineer and I hope to have a daughter named Samantha. So I did both of those two things. And I got into the civil engineering world and I very quickly figured out that I didn't really love it. I kept looking at the

biz dev guys and I'm like, "They got the sweetest gig." So I was the atypical engineer that always had a negative expense account, because I was taking my clients out for breakfast, lunch and dinner as much as I possibly could, which was not what a typical engineer was doing. And so I enjoyed doing that and a lot of my clients, this was 20 some years ago, were real estate guys. They were developers and builders and investors.

And so I kept pursuing and kept asking questions. I figured out early in life that if I asked enough questions, this was before the days of podcasts where information was easier. I had to ask good questions and try to figure out, "Why are they sitting on the side of the table they are making millions and I'm sitting over here billing hours?" And so to accelerate that story, I ended up at a Denver Marriott Wednesday night seminar. And the guy on stage was a great presenter. He presented real estate and real estate investing in a way that made a ton of sense to me. And I was very conservative and I wasn't going to get hoodwinked and suckered by this slick salesman. And that's not what I found. I found a guy who explained to me and the rest of the audience how real estate investing worked, a \$1,600 investment at the back of the room at the end of that evening, and I was on my journey. And that's how I got started.

David Phelps: So making the transition from civil engineer, obviously a paycheck, a good paycheck, and then going on this entrepreneurial journey, which means now you've got to eat what you kill. What did that transition look like?

- Rob Swanson: Yeah. So a couple of things happened for me. I went to a couple of their seminars, I ended up buying their first package and then I ended up investing more money into their higher level packages. This company doesn't even exist anymore, back in the day. So I went to a class and I learned about real estate wholesaling. And for the audience that doesn't know, that's the art of finding a deal, packaging it up, and selling it to another real estate investor for a small fee or a reasonable fee and leaving the lion's share of meat on the bone for the next guy who's taking all the risk. I learned that skill, I came back and I made 75 offers in the next three days.
- David Phelps: Wow.
- Rob Swanson: And I was like, "Wow." One of the things that I learned, and I've coached now real estate investors for years, and people say, "Hey Rob, I'm doing all this stuff, but it's not working." And I ask them one question, "How many offers did you make this week?"
- David Phelps: Exactly.
- Rob Swanson: Right? And so I made 75 offers, I ended up flipping three deals. I made \$42,000 in the next 45 days after just learning the skill of wholesaling, I just took massive action. I didn't know what I was doing, I didn't know how it was going to work, I just took action and figured that I would ask my way to success if I got into a jam. And so that was what I did. Now, back in the day, David, you'll appreciate this, this was before email, apps, all this stuff. I was faxing in copies of my checks. So I closed three deals and I'm faxing in my checks and the company

called me and said, "Hey, congratulations. If you keep faxing in checks, you're going to break our fax machine. What are you doing?" And I thought, "What do you mean, what am I doing? I'm doing exactly what you told me to do." And they're like, "Yeah, we know, but you're having a lot of success. What are you doing?" And I was like, "Oh my goodness, these guys are teaching the stuff that works, but they don't see the success from their students."

I ultimately ended up doing some coaching and consulting for them, which was a nice transition for me out of... I quit my job. When I had six months of stability in the bank, I quit my job, I did a little consulting with these guys where I kept the little 1099 income coming in from their work. And I did that for about a year and a half. And as that business was ending or as their organization was ending, they wanted me to do some more stuff with them. And I said, "Guys, I just made 60 grand this month in my real estate business. I really don't need the consulting gig." And then I was out.

David Phelps: There you are. It's interesting. I didn't mean to bring this into the conversation today, but I think it's so relevant. I'll just let you know, I've got this book that I'm launching in February, "What's Your Next?".

Rob Swanson: Oh, cool.

David Phelps: Which I believe really speaks to the entrepreneur's journey. Most of the people in my world today, and I think probably in our world, let's say our world, who are entrepreneurs and many of our friends, like you, they're

active in real estate, they're building wealth at the same time, but they've got businesses that create the transactional income. So they're doing both at the same time. Most people didn't come and get a degree in entrepreneurship or real estate or finance necessarily, most came from other aspects. And as you said, I think the key thing of that was number one, you're curious. If I had to pick something out from what you said, curiosity. Always curious, always curious, always looking, listening, being aware.

And the second thing you said, I think it was so noteworthy, Rob, is learning to ask the right questions and not being afraid to ask questions. If you had to give key, and I know you've got three young adult kids in your family, all three of which are starting to feel their way out. I'm sure under your two leads and your wife, they understand that that's how life works, that you get out there, you ask questions, and you're not afraid to take action, and not afraid to quote, I hate the word to use, "fail". It's really testing, I think get up there and test. Test some stuff, see what fits. Ask questions, find people that have already gone down a certain path and ask questions, because there's so much available people out there that will share, that will share willingly with their experience.

Rob Swanson: Oh, a hundred percent. It's interesting, now with the team that we have here and just the people that I interact with, I have the opportunity to interact with younger team members, older team members, and everybody in the middle. And I do find it interesting occasionally to see, my oldest daughter works for the company now as my

executive assistant. And that's a great experience. And it's interesting to see, she's 22 years old, she's grown up listening to her mom and myself talk business, talk life, talk politics, talk faith, talk all of these things. And so she's brought a world view and has developed her own, but she's brought a worldview of just hearing an entrepreneur, a business owner's perspective, to the world. And so it's been fun.

- David Phelps: I call that the conversation that our kids hear from the top of the stairs, so listening to mom and dad. Or dinner table or wherever. You're right. And having them hear real life what it's like, they're taking all that in. Even at very young ages, they're taking that stuff in. So be careful what you exhibit to your kids, but what you can be great role models if you do it the right way, for sure.
- Rob Swanson: Yeah.
- David Phelps: All right. So let's dig into what we both love, what we both found early in life. Like you, I didn't go into real estate, I went into dentistry. So kind of like you, I was the engineer of the mouth. Right. So very similar, very analytical, data driven. And now I found this other world, like you, so similar, Rob, I just got to tell you this. I'll just mention his name because he's still around, he actually opened the door. Robert Allen, back in my early years, he was doing these conferences around the country called The ACRE Group. Gosh, what did it stand for? Association of creative real estate, something. Anyway, Robert Allen would take a group of a dozen or more real estate people around the country in different cities and he'd line them up on stage, and then they would have breakouts and they'd

sell their stuff. And as you know, most of them just were very good communicators, good speakers. They were selling their wares, which back then was tapes.

And I loaded up and I learned something, but I had to distill through and find who is the real guy, who's a real deal. And you would always find somebody. And then it was the next step, next step. So you had to figure out your way through and find the people and then dig in. But to me, that was always my plan B. I didn't call it that back then, but when I was in my transactional business, which is dentistry, which again, just like you being an engineer, got me going, but I learned quickly that somewhere, somehow, real estate was going to be really what gave me the freedom to do what I wanted to do. Which it did, which it did. I didn't do anything super smart like you, I just went out and just fricking took action. And just started building these and the compound effect of what real estate would do.

So with that in mind, let's just talk about why we like real estate. We're in a time in the economy where we've had... We'll go back to 2008, we just start there, massive stimulus back then because we have this recession. So we had a bubble there, we won't go into the reason of that bubble. But in that bubble, we have the reset, government comes in and just stimulates the crap out of the economy, bolsters it back up, and then from about 2012 all the way to first part of 2020 with this massive bull run, we've got asset bubbles in the stock market, we got asset bubbles in the stock market, we got asset bubbles in real estate. No question as to why it's happened.

Rob Swanson: Right.

- David Phelps: It's money, cranking it up. So what the difference is, so people go, "My 401k actually has done really, really well in the last eight years. And so it's all good. It's all good." We can say the same thing. Well, our real estate is done really well too in most sectors, and then COVID comes in and we see what the stock more easily does, this, one of these drops.
- Rob Swanson: Yep.
- David Phelps: My real estate never heard of that. Did your real estate actually call you and say, "Hey Rob, there's a free fall here." No, it doesn't do that. But the market does. Now again, here comes the government with unprecedented amount of steam, just cranking it, ramping it back up again. So everything's back good again, and not everybody's world, but a lot of people's worlds it's back again. And so now we're back somewhere here. So what do you say to people who are having fun with their financial markets stock stuff on the real estate side? What lets you sleep at night where you think that they probably in their own world are probably sleeping that well, even though they like to brag about it?
- Rob Swanson: Yeah. Here's the deal, wow, this will open up a can. It's a tough one, because I have those friends who, their wealth is built in their 401k. Let's talk about wealth for a minute. Wealth is oftentimes something that you pick a unit of measure and you measure a certain thing that defines wealth. So let's take the dollar, the US dollar. Most people say, "Hey, my 401k is worth \$800,000," or 2.8 million or whatever the case may be. They're measuring that wealth in dollars. And the same thing can be said about real

estate. We buy real estate, we buy a property and we attribute the value that real estate, we say, "Hey, the house that I own is worth \$165,000." Here's the interesting thing, and I think a lot of people, this is just my opinion, I think a lot of people are going to get a rude awakening if the government keeps printing the money and the dollar continues to de-value.

And if your wealth is in dollars that don't have any other backed hard asset value, and that dollar continues to go down and down and down, it's called inflation, I think people are going to wake up and have a rude awakening. Here's why real estate is considered a hedge against inflation or a hedge against the devaluation of a currency. Because if let's say, David, you're renting a house that I own today, and you're paying me \$1,500 a month. Well, if that dollar goes to a point where it's now not worth anything, or it's worth less than it is today, and let's say that, and this is where I think we are, I think we're at the end of a hundred year debt cycle where I think the dollar is going to get obliterated at one point. I think if you start to look at legislation that's out there, every bit of legislation has clauses and things trying to put in digital currencies into the legislation.

I think fiat dollar is going to go away and it's going to reset. And what happens if you're paying me \$1,500 today, and the dollar goes to zero, maybe the quote unquote "value" that I've measured that \$165,000 house at goes to zero measured in dollar 1.0. But guess what? I call you up and say, "Hey David, I'm not accepting rent in dollars anymore, I'm now accepting it in XYZ currency." That's why real estate is a head against a deflationary

currency, because I can take payment for the use or the occupancy of that property in any currency I want. You could pay me in shovels, you can pay me in dollars. And so I have a sense that as you pointed out, we're at a bubble, we're clearly at a bubble.

And here's a good measure. Back in 2008, I invested in real estate through the crash of '08. I didn't feel right in '06, so I sold a lot on my real estate in '06. In '07, we started to see the tremoring and some drops, I put a large real estate fund together at the end of '07, early '08, and we ran that fund for about three years. And it was fantastic. There were some great years through the crash. But here's what happened from about August or so of 2007 to December 2008, it took around 14 months for the fed to ratchet down interest rates to zero. This year or last year in 2020, it took a week. It took one week. And so there's two ways the fed has to really stimulate the economy. They play with interest rates going up and down or they print money. And so the juice on interest rate is gone.

David Phelps: It's gone, yeah totally.

- Rob Swanson: So the only tool they have left in their belt is printing of the dollars. And the masses of people, David, and you know this, don't understand, they think, "Oh, send me the money, print the money and send it to me." They don't understand the negative consequence and how the piper comes to be paid at some point.
- David Phelps: Yeah, it's the indoctrination in our education system, the media, that controls the sound that everybody hears. And

I think in a big way, Rob, we've just become immune or there's a better word for it. What's the word I'm looking for? The use of debt has just been so prevalent in our country, particularly in the last decade plus, and even before that, for sure. But we've seen it skyrocket where the word trillions means nothing. And yet, if you really looked at what that number meant, it's monstrosity. And yet we casually throw around, "Well, here's a trillion here, a trillion there, no big deal, it hasn't hurt us yet."

People really think that we can just continue this on forever. And I'm with you, no one can predict when the next reset happens, but we're going to have one. This can't continue on, the piper has to be paid. And I've been telling people since back in 2017, '18, all of us in our world, we know there's going to be a cycle. We don't know what's going to trigger it, when it's going to happen, but we're on top of a bubble, the virus has accelerated some things that, again, the stimulus has temporarily overridden, but there's fallout to happen. We both know that. And short-term, but also long-term. So what I'd like to get from you is today and your thoughts, without getting really political here, but I have to say, the country has taken a major swing from let's call it a more conservative approach to a more liberal, or the word used is progressive. Now I'm not going to banter in that, but you know what I'm saying?

Rob Swanson: Yeah.

David Phelps: And so with that being said, socialism means it's a collective, it's community, we're all in this together. And so what you own, everybody owns, the government

becomes the mediator or arbiter of wealth and says, "Well, you got this, we're going to take it over here." And they try to move money and money never stays where it's not being used, so it never works. Go back to the sixties, LBJ war on poverty. How's that worked out? I get it. I get the sense of trying to... But that never works. That never works. So with that being said, I think we're going to see a lot more regulation, a lot more government control stepping in. Where do we play? I say we play. Where should we as small business owners, entrepreneurs, whether in real estate or otherwise, where do we need to play and be on guard?

Because I've seen it in medicine and dentistry and veterinary medicine, consolidation. Consolidation. Well, in our industry, in our real estate industry, 2008, what happened to most of the private mortgage brokers? Where are they today? Do you think that was by accident that the government uses a crisis to remove as many of the individual players? We think, Rob, that the government's smart and they should know that the capitalist base is based on small business entrepreneurs, it's not on the fortunate 500. But those in power, they don't care. They're all about getting control and they'd rather see everybody dependent. So take healthcare. Most of the doctors today are not working by themselves, they're a W2 employee now employed by hospital affiliated conglomerate.

Rob Swanson: That's right.

David Phelps: This is the way the world is going. So back to my question to you, a long way around, I had to make my point, where

do you see the solopreneur being able to stand their ground and not be regulated or over bureaucratized into not being able to play anymore?

Yeah. So I'm approaching it in a couple of ways. And I'm Rob Swanson: going to give a little setup to then the answer. And I've studied this a lot, and I've studied this from several different resources, organizations that have a large investment in research, budgets. And so if you look at the debt cycle where we are today, and you started this off with debt, most currencies, and the dollar has now been existence for a long time, and we're coming to the end of that typical a hundred year cycle. And if you look at how a currency comes into play, it starts as hard money, a hard asset, like gold or silver, typically a precious metal. Then it typically moves to a paperback currency or a paper currency that's backed by that hard money. And then it moves to a fiat currency that is debt-based, and it's no longer backed by the hard currency. And then when the reset comes because of the printing of the dollars, most currencies typically go back to some kind of hard asset basis.

> Now the US dollar is an interesting one, it's been the most powerful reserve currency in the world for a long time. You can go back to some of the empires, previously the British empire, the Dutch empire before that. But the dollar, as long as it maintains its reserve currency status in the world, I still think we're roughly okay. We'll see inflation, we'll see prices go up, we'll see things become more expensive, there'll be some problems. I think ultimately there's going to be a transition in the currency, and so I'm investing in several things. I'm investing in

knowledge. I'm an avid learner. I read and I listen and I invest in knowledge all the time because nobody can ever take knowledge away. The government cannot regulate knowledge out of my head. I'm a big proponent of real estate. I continue to buy real estate. Here's how I buy real estate. I buy real estate very cautiously with debt, I don't use debt much. If I do use debt, I typically use private money either. I'm a private lender in a deal, or I borrow private money for my own portfolio.

And one of the reasons I'm really doing private money in all of my real estate today is regulation could be put on the small investor and force the mom and pop out of real estate ownership is through the use of debt. Rent moratoriums, but not forgiving the debt payments, the mortgage payments, that squeezes a lot of people. But if we recognize that there's going to be a season where that happens, and then we'll come out the other side, I always approach using private money with my private lenders as, "Hey, if there's a problem, let's have a conversation about it and let's work through, because remember, some of my wealth is in the value of this real estate. Your wealth is protected by the asset of this real estate, let's work together if we have a problem and navigate through this." Versus if I have a bank loan or bank debt or other forms of debt. I don't have that relationship to work on. So I'm a big proponent of real estate with private money.

I am looking, and this is not something that I have done a lot of, I'm starting to look at non housing flow assets versus just housing cashflow assets. Storage units, other types of cash flowing real assets other than just housing. I'm also looking at expanding just some of the

diversification across the country. So I've invested in, as you said at the beginning, 20 different states, 30 some different cities across the country, and then I've sold and I've consolidated my portfolio at times. I'm starting to really look politically in the counties that I invest in, how did they lean? What's their track record? What is going on politically? And so I think knowledge, real estate, diversification with the lending programs, the geography, as well as the type of cash flowing real estate.

And then I'm looking at other business. I own FreedomSoft, FreedomSoft is a cash flowing business that provides a service. It's a subscription-based business, and so it provides cash flow. Again, if dollar 1.0 became not valuable, I could take payment for the use of our software in another form of currency tomorrow. So I really like business when you have the ability to be paid for those services in different currencies. And then finally, I am looking at more and more digital assets, digital investments. I love the block chain. I don't think anybody has fully figured out how to bring that to the mass market, in the real estate space yet, or maybe in the finance space. But I'm looking a lot in that direction. Those are the things that I'm thinking about and investing in today and spending a lot of time gaining knowledge about.

David Phelps: You made so many great points there. I won't try to reiterate all of them, but going back to your point of being curious and seeking knowledge is a key, diversification into multiple streams of income. It's all about hedging, because no one knows, can predict. So it's hedging, you've got multiple streams and it's one of the things that I love seeing the members of our community, Freedom

Founders, who have been very dedicated to transactional income. They do, they provide great service. We've got to have them, doctors are key, but they have the problem that anybody does, doesn't matter what your income level is. If it's all based depending upon your active work, then if something happens to you or to the industry or regulation, all of these things are at play right now. They come to learn about real estate because it's diversification, and they understand as you said very well, very succinctly, that it's a tangible asset that provides a use.

I always say, where do you want to go when people try to figure out, "Well, what do I invest in?" Invest in what everybody needs, the essentials. When COVID hit, do people run out of their houses? No, actually they went from apartments to houses. There was a movement. What happens when certain jurisdictions, states, municipalities in blue States, very liberal, very progressive, and they're taxing the heck out of their constituents, where are the constituents going that can? They're moving. They're moving. Just as you said, to places where there's still capitalist ideology. So the ability to set up your income streams and be diverse, we can do that with the tangibles, the businesses, with the real estate, with knowledge. I don't know how to do that on the stock market. I personally just don't get it, never have, and maybe I'm just not smart, but I have found that over my four decades with real estate, been through as you have, a number of cycles. Solid, stable, real estate has maintained the cashflow. I don't care about the evaluation. As long as the cashflow is there.

Rob Swanson: That's right.

David Phelps: You went through it, it's the buy and hold. It's building the wealth, compounding it over time is what's worked for us.

- Rob Swanson: That's right. You're exactly right. And taking that full circle back to, again, friends of mine who have 401ks and IRAs, and their wealth is in their retirement accounts, they don't have control over the regulations of those retirement accounts. They don't have control over the evaluation of those retirement accounts, they don't have the cashflow from those retirement accounts. There are so many things that I think people are just misguided in today's world about, let's not even talk about wealth, let's just talk about financial security. Not even financial freedom, but just financial security. People have put security in these things that they have no control over and are much less secure than many are led to believe.
- David Phelps: So true. So true. Well, Rob, I'd like to continue this conversation at different points in time, because we could go down a lot of these rabbit holes deeply. Just to be cognizant of our time, your time, and our listeners' time, I'm going to wind it up today, but I want to thank you for being here and just really relaying your experience and your wisdom. So many good nuggets here today. I'm going to go back and have our team just pull some of the great things that we talked about today. If people want to find you, follow you, reach you, what's the best way to do that?
- Rob Swanson: Yeah. So I'm fairly active on Facebook. They can go to facebook.com, Rob Swanson. Also, they can go to

robswanson.com and jump onto that email list and just follow what we do there.

- David Phelps: Excellent. Excellent. Well sir, I appreciate your time, Rob, have a great day. We're all going to make this a great year, but we've got to do it together.
- Rob Swanson: Absolutely David, you bet.
- David Phelps: Take care.

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