

Chapter 1: Me, Myself, and I – An Open Book

Ever since I immigrated to Canada in 1971, when I speak in public to a group in either a business setting or as of late when lecturing on global affairs to “Third Age” life-long learning audiences, I begin with the same introduction. My name is Amnon Zohar. Amnon, a Hebrew biblical name, first son born to King David in the Old Testament – Check it out. I do it deliberately to help my audience to pronounce my name properly. The English language is not too tolerant towards words that have successive consonants. As a result, I have been called different names, including my first name, ranging from Amen, to Amon and would you believe Amoron. Few if any in my audiences bother to verify

my claim in the Old Testament, and I prefer it this way. If they did, they will quickly discover that it is the name of the eldest son of King David. But also, that he was killed by his brother Absalom in revenge for the rape of his sister Tamar. Something that I will find hard to explain especially when my one and only sister who is six years older than me is willing to swear that there was never any sexual tension between us – Ever. In fact, it was my sister who chose the name Amnon for reasons that I only discovered years later. I was born during the Jewish High Holidays (September). My parents asked her if she had a suggestion for naming her new-born brother. That same week her teacher recited some words of wisdom by the Rabi Amnon a name that as a six-year old she did not hear before and liked the sound of it. Today it is a reasonably popular name in Israel and in fact the flowers that we know as Pansies get their Hebrew name from one of the uglier stories of the Bible – That of Amnon & Tamar. Shortly after I immigrated to Canada, it was suggested to me that I should change my name to make it easier for native Canadians to pronounce it. For example, Anton or Amen. I never considered it and never did. What is in a name? Its mine and I am proud of it. Years later at one of my sales effectiveness seminars I began with the same introduction only for one of the attendees to ask me if I knew the meaning of the name Amnon. I was embarrassed to admit that I did not and never thought about it. He proceeded to tell me that the meaning of the name Amnon is loyal, faithful, and a reference to a

tutor, lecturer or mentor. Many years later well into my “Third Age” I discover my true calling and one of the angles of my “Love Triangle”: Lecturing and mentoring in business leadership and Global Affairs my present passionate pursuit. I continued to research the origins of my name Amnon. Through the wisdom of the Internet I discovered that:

“People with this name tend to be creative and excellent at expressing themselves. They are drawn to the arts, and often enjoy life immensely. They are often the center of attention and enjoy careers that put them in the limelight. They tend to become involved in many different activities and are sometimes reckless with both their energies and with money”

Both me and those who are close to me find it difficult to argue with that description yet wondering about the “science” of associating these attributes to a coincidentally chosen name of a new-born. Further “investigation” (different Google keyword searches) revealed under the heading:

Amnon Destiny Analysis

“You are capable of great love. However, you have a tendency, to get carried away and be stubborn about what you think is right; often seen as a ‘Hothead’ or rebel. You would be excellent as a boss, explorer, race car driver, or matador. You are a rebel. You are both colorful and unpredictable. Your energy and love of life are stimulating.

You love being the center of attention and never go unnoticed. You are impatient and always look for action. You speak your mind when upset and have suspicious nature.”

I strongly refute any suggestions that I could be an excellent race driver as by all accounts I am a self-admitted and family endorsed: “one of the lousiest drivers in the land” Similarly, I refute any allegation of having a desire or aspiration to become a matador. In 2016 my wife, the prime angle in my Love Triangle, and I spent a few months in Malaga, Spain. In April, we travelled to the Feria in Seville and watched the season opening of the bullfighting season. Afterward, we swore that it was the first, last and never to be seen again in person or in visual media. No, I am not a matador wannabe. However, with the rest of the description I have few if any arguments.

Yet further exploration uncovered my personality in much greater detail. First-of- all, my numerology number is 57 and I have no clue whether it is good, bad, or indifferent and frankly I do not particularly care. But this? How did they know?

- *You find it difficult to be patient, practical, and systematic, preferring to act impulsively as the spirit moves you.*
- *These contrasting qualities make it difficult for people to understand you and can lead to friction in your personal life.*
- *Your name of Amnon is a dual influence: at times you can be extremely happy, expressive, full of fun, and good-natured; yet at other times you find congenial association impossible, being controlled by self-pity, moods, and depression.*

- *You are deep, philosophical, and refined, but your extremely sensitive nature causes you to become depressed over any real or imagined slight.*
- *You feel and sense much more than you can fully understand and could become psychic if you delved into the occult.*
- *The problem then would be controllable thoughts, feelings, and reactions.*
- *Indulgences could result in skin rashes, liver problems, heart trouble, or lung and chest congestion.*
- *If you could express only the constructive qualities and restrain the negative qualities of your nature, you would always be good company.*

Who knew that by googling Amnon, I will come across such an intimate revelation of my psychological DNA. The description got carried away by venturing into the clinical domain and it behooves me to go on record in saying that as I am writing this book I am clear of skin rashes, liver problems, lung or chest problems and yes in 2011 I was diagnosed with a heart problem during an angioplasty procedure and had two stent “installed” in one of my arteries. I have since subsidized the pharmaceutical industry by taking mitigating medications on a life-long basis. Aside from that, once again I have very few disputes with this, psychological profile.

I was born in Israel before Israel was born which is somewhat confusing. Once when I crossed the border to the United States, a young US Custom and Immigration officer thought so. He looked at my papers and asked me. “When where you born?” “1943” I replied “Where were you born” he replied. “ I was born in Israel” “In 1943 there was no Israel” he said “yes I know” I replied “Israel at that time was

under British rule as part of the British mandate over Palestine “Well” he said, in this case you must change your place of birth from Israel to Palestine” “I am sorry, sir I can’t do this as it will identify me as a Palestinian not an Israeli citizen” He opened my Israeli Passport took a quick look and in a bewildered tone said: “What the hell is Rehovoth? Rehovoth is my hometown where I was born. It is only then that I realized that Israeli citizens who were born prior to 1948 have their hometown designated as their place of birth.

So, mine is a story about identity. Born under British colonialism, witnessed as a child the birth of a nation, served the country with distinction through the military (albeit non-combat) service, native son (Sabra) of the state of Israel son of Jewish Polish Immigrants that had the foresight to escape Poland well before the rise of Nazi Germany. As an Ashkenazi Israeli Jew married a Sephardic Bulgarian, hometown girl at the tender age of nineteen and a half, a girl whom I have known since we were six years old. Her parents were spared during the Holocaust thanks to the compassion and sense of dignity of the Bulgarian Orthodox Bishop in a story for the ages: *The Trains Departed Empty*. Then at the age of twenty-eight owing to tragic family circumstances, with three toddlers arrived in Canada with two suitcases to experience the cultural shock that is a common immigrant experience. At first denying for patriotic reasons the permanency of my Canadian residency, guilt ridden for leaving parents and siblings behind in a country that could use my talent and commitment and whose core values shaped the man I have become. Now forty-nine years later still with an indiscernible Canadian accent but not an Israeli either, I reflect on the arch of my life. When I turned fifty years old my children surprised me with a video, part of which was for each to attribute to me or my personality a one, or two words adjective(s). My older son he of the cynical

sense of humor did not hesitate and replied: “Average Height”.

My life story is too benign to burden the reader with it. I had a happy childhood. I do not hate my parents even though they had little time for me as a child seeing that they worked so hard to make a decent living. We were not poor but not well off either. We were the classical decent working class, family. Throughout my schooling I was the classical “Good student but could achieve more if only applied himself greater”. I was born with a lazy eye and for many reasons did not bother to straighten my left eye knowing that my lost eyesight cannot be restored. I was obviously ridiculed as a child and confused my audience as an adult which I learned to turn into an advantage. Since childhood I was a romantic with great interest in the opposite sex. By the age of 15 I began dating my third girlfriend the one I married just a short 4 and a half years later, the love of my life and the woman I have adored and admired for over 60 years now. We grew up together, we matured together, we were educated together, we have common values but extremely opposite yet so complimentary personalities and little to no sensationalism in our relationship over such a long period of time. We are both immersed in the love for each other and love of our children and our grandchildren. I was recently asked what I would like my epitaph to be and without hesitation I responded: “ Here lies a man who could never look you straight in the eye , but yet he always did” Years ago I started to dabble in poetry both in my native language Hebrew but surprisingly to me at first, in my second language English. Years ago, I was also diagnosed by a psychologist as having a Cluster B personality disorder - a drama personality. The more I more I tried to understand what it meant the more confident did I become in understanding myself, my

personality, my strengths, passions and shortcoming and I am at peace with them all.

“Dramatic individuals are feeling, and people oriented. They tend to experience and express themselves in vivid emotional terms and pull others into this colorful world. They are often optimistic, buoyant filling their world and those in it with excitement, sensuality, warmth, and theatre. Things happen in their lives which are never dull”

This was my inspiration when I was trying to examine myself in poetry:

My Heart & Mind

*My heart and mind have always been
The guiding light that shaped the man I have become
My heart has always led my mind forever just a step
behind*

*The chambers of my heart I am told are only four
But for the love and passion that they hold
I am sure there must be many more
The life that I have given
The life that came before
The love that I have shared
The children grand whom I adore
Have filled the chambers of my heart
Perhaps as close as to the rim
But for the love and passion that is left
They'll sure expand to the extreme
My mind has grown in wisdom through the times
Enough to know that I don't know
How far that I have come.
Or better yet how far I have to go.*

So perhaps my story is a triangle of Love, Passion and Reward.

Chapter 2- A Love Triangle

If we are telling a story about *Love* and *Love Triangle*, we better start by defining the terms. Of course, this has already been done for us in the 1970 film adaptation of Erich Segal's novel *Love Story*. Starring Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neil. "Love means never having to say you're sorry". I did not quite understand it then and I am not sure I understand it now. It is a good catch phrase though, you must admit. But I felt a need to search for a more meaningful, more intense definition that could better describe the emotions I feel for the subjects of my Love Triangle. After all love is one of the most intense emotions that we experience as humans. It is a variety of different feelings, states and attitudes that range from interpersonal affection to pleasure. Love can be defined as an intense feeling of affection with no limits or conditions for a person or a thing. Not bad, although we tend to throw the term around many a time without a true reference to this wonderful emotional state. Whitney Phipps. A renowned pastor and gospel singer who has been married to his high school sweetheart for 39 years, almost 20 years less than my marriage to my high school sweetheart, said it best in only two sentences:

*Love is when you choose to be at your best when the other person is not at their best. Love is when what you want is never important. But what the other person needs and wants is always paramount. ... "That's a hard one to do, but that's what **true love** is."* ... and this does not depend on what "is"-is! It is commonly accepted that Love is essential to our well-being. Though most have experienced it in their lives,

they would have differing responses when asked to define love. Mine is as simple as a “*one-sided unconditional commitment of loyalty, trust and respect and as appropriate lust*”, in the respectable term of the word. For me living life by offering unconditional love is an adventure that excites the very essence of my being and that I am delighted to dish out to my wife and family and with different intensity to things that I am passionate about. This is my Love Triangle.

We all know the common definition of a Love Triangle. We read about it in novels, saw it in films and on the stage. But this is not my Love Triangle. Mine are the subjects of my unconditional love: My family, my football and my teaching and mentoring. It may be uncool to admit in public that having lived through almost eight decades I have never, ever used narcotic substances – drugs of any kind. The subjects of my Love Triangle are my drugs.

I picked the title for my book with the risk of setting false expectations that this is some sort of an erotic novel. With a few minor exceptions it is not the case. But then I asked myself if other than the obvious is A Love Triangle a “thing”? In my zest for learning I discovered that few researchers have put forth a viable [theory on the concept of love](#). The triangular theory of love, developed in the late 1980s by psychologist Dr. Robert Sternberg, tries to do just that. His theory suggests that people can have varying degrees of intimacy, passion, and commitment at any one moment in time.

Intimacy. Intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships. It thus includes within its purview those feelings that give rise,

essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship.

Passion. Passion refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. The passion component includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in a loving relationship.

Decision/commitment. Decision/commitment refers, in the short-term, to the decision that one loves a certain other, and in the long-term, to one's commitment to maintain that love. These two aspects of the decision/commitment component do not necessarily go together, in that one can decide to love someone without being committed to the love in the long-term, or one can be committed to a relationship without acknowledging that one loves the other person in the relationship. The three components of love interact with each other: For example, greater intimacy may lead to greater passion or commitment, just as greater commitment may lead to greater intimacy, or with lesser likelihood, greater passion. In general, then, the components are separable, but interactive with each other. Although all three components are important parts of loving relationships, their importance may differ from one relationship to another, or over time within a given relationship. Indeed, different kinds of love can be generated by limiting cases of different combinations of the components.

The three components of love generate eight possible kinds of love when considered in combination. It is important to realize that these kinds of love are, in fact, limiting cases: No relationship is likely to be a pure case of any of

them. Don't researchers tend to complicate things that are basically so primal and intuitive? But I was intrigued. By now I declared myself as a passionate, unconditional lover, so at least I better know what I am talking about. Of the 8 combinations of the types of love that the interaction between intimacy, passion and commitment, I chose the ones that are closely related to my own Love Triangle:

Romantic love: *bonds people emotionally through intimacy and physical passion. Partners in this type of relationship have deep conversations that help them know intimate details about each other. They enjoy sexual passion and affection. These couples may be at the point where long-term commitment are still undecided.*

Consummate love *is made up of all three components and is the total form of love. It represents an ideal relationship. Couples who experience this kind of love have great sex several years into their relationship. They cannot imagine themselves with anyone else. They also cannot see themselves truly, happy without their partners. They manage to overcome differences and face stressors together.*

Those two best describe the lifelong love my wife and I share. But what about our joint unconditional love of our children and grandchildren and of the occupations we are totally passionate about and practice them with love and attention and derive from them unusual satisfaction? Is this not love? Of course, it is. Does it need a better definition or needs to be allocated a type? May be passion rather than love? Only to underscore that there is no greater satisfaction than to immerse yourself in activities which you love and enjoy and from which you derive enormous satisfaction and in which therefore you naturally excel. That is how I feel

about my passionate love for “The Beautiful Game” or in Portuguese “Jogo Bonito” Soccer to North Americans and Football to the rest of the world. I feel the same about my late discovery of my calling: Lecturing “Third Age” adults who, as do I, thrive on life-long learning. This is my Love, Passion and Reward story.

Chapter 3: The Love of My Life

It is only late in my life and following a professional verification, that I understood that I was born a romantic. For the longest time I hid the psychologist handwritten twenty pages analysis of my personality deep in a drawer where nobody could find it. At times I was thinking of shredding it. As it turns out my personality thrives on approval, praise, and affirmation (and whose does not?). I found the classification of “Drama Personality” as an affront to the way I wanted people to see me. I was particularly upset with the clinical definition of “Cluster B personality disorder”. Not only was I offended by being classified as “B” but the term “personality disorder” freaked me out. Only recently as I was contemplating writing about my Love Triangle did I become comfortable with the diagnosis. As I “matured”, not only have I become more comfortable with my personality and my standing in the “world”. In fact, I became proud of my diagnosis. This is especially true when one considers the alternatives. Cluster A is defined as odd or eccentric behavior that affects 5.7 percent of adults. Cluster C personality disorders consist of fearful and anxious behaviors, affecting 6 percent of adults.

So, it is not out of character for me to write about Love. As a child I was especially unattractive by children's standards of the time and even more so of today. I was short, skinny, cross eyed and my mother who was a professional seamstress dressed me in her hand made diaspora inspired shorts and pants. I quickly recognized that my acceptance into the social structure of kindergarten and grade school will not be based on looks and appearance. I did not understand it then, but by all accounts, I was still popular, an attribution that children crave. I compensated for my looks with my chutzpah, my wit, my athletic skills, and my academic standing. Little did I know then that girls, speaking generally, find these attributes appealing and even attractive. I fell in love in grade 4 at the age of 10 or 11. She was a tall, black hair with two long braids. She knew that I liked her as I could not keep my eyes off her, including my lazy eye. We never touched, we never acknowledged but we sure knew. In fact, some 60 years later we became friends again, on Facebook. She remembered and reminded me that I carved out our joint initials on the school desk we shared: ALBZ. My parents had to pay for the repairs. That was my puppy love but one that I recall as exciting and intense. It was not until grade 7 or 8 when I was already Bar-Mitzvah that I fell in love again. She was a red head daughter of one of the wealthiest families in my hometown of Rehovoth. She was what kids nowadays call the Queen Bee and I was her boyfriend. By then I grew in height and while still cross eyed also in appearance. Was it a true love or was it more my ribbon for making it to the top echelon of the class' social elite? We were not only classmates, but we were also members of the same youth organization – Maccabi a Zionist sport and culture organization. We had our weekly gathering where we played, talked, walked and many times traveled the land on day walks and overnight trips. This was then. Children really

liked to play outdoors and make up their own games, loved to pick wildflowers on weekend walks and were fed and thus full of pioneering spirit and the love of the land. Every summer break our Maccabi group would go to an Israeli Kibutz in the Northern Galilee near the mouth of the Jordan river called Dafna. We would spend a whole month living in the Kibutz. Getting up early in the morning, and I mean early, to pick up fruits and vegetables from the Kibutz' orchards and fields. By noon we were back for lunch in the Kibutz's communal dining room mingling with Kibutz members and feeling great. The afternoon was our free time to go swimming, playing outdoors, hiking, gathering in groups and truly converse on topics of the day. On reflection our social foundation, our tactile engagements and the simplicity of our physical and emotional environment shaped our values and the men and women that we have become. Values that we carried forward throughout our lives and ones that we live by even in this age of iPhones and Instagram and Tik-Tok and texting emojis. We may have not been better as children but we sure were different. That summer of 1956 my girlfriend and I spent the summer in Dafna. In my mind it was our coming of age as an "official couple". The circumstances are still blurry, but that was the exact time when my Queen dumped me. In my mind, to this day I can recreate the pain, agony, humiliation and distraught that washed over me. Not recognizing the clinical diagnostic of my personality, I knew deep in my heart that this was the end of the world. That life is not worth living and I decided to go out in the middle of the night and drown myself in the freezing waters of the Banias tributary that feeds into the Jordan River. My drama personality kicked in. I wanted her to feel so bad knowing that I committed suicide because of her. I am still writing so what exactly happened? For many years I convinced myself that my suicide attempt was real, but I could never recall the

exact circumstances as to why I failed to execute the mission. Now I know. It was my Drama personality that kicked into action. I probably never seriously considered committing suicide, but it was important that everyone knew and felt sorry for me, especially Her. In late 2016 my wife had a class reunion of the grammar school graduating class of 1957 marking the 60th anniversary. My wife was a classmate of Queen Bee and I joined her. The Queen and I met before a few times since the summer of 1956 and remained friendly. But at the class reunion we reminisced about our childhood and had a good laugh about the attempted suicide mission.

In the summer of 1957 my future wife, the love of my life who was also a member of the same Maccabi group did go to Dafna for the summer, but I did not. As it turned out I came down with a case of the Mumps and was bed ridden most of the summer. My wife wrote her family history recently in a book titled "From Birthplace to Homeland". This is how she remembers the summer of 1957. This has some significance to the evolution of my love story. So, I quote:

The summer of 1957 was one of my most memorable summers. Every summer for one month we used to go with our Maccabi leaders to work in a kibbutz. Think of it as summer camp on steroids. We had an early morning wake up we were assigned in groups to pick fruit till lunch time. After lunch we had free time to do whatever we liked. We had our meals at the communal lunchroom with the members of the kibbutz. American Jews and gentiles loved to come work and stay at the Kibbutzim. It was just after the Sinai war. Young American Jews felt a pull to come help and experience life in Israel. We were in kibbutz Dafna in the beautiful north part

of Israel. ... There were volunteers from the USA and France in kibbutz Dafna. An American and a Frenchmen befriended me. I was flattered that they liked me. Imagine how I felt as a fourteen years old girl, who never left Israel, was noticed by American and French men much older and sophisticated than me. After I left the kibbutz and came back home to Rehovot, Danny the American and the Frenchmen came to visit me in Rehovot. I did not speak English or French and they did not speak any Hebrew but somehow, we figured out how to understand each other.

Aliza Levy was a neighbor of mine. I knew her since she was 6 years old. She lived not a kilometer away from my home. We went to the same grammar school just up the street from our homes. We were in the same grade but not in the same class. We knew each other and that was all. Later, we both ended up joining the Young Maccabi youth movement and were in the same group. By that time, the summer of 1957, the young Aliza (6 months older than me) flowered into a beautiful, many say, and I am certain, the most beautiful girl in our school if not our town. I was then on the “rebound” a condition I have become aware of only much later. I had the most miserable Summer while with the Mumps and following a year of agony after my Queen Bee dumped me and the suicide fiasco. Aliza and I graduated to High School and ended up in the same class and if I remember correctly seated next to each other or close by. My closest friend at the time, you know the one where ‘mi casa es tu casa’ best friend was eying Aliza but as 15 years old awkward boys did not know exactly how to go about it. Who knew? On this one evening I was walking Aliza home from our Maccabi group meeting, as we were close neighbors, on a mission to “smoke

out” her intentions towards my best friend to see if I could broker a romantic relationship between them. Or did I?

In her book Aliza describes this event like this:

“Amnon and I knew each other from a young age we were neighbors. We attended the same school, were in the same grade and we were together in the same youth organization Maccabi. I did not pay attention to him till the age of sixteen. I started dating Amos, Amnon’s best friend. One day Amnon walked me home. He said that he wanted to make sure that I am serious about Amos. He said he wanted to protect his good friend. I do not know or remember how and why the switch happened. I started dating Amnon. Amnon is both romantic and possessive. We spent together every minute. In our small town everyone knew us as a couple. We were the famous couple in the town. We spent all our time together and alone neglecting all our friends”

As the statute of limitations precludes this incident from being litigated, I am free to admit that my sales pitch about protecting my best friend was somewhat contrived. I was not certain at that time, but I now know that I fell in love with Aliza almost a year earlier. It was our end-of-the-year traditional over-night trip to the Northern Galilee and as it turned out, our group camped overnight on a flat roof top of a school in the town of Tel Chai that of the famous lion statue symbolizing one of Israel’s early military heroes. Aliza and I ended up sleeping right next to each other, or so we thought. No, it is not what you think at all. We just talked and talked and talked throughout the night literally until dawn the next morning. There was something magical about this night. For the life of me I cannot remember what our conversation was

about. All I remember is that it was intimate, respectful, friendly, and exciting to spend a night with the prettiest girl in town – just talking. I registered in my mind that Aliza was not only the most beautiful girl I have ever met, but that she was so smart and wise and honest and humble but it took me another year to gather the courage to lure her into a romantic relationship. We have known each other for 71 years now, we are married for 57 years and we are still to this very day the best of friends, partners and lovers. Who knew? Once we became “officially” hinged we could not take enough of each other. I remember our long walks in the park, our making out on park benches, our staring in each other eyes, crooked as mine were, with puppy love looks. Almost 60 years later many of our contemporaries who still live in the town of Rehovoth remember us together everywhere in town. Later in life when our own children grew up and started dating, did we recognize and advocated to them to not abandon their childhood friends as we did when we were young and in love. What may appear as such an idyllic courtship, encountered its first crisis very soon after its inception. When you are young and in love you find it hard to accept that there may be hurdles and bumps along the road of a serious relationship and that love alone may not be enough to mitigate them. In 1958 when Aliza and I barely celebrated our first “anniversary” guess who showed up. Aliza describes it this way:

Danny went back to the US, we corresponded with the help of the dictionary for a couple of years. Two years later he came back to Israel. He planned to attend The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He wrote that he wanted to see me. At that time, I was dating Amnon. We were only sixteen.

When Amnon heard that I was planning to see Danny he gave me an ultimatum: “It’s Either Him or Me” and you know what I chose. Now I think what Chutzpah Amnon had giving me an ultimatum. We were only sixteen. I ask myself where was my independent spirit? Then, I did not have it. I was too young to know my wants. I took Amnon’s ultimatum seriously.

I have never, and will never, apologize for having the Chutzpah to claim Aliza for myself. If either of us on reflection may have second thought it will be Aliza. For many years since we got married, had children, immigrated to Canada the memory of Dan and the thought of a missed opportunity must have lingered in Aliza’s mind. Dan was tall, handsome, mature, highly educated (medical school) and well to do. In hindsight this may be considered an “own goal” by Aliza. Years later every time I used to travel on business to Dallas, Texas where Dan used to live, Aliza asked me to try and look him up. Somehow, I always came back empty handed. It became a thing. In January, 1999 when the Internet was at its bare infancy, Aliza and I had a conversation about the potential of the internet to change our lives as we know it. Aliza has always been and up to this day a techno skeptic. She prides herself of refusing to embrace the digital and social media realm barring the absolute necessities (e-mail and Skype). She is likely the only person in Canada that can afford an iPhone but refuses to buy one. She is a ferocious reader but only in hard or soft cover. She is one of the few, unfortunately, who subscribes to the morning national daily newspaper and prefers a land line (if no longer a rotary dial) telephone conversation the old-fashioned way. It is a thing with her. So here we are discussing the future potential and

impact of the internet and as a marketer and salesman by occupation I declare that: “There soon will be and may be even today, not a single thing, not a bit of information that you would like to know that you couldn’t instantly find on the Internet” (This is pre-Google mind you!) “Find me Dan” she said without hesitation more than 40 years after she last saw Dan.

I embraced the challenged, looked up a directory of e-mails then available on the web and ended up sending this e-mail to about 150 Dans, Daniels, with two variations on the last name as we were not sure exactly which was the right one. My e-mail read:

“ I am looking for a Dan or Daniel F(1) or F(2) originally from Dallas Texas who in 1957 or 1958 was a volunteer at the Israeli Kibutz named Dafna and who a year later came to Israel to study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This is strictly a nostalgic search, no other motives are involved. If you are the one, please reply to this e-mail.”

32 minutes later I received an e-mail which read:

I am not the Dan you are looking for, but I find this to be a very wonderful story. Good Luck!

35 minutes later I received another e-mail. It read:

You found me! I remember that summer well. Have been back to Israel only once since then., but I stay in touch with some good Israeli friends. I am pretty, sure I know who you are. Tell me about yourself. Are you in the U.S?

Even in this early day of the internet, and most definitely today I would not necessarily trust this reply for fear that it is

a prank and for greater fear of disappointing Aliza after elevating her hope of finding Dan. I decided to scan a photo of Aliza, Dan and a few others circa 1957 in Dafna. Scanned it and ask Dan to identify himself and Aliza in this photo as a form of verification. 45 minutes after I sent the original e-mail, I received Dan's reply where he clearly identified not only himself and Aliza but the other 3 boys and girls in the photo. Almost exactly within the 45 minutes time frame that I promised Aliza to "find her Dan". I waved the e-mail in front of her face and said: "Beware of the Internet. It knows everything!" This is not the end of the story. In a follow up e-mail Dan wrote about his memories from that summer including the sentence: "*...I also remember thinking you were the most beautiful girl I have ever seen*" To add insult to injury he also mentioned that he lives now in Palo Alto, Ca. married with grown up children, have degrees in physics and medicine and have worked in medical research most of his life at Berkeley, Yale and Stanford. Recently he left the academic world and now involved in Silicon Valley hi-tech and biotech, startup companies. I won the bet alright but never convinced Aliza to embrace the internet to this very day. When she read his e-mail all I could tell from her expression was: "Boy, did I ever make a big mistake!". This hypothesis was verified a few years later when my daughter Sharon was preparing to travel to San Francisco on business. Aliza suggested that she should contact Dan to see if he would be willing to meet with her for lunch or coffee. He enthusiastically agreed. They met for lunch and on her return, Sharon had this sad look on her face when she said: "Sorry to tell you mom – but you made a big mistake!" Dan was handsome and charming and friendly and so accomplished

and all you are going to get mom is his photo with me. Dan and Aliza never met. We both travelled to San Francisco and offered to meet with him. We suspect that he was ill at the time and offered some excuses. My expressions of my love for Aliza only grew in, size, scope, and frequency since then. Recently we remembered this story and Aliza did not hesitate to admit: “When I look at my life and the life we spent together and the family we raised – No regrets, I am the richest person in the world.” Little did she know that I would not have given up on her no matter what and that my ultimatum which happened to work was only a short cut.

Aliza and I went to high school together where “went” was the operative word. By then we were sitting next to each other, exchanging looks and remembering the events of the previous evening. I was a good enough student that could get by with passing marks without paying too much attention to the study. Aliza did not. In hindsight I regret it. Aliza registered to a vocational school and graduated with a secretarial diploma before at the age of 18 she joined the Israeli army for a compulsory 2 years, service as is the standard in Israel. I, being her younger, was still in my graduating year of high school. Not having Aliza by my side even for short periods of time sucked. I remember writing her steamy love letters that were pages long. I was always good at expressing myself in writing. I was also as my personally profile dictate, very possessive if not outright jealous. Here is my girlfriend who is now independent, meeting other “older” and more mature than her high school boy friend and none of them are blind to see what I was seeing in her, as was Dan, the most beautiful girl we collectively ever seen. I told her years later that I married her for her looks when it was

already safe to say that. As a young man I was infatuated with the actress Sophia Lauren (at 77 I still am) and Aliza was just as beautiful and sexy as Sophia Lauren. I remember cutting school, catching a bus to her army camp an hour away from our town. At the gate to the army camp the guards would greet me as “Hey boy who are you looking for?” Many a time Aliza would leave her post and come to the gate somewhat upset. “What the hell (she never used the word) are you doing here? Go back to school”. Aliza had some of her happier times while in the army. She was a bit of a bubble girl at home, daughter to conservative immigrant parents and here she was experiencing freedom and independence and spending time with “older” army buddies and having plenty of fun. And I as a drama queen was miserable. I was in constant fear of losing her and I knew this time that if I did, this would be truly the end of this world.

When we immigrated to Canada in 1971 with our three toddlers we were certain that this was a two years assignment in Canada with a planned return to the company that sent me there and a promised high-tech career. We left many things behind and never regretted it and 50 years later we are still living happily in Canada with our 13 extended family members including 7 wonderful grandchildren. Except for the love letters. They disappeared and we have no idea if anyone ever noticed them, read them, or just tossed them away. I doubt that any of them can be revealed never mind published because of their X rated content. But we do miss them. If I may say so myself, they were literary gems full of love, lust, passion, and tenderness.

Friday nights were the highlights of our relationship. My parents always went to friends to play cards and we had my parents' home all to ourselves. Almost. My 9 years old brother was home and we would "bribe" him to go to bed earlier than usual in the back room which we were quick to lock up as soon as we thought he fell asleep. My brother grew up to become an elite commando unit officer in the Israeli army, so I would not put it past him even at his age that he either knew or may be even witnessed what we were doing in the living room. I never asked him, he never told me and by now it does not matter ...and yes, we were doing it at 17 and yes for the first time.

After graduating from high school, I joined the army. Except for Aliza, my other passion has only been and continued for almost 70 years, to be Football (Soccer for you North Americans who stole the name for a game you call football where hardly ever the ball is kicked by foot) I will write some more about my love and passion for Football. I only mention it here because by the age of 13 or 14 I was a good enough a football player to join my junior hometown football Maccabi Rehovoth. When I was 16 I became a bench warmer on the senior team which was then in the Israeli Premier League. I thought that I was destined to become a professional football player one day, although at that time football in Israel was strictly an amateur sport. This story is relevant in that it completely altered the arc of my life. Just before joining the army where like every Israeli youth I expected to join a combat unit, I was injured during a football match and was operated on for a torn groin ligament which ended my football career before it had a chance to develop. When I joined the army and despite my injury I was in top athletic

shape. But after going through the routine medical test I was informed that due to me being legally blind in one eye I could not be drafted to a combat unit and can only serve in an administrative capacity. I was devastated at first. The last thing I wanted to do was to spend two and a half years pushing paper in a back office somewhere in the city in a 9 to 5 job. In fact, being a “Jobnik” as this was being referred to, was frowned upon if not humiliating. As it turned out I was assigned after only 8 days of basic training (“real” soldiers go through six weeks of harsh training before they are assigned to combat units) to the Ministry of Defense Computer Center which launched my professional career in hi-tech right through my retirement. So, what does this have to do with my love story? A whole lot. It meant that I could see Aliza every evening and with her serving in the Military Police it meant that she could cancel citations issued to me by MP patrol officers for violations of dress code and like minor “offenses”. She even bailed me out of jail when I was arrested on orders of a rank officer for not wearing my army beret while walking on the base in open air. So, while I was deprived of exercising the freedom, independence, and adventure of serving in the front lines away from home most of the time, I spent all my, after hours with Aliza. I was a little over halfway through my military service when my father approached me with a serious question: “Are you and Aliza in a serious enough relationship to consider marriage?” Everybody in town knew the answer to this question and when I said: “Of course” he said that a good friend of his is building apartments on a rent-to-own basis and that he could get a good deal in securing a premium apartment for us in this complex. When you are in the army during your

compulsory service you do not earn a wage. You get pocket money to buy a pack of cigarettes a day and that is, about it. Aliza by that time already completed her military service and was working in a secretarial pool at the Nuclear Energy facility, earning a modest salary.

The idea of getting married so soon for me the romantic, was fascinating. I shared the news with Aliza whose enthusiasm was measured on a much lower scale. I did not get down on my knees nor did I buy her a ring but I offered her a cigarette (yes, everybody was smoking at the time) proposed that we get married now that we can have our own home. This did not go over well with her parents. This is how she describes, the event in her book:

As much as Amnon is romantic his marriage proposal was more like a business proposal. I just started working at the Atomic Energy reactor in the secretarial pool. Amnon was still serving in the army, earning enough money for a pack of cigarettes. Amnon's dad came to him with a proposition, asking him if he is serious about marrying me and if so, he had an apartment for us to rent if we could decide quickly. My mom who worried that I would be an old maid by the time I get married was surprised of the speed and the rush to marry. I just started working, I had no savings, my parents did not have the means to help us. We were young and in love. Money, financing was not on our mind.

The rest is history. When Aliza turned 75 and unbeknownst to her I produced a feature length movie on her life (so far) This story appears later in this chapter, but suffice it to say that she was sure that we are going to watch a performance in the theater only to be shocked to see the entire family and

a few friends joining us for the screening of [Madre Querida](#) dedicated to the life and times of Aliza Zohar. At the end of the movie I expressed my love to my lifelong partner and lover:

“I was married when I was only 19 to a girl who just turned 20. A girl who I first met when she was 6 years old. She was a neighbor of mine. She lived less than half a mile from my home. We went to grade school together and then to high school. We dated since we were 15 years old. She has been my wife, my friend, my lover and my partner ever since we married some 50 plus years ago. She is the only woman I knew the only woman I loved, the only woman I adore and admire every waking hour. One could say that I married her for her looks as she was the most beautiful girl in our town

She always reminds me of Sophia Loren my favorite actress. She looks like her and even though she was born in Bulgaria most people mistake her for being an Italian. People frequently address her in Italian of which she knows not a single word. But if I were to choose one adjective to describe her it would be “wise”. I always listen to her. I consult with her on almost every important decision I ever make. She is yet to steer me wrong. OK she is always right, and she knows it. Her knowledge and understanding of almost every aspect of the human experience is amazing. Her wisdom comes from her curiosity and her intuition. She reads a lot of books. She says little but always the right thing at the right time. Her creativity abounds. Without any formal training she could and in fact did renovate and decorate our home and garden from the ground up. Single handedly and without a single drawing except for her photographic vision. She architected, designed hired and managed the different tradesmen and designed and built an award-winning garden

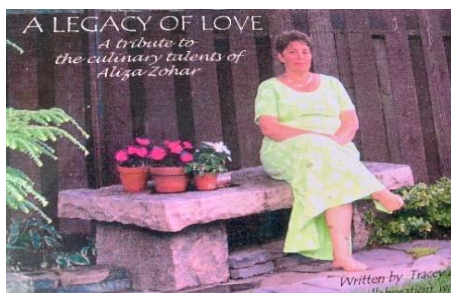
to boot. How does she do it? She fascinates me with her sense of adventure and exploration. She went on expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctica, tracking primates in Uganda and Rwanda, the Galapagos archipelago, the Amazon, across the African continent by train and to the Himalayan kingdoms. She skydived from 13,500 feet for heaven sake before her 70th birthday. Her thirst for knowledge and competency took us to Paris for six months where she graduated from the culinary and patisserie programs at the world famous Le Cordon Bleu school of cooking and a few years later to Tel Aviv University for Jewish studies in Israel, and for many years to the University of Toronto for art, literature and philosophy studies. Her love for art, music theatre and opera took us to the gala opening of the renovated La Scala in Milan, the concert halls and opera houses of Paris, Vienna, Sydney, Tel-Aviv, Milan, New York and Berlin. Not to mention our hometown of Toronto. I was with her every step of the way. Through her passion I learned to love the Opera the Symphony, Architecture and Art. Through my passion she learned to like Football. Together we went to matches in Wembley, London, San Siro in Milan, Olympic Stadium in Rome, Camp Nou in Barcelona, and the Barnabeu in Madrid. For a person who experienced the tragic loss of both her parents and her grandparent within one year at the age of 26 and already a mother of three, she embraced life. She emerged as the matriarchal role model to her children and grandchildren who adore and admire her as much as I do. So, what is the point of this story you may ask? Well, I am the lucky bastard who won the grand prize: to live and love by her side for most of my life”

My love for Aliza perfectly matches the definition or **Romantic** love blended with **Consummate** love to create our unique brand of our love for each other. But there is more.

“The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.” The actual quote that became a popular cliché’ was made by Ian Somerhalder: *“They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. It is the same way with women... or at least the ones I want to be with.”* When I started dating Aliza in earnest, meaning when she first invited me to meet her parents over dinner was the first time, that I discovered the Bulgarian kitchen. You see, my parents are Polish Ashkenazi Jews who immigrated to then British mandate Palestine thankfully in the early 1930s before the rise of Hitler Nazi Germany. I can say with great certainty that the Polish Kitchen is nothing to write home about. Combined with the fact that mine was a working mother extremely talented as a seamstress but clueless in the kitchen, food was never a thing in our home. You ate what was there and went on with your life. To be fair, my mother used to treat me with a desert of shredded fresh carrots with fresh squeezed orange juice dressing. As a child this was my favorite food of all times. As a matter of fact, she also made excellent plain omelets. To this day I remember the smell and taste of what I used to call Polish omelets. The only other dish, of any significance, may be because of the frequency of its introduction were breaded Schnitzels. There it is my mom’s kitchen. To this day I avoid frequenting restaurants that advertise “home cooking”. So, here I am at a Bulgarian dinner table that Aliza’s mother prepared in the best of tradition. The first dish or appetizer was a gooey, white spread of something that not only was strange and unappealing but also tasted the same. Only later did I discover that Sephardic Jews often served egg yolk-

enriched sauces with meat dishes in place of milk-based sauces to adhere to the laws of *kashrut*. An offshoot of the Greek *avgolemeno* sauce, *agristada* makes for an ethereal, light accompaniment to chicken or vegetables. I was flattered but could hardly hide my lack of enthusiasm. Sure enough, the main dish was chicken, something I was familiar with, mostly in breaded schnitzel form, but it was served with prunes which as little as I knew about food was usually served for other purposes. I was polite and thankful. In the company of a Bulgarian family the warmth, the hospitality and the joy of dining together, was well worth the experience. I was not thinking at the time of what it would mean if I were to be subjected to Bulgarian food three times a day. I was only 16 or 17 little did I know at the time. As our relationship intensified, I discovered the Bulgarian food which Aliza's mother skillfully prepared for us, even after we got married. When we got married, Aliza confessed that she knew little, about cooking let alone the traditional Bulgarian dishes which by then, I happened to fall in love with. We agreed to rely on her mother for this treat. Only after the tragedy that saw her mother, father and grandmother pass away at a young age within a period of 15 months and after we arrived in Canada, did Aliza take to cooking more seriously. In her book, Aliza expresses great regret for when she cleaned her parent's apartment after the death of her mother, she threw away most of the stuff including her mother's Bulgarian written recipe book. In no time Aliza began to experiment and very quickly the wonderful dishes of the Bulgarian kitchen appeared on our dinner table. Aliza has a natural talent for cooking. The entire family including all of our grandchildren are craving, definitely in the time of Corvid-19 isolation, for her Leek Patties, Her Moussaka, her Matza Ball (chicken) soup that one of our vegetarian granddaughters knows only by the first name: Matza Ball

soup, her stuffed peppers, the famous Bulgarian Kyopolou, Tarator and delicious meat and fish dishes. Seriously, if it was not so late and under other circumstances Aliza should have opened a Bulgarian restaurant in Toronto. I never understood how she could replicate her mother's kitchen without a recipe and her mother around to ask for instructions. She told me that she remembered the smell, the taste, and the texture of her mother's kitchen and experimented with it until she reached perfection. It was not until Aliza turned 50 that our daughter-in-law Tracey forced her to prescribe her recipes and created the Aliza cookbook: *A legacy of Love – A tribute to the culinary talents of Aliza Zohar*



Watching Aliza cook reminds me of watching an artist during the creation of an artful masterpiece. She knows exactly what to do, when to do, how to do. She is focused and in a Zen like concentration mixed with the joy of creation. Suffice it to say that her cooking is to die for. So, if that was not enough in 2007 Aliza graduated from the famous cooking school Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. I was with her in Paris most of the six months program a direct beneficiary of being served the amazing dishes and pastry that she cooked in school – for dinner.



... and as if this is not enough at the age of 69 I surprised Aliza by buying her a sky diving lesson at a field just north of Toronto. She mentioned her intrigue and desire to try something like this. I learned and have practiced not to laugh or trivialize her wishes or desires. Aliza knows what she wants and I remember my vow and am always there to make her happy. Nothing that we do will erase the pain and trauma of Aliza's family tragedy, but making the most out of life, living in the moment, taking risks of discovery, learning and expanding her mind. That's the girl I met when she was six years old and spent the rest of my life with her and making her happy.



The first two years of our marriage were a bliss. In fact, it was one long honeymoon with all the images that your mind may conjure up. Get up, go to work, stop to pick up food at her parents, express our passion for each other in the only way that it has been prescribed. We literally could not

get enough of each other even though by that time we were courting for almost 5 years. Our actual honeymoon was a complete bust. Aliza was too nervous during the wedding and did not eat at all. On the way back to our apartment my sister bought us street food steaks – the only option available at that time. We arrived the next day at the Israeli “Niagara Falls” the capitol of honeymooners in Israel – Naharia. Aliza did not stop barfing and remained in bed for the entire time. When we shared the story with close friends they smirked: “of course she was in bed most of the time” I was there it was not what they thought. For that we went a year or so later to a seaside town Shavei Zion where we made up for our botched honeymoon in record style never to be surpassed. The passionate love continued when we traveled to California sometime later and still remember what we recall as deep in the red woods. We had only enough money to pay for the rent, groceries and of course cigarettes. Her mom would send us, or we will pick up or dine at her parents. We did not owe a penny to anybody and we were carefree. The future did not bother us or that we just did not know any better. Aliza was working and I was still serving in the army when we got married, but I did soon after continue to work the same job as a civilian Military of Defense employee with a decent salary which more than sufficed for our life style.

Two and a half years after our wedding our first son Eyal was born and 18 month later Alon and then less than 2 years later Sharon the daughter we were determined to have no matter how many tries. This was a different but just as exciting a period in our marriage. With a few minor episodes, our kids were healthy, beautiful (taking after their mother) and a joy to have around (preferably one at the time) The grandparents were happy and proud, and we were one happy family. Then an awful tragedy beset our lives and changed

the course of our lives from its predictable course. Aliza parents and her beloved grandmother Omama passed away one after the another from illnesses within a 15 months period all at such an early age. Her mother Ketty was 49, her father Marco was 61 and her Omama just 74. Aliza is describing this period in her book *From Birthplace to Homeland* in great painful details. Imagine a mother of 3 toddlers who lost her entire immediate family barring her younger brother. A family of Bulgarian immigrants to Israel since 1949 who as in Bulgarian families could not have been any closer, supportive, and nurturing. At the time I was working in the private sector for an American company and was travelling extensively and for long periods to the United States and Europe and was of little help to Aliza in her most dire time of need. Our lives as we have known them were changed forever.

Life works in mysterious ways. When all this came down finally, I was in Minneapolis, Minnesota at my company's headquarters. I became aware of the fact that the company was planning to start a joint venture in partnership with the Canadian Government and open a research and development center in Mississauga, Ontario Canada essentially part of the Greater Toronto Area. I felt it in my bones that we must think of a radical change in our lives away from our hometown where the pain and the agony became intolerable. I managed to convince the president of the Israeli subsidiary to sponsor a world-wide program where multiple country subsidiaries will sent field personnel to participate in the development of the ultimate (at the time) super-computer and in two years when the product was scheduled to launch will return to their home offices and disseminate their knowledge and experience in their respective subsidiaries. In my case to the South European region which included Greece and Italy. He

thought this to be a brilliant proposal and sold it to the top corporate executives. This was how Aliza 28, Amnon 27,5 Eyal 5, Alon 3.5 and Sharon 2 years old landed in Toronto, Canada on the afternoon of April 21, 1971. In retrospect we believe that a mysterious guiding hand charted this course for us as we are about to celebrate 50 years in Canada in 2021.

Our road to Canada was paved for us. From an economical point of view, we were set. Ours is by no mean an immigrant soap story. I had a good paying responsible job. The company paid for our move, we sold our apartment in Israel and had some money to fall back on if needed. Yes, we arrived with only two suitcases and 3 screaming toddlers but ever since and to this day we are, and we were always financially reasonably comfortable. Sure, we experienced some cultural shocks. Coming from tiny Israel we were overwhelmed by the vastness of the country, the abundance of anything and everything, the orderly calm and polite nature of people and institutions and of course the absence of a good command of the everyday English language. I remember pretending to spray the attendant at the Canadian Tire store in search for the word “hose” and there where so many such situations. We had an advantage though that other newcomers to Canada do not normally have. We were sent to Canada for what was to be a two years assignment before we returned to Israel. We were temporary residents and we acted this way. We sent the kids to Hebrew school to make sure that they could integrate back into the Israeli school system upon our return. We lived this way. We rented a townhouse, bought some rudimentary furniture and appliances, listened to, and read Israeli media, sought, and befriended other Israeli families of which we were surprised to find so many. Basically, we thought of ourselves as long-term Israeli tourists. What we completely underestimated

was what this move would do to our marriage. By then we were married for eight years. Throughout this time our marriage was balanced. We knew each other from childhood, we had the same experiences, we were brought up with the same values. We were total opposites as to our personalities but in a wonderful complimentary manner. For Aliza, the first two years were sheer hell. In her words: “*Starting a new life in a new country is exhausting, terrifying frustrating and exciting all at the same time*” For the first time our marriage became totally imbalanced. I had plenty if not an overload of social and intellectual stimulation, Aliza had none. She did not speak the language well at all, she did not have a driver’s license and lost her mobility. She was cooped up in the house with three screaming and demanding toddlers, she did not have any close friends, she could not read books written in English, which for her was like cutting her oxygen. She was always courageous and independent and positive and strong. That is why I love her so much. But most importantly and for many years she could not express her pain and grief mourning her parents and her grandmother. This is when I dropped the ball, I did not understand what she was going through. Or maybe I did, but I was too selfish for the first time in our relationship focused on my job, my career, and my own needs. We were no longer equal partners which when the story is told has been the hallmark of our beautiful life together. The total imbalance of our intellectual, social, and even sexual stimulation set us apart. Being selfish and inconsiderate is not my natural state. It took me a long time before I realized how much I let her down at a time she needed me the most. How much I hurt her and lost her confidence in me and in herself. Then there was the moment of truth. In fact, she confronted me and I had a choice to make, to be defensive and retreat to my corner or fall on my sword and dedicate the rest of my life to not only make her

happy but to express my love and admiration to her at every turn. I wrote to her in Hebrew a handwritten letter, which translated to English read:

It has been many years since the last time I wrote you a letter expressing my feelings towards you in writing. It has been many years, if ever, that I find myself in the middle of such an emotional storm. Words cannot describe the guilt, humility, and anger that I am experiencing. But this is not about me I disappointed, and I let down the person dearest to me. Today I vow, I give you my oath that I will never, ever let you down. My love for you only intensified over the years and in as much as I am unable to imagine, did not yet peak. We have many missions ahead of us and our life together is likely to encounter other challenges. To date we have faced and overcame them all and there is nothing in this world that will stop us from overcoming any future challenges.

I am not only convinced that I have held my part of the bargain thus far but that I did so with love and devotion.

By the end of the two years a few interesting things converged. First, the project that I was working on was scrapped for reasons that are not relevant to my story. On the other hand, I was offered to extend my stay indefinitely and promoted to a senior executive position. One must understand that in the early 70's and especially after the brutal Yom Kippur war Israelis who live abroad were frowned upon if not shunned altogether. The term was Yordim (Emigrates). At one time the prime minister of Israel called them Bogdim (Traitors). I harbored immense guilt feelings about leaving my homeland, my family and friends to seek material opportunities that were not available to my peers back home. At the end of the two years Aliza became

totally comfortable with Canada. She was driving, socializing, taking advantage of the cultural opportunities denied her before because of language barriers. She became her own confident, resilient self-assured as ever.

I remember telling her that my boss asked me out for lunch, and that I think he will ask me to stay. I asked her how she felt about it and it became obvious that this was not the right time for her to return to Israel. In fact, she said after the two years from hell it is my time to enjoy the opportunities that Canada offers by way of culture, nature, adventure. At that time, it was not common for Israelis either at home or abroad to consume alcohol at a rate close to that of Canadians. Israelis would drink wine or maybe a shot of brandy during the high holidays and on happy occasions such as weddings and Bar/Bat Mitzahs but never enough to get “wasted”. Getting wasted goes against the grain in the way our generation was brought up. We were conditioned to always be alert, never lose your senses, be in control of your faculties all the time. It was incomprehensible for Israelis to understand that Canadian but not only Canadians drink excessively, exactly for the purpose of getting drunk. I came home from my lunch with my boss and Aliza noticed something strange about me. I was a bit or more than a bit tipsy. First, she asked me “what happened to you?” And then, “what was the outcome of our meeting?” I told her that to the best of my recollection I agreed to stay for two more years but that was only discussed as I was about half-way through the third bottle of beer. I have never drunk that much beer in one sitting before. Of course, we stayed in Canada until the next family crisis and we are still here almost 50 years later as one happy family. Canada has been good for us, good for Aliza for whom Israel brings back dark memories of pain and

agony and for our kids and grandkids for whom Israel is a favorite tourist destination.

Our next family crisis occurred in 1984 eleven years after we arrived in Canada. My longing for Israel and to be reunited with my parents and my siblings got the better of me. I began to apply pressure on Aliza and the kids that our destination must be Israel. Through my sales training in persuasion I (wrongly, of course) approached this as a sales campaign. I surveyed the family objections to returning to Israel and there were many. Later as I became so proficient in sales effectiveness methodologies to the point of consulting to major hi-tech companies, I understood that people throw out objections to deflect their real and unmovable resistance to the proposition. After surveying the family, I went to Israel in the summer of 1984. I had a list of objections varying from: Can you get a job? Can we afford to buy an apartment, Can the children integrate into the school system? Will they have language problems? etc., etc. In my naivete' I was able to check off all the objections on the list. I came back from Israel totally enthused and shared my enthusiasm with them. Yes, I have a job, yes, we can afford to buy an apartment, yes, the kids will do fine etc., and we are moving back at the end of the summer. I was dead serious but not the rest of the family. Not only the concept but as much the almost immediate timetable freaked them all out. In my stubborn way I kept pushing almost to the point of breaking. We decided to seek family counselling to help us overcome this, by now, a serious family crisis. We did. The counsellor a young female interviewed us individually and then only Aliza and me. This continues to be a standing joke in our family history. She told Aliza and I that our differences are irreconcilable and that we would be better off seeking a divorce – I kid you not. As we left the counselling

session, we were absolutely, certain that our destination will remain Canada and we have lived in Canada happily ever after. Sometimes, I wonder whether the Counsellor was tricking us into a consensus, but we never tracked her down to validate the assumption. Yet we attribute our staying in Canada to her chutzpah to suggest this alternative. To the best of my recollection this was the last meaningful family or marriage crisis we experienced ever since.

Most people are raising their eyebrows when they hear that Aliza and I have known each other since we were 6 years old that we married when we were 19.5 and 20 respectively and that we have been married for , by now, 57 years. This may not be a unique story but in today's culture most definitely unusual. We ourselves wonder sometime as to the secret to the longevity of our loving relationship. This is my version:

Notwithstanding the inevitable bumps and bruises of any long relationship, for it to endure it must have to be based on a solid foundation like any other structure. Ours is a solid foundation. We grew up together, we matured together, we have common values and common experiences that we cherish. We have completely opposing personalities and as they say opposites attract. My drama and Aliza's calm make for an exciting combination. We have learned to make them more complimentary than diverse. But more than anything our relationship apart from puppy love is based on mutual respect, trust, and partnership. We travelled a long way together and we were able to negotiate and compromise on our wants and needs and discovered common interests that enriched our lives, our intellect, our curiosity, and our joy. We travelled the world over and since we became "empty nesters" it has become our passion. We travel for culture,

nature, and adventure. We learned to share in each other passions. Whenever we are in a major city around the world, we usually watch a football match, my passion and one that Aliza became fond of, understands, and enjoys if not necessarily the technical aspect but certainly the atmosphere. Invariably, we will go to the theatre, the opera, and the ballet which we were fortunate to patron in New York, Toronto, Vienna, Montreal, Sydney, and Paris. A passion which Aliza drew me into. Both of us fell in love with one Opera in particular, which by now we have seen at least five times – Norma.

But above all we always kept our marriage fresh and where possible exciting. When we had three young children during the early years in Canada, we would still check in to a local hotel for a weekend to replenish our intimacy. We frequent the theatre and the opera on a regular basis and exchange our views even when they are opposed. There is an element of our personalities that lends itself to building a strong foundation especially when confronted with major decisions such as major purchases, investments, and family matters. Aliza is intuitive, visionary, trend spotter, innovative. I am analytical, process oriented and result driven. They go very well when collaboration is involved. We support each other out of respect and commitment. When Aliza floated the idea of culinary and patisserie studies at the prestigious Paris' Le Cordon Bleu, I was right behind her and we both made it happen and had a wonderful experience living in Paris as Parisians for six months. When in 2002 I had an opportunity to start my own company but did not have the capital to get it started, Aliza encouraged me to not be afraid to go into debt and supported me fully. When in 2011 I had an opportunity to study International Relation and Security studies at Tel-Aviv University on a scholarship from

York University she joined me and registered at the same University for Jewish studies in Hebrew – her passion. We ended up spending almost an entire year in Israel that we still consider one of the happiest times in our lives. Imagine coming back to your homeland after 40 years, this time as a student attending school during the day, touring the country on weekends to places we remember so fondly from our Maccabi trips in our youth. Mingling on campus with young students sometime a third our age and living in a student apartment at the heart of Tel-Aviv. What could be better than that for shared experiences. Bit by bit the secret recipe unfolds: Shared values, shared experiences, compatible personalities, respect, trust, and partnership were and continue to be our ingredients.

Many marriages hit the rocks when children arrive. Parenting is the one occupation for which there is no official training. You are swept into it, improvise and hope that you did right by your kids and not be able to verify it until much later. Aliza comes from a background where love and support of family is of supreme value. We share that value and were able to develop a common philosophy toward parenting that we were not sure was the right one but that sure was consistent. Our parenting philosophy or better yet call it instinct, was based on trust, support, and presence. In many families as we understand a common phrase is used frequently: “Wait till your father comes home!” in our house our kids would respond: “How soon?”. We encouraged our children to be open with us and no matter how bad a situation maybe they should feel free to openly share with us and seek advice and support. They said they would, but we are not that naïve to believe that they did it consistently. Both Eyal and Alon practiced mischief as young children and later as teenagers do. Some of it we knew and ignored, others we

warned and advised and yet others we probably knew nothing about till this very day. But this is what parents are for. Alon wrecked 5 cars by our latest counts in fender bender traffic accidents at an alarming frequency. The insurance premiums skyrocketed, but we allowed him to get on the road the next day. Sharon was less of a menace as far as we know, but what do we really know? When parenting you never know what the final product would look like even when it stands in front of you. How many daddy or mommy issues have screwed up children for life. We are certain that our children have their own views and may be even grievances but one thing we are certain of that they would attest to: We loved them equally and unconditionally, and most importantly we were present.

For many years Aliza was still traumatized by the tragedy that saw her parents and grandmother die of illness at such a relatively young age. She always worried that she may not outlive her mother who died at 49 and when she did, her father at 61 but in 2008 at the age of 65 we had the scare of our lives. All of us in the family cannot fathom a world without the family matriarch, the leader and role model to us all. It was the winter of 2008 I was on a flight from San Francisco to Toronto scheduled to arrive at 5 pm or so in Toronto. From the Airport I was going to rush to the North York Hospital to join my wife and my daughter to receive the diagnosis of my wife's CT that we suspected may be Lung Cancer. No need to elaborate. I found myself scribbling on the back of my boarding pass the words that ran through my mind. The scrambly manner the switching from script to cursive are indications of my emotional storm. The thought of the big C, the history of her family almost paralyzed me. But I ended up writing:

I PRAY A LITTLE PRAYER FOR YOU

*MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND GIVE YOU BACK
YOUR HEALTH, YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR
COURAGE*

*YOUR LUST FOR LIFE AND ALL THAT IS GOOD
AND MAY WE LIVE THE REST OF OUR LIVES IN
HAPPINESS AND SPILL OUR FLOWING LOVE TO
OUR CHILDREN AND GRAND CHILDREN
VE NOMAR AMEN!*

I was in my car on the 401 racing toward the Hospital when I received the call: No need to come. We saw the Doctor all is well chances are that it is not what we think. Imagine the relief. As it turned out it was the wrong diagnosis. It was Lung Cancer, but it was caught in pre- or stage 1, operated on by Dr. Keshavjee now the chief surgeon of the Hospital Network. That was February 2009. We have been going to the hospital together always with the unspoken fear that the cancer may return. We were told that being clear for 5 years is a clear indication that the cancer has been beaten. We are closing in on 12 years and my prayer was answered. Aliza out lived not only her parents but her grandmother as well. I am not a great believer in God. I have an axe to grind with the almighty for things that if he existed allowed to happen in our world and you well know some of them. Did God respond to my prayer? Who cares? However just to be sure I also wrote a prayer in Hebrew. May be this one did the trick:

תפילת האוהבים

ברוך אתה אדוני אלוהינו מלך העולם
אנא שמע תפילת בנך ותפילת כל העם
שמור נא לי אלי הטוב על בתך אהובתי
על אשתי חברתי בבת עיני וחמדת לבי

שמור עליה מפני כל פגע וצרה ומחלה
אביאנה אל חיקך אך ולאחר שיבה טובה
בשם אהבתי תן לה את האמץ רצון והגבורה
להלחם להתגבר ולהכריע כל פגע וכל סכנה

ואני את חלקי אתרום באהבה ובשמחה
בחיבה ובתשומת לב מושלמת ועצומה

מי יתן ונוכה יחדיו לשנים רבות ופוריות
כי עדיין רבות הן אדוני רבות המשימות

When we look back at the arc of our lives, we can clearly delineate 3 distinct chapters: Honeymoon (which lasted more than two years), Parenting which lasts to this very day, empty nesting and grandparenting. The beginning and the end are totally exciting, and invigorating and I am certain Aliza would agree that we made the most and amassed great pleasure in both. The middle is a grind: job, career, money, friends sprinkled with cheers and tears. This is where I allow myself to take credit for sprucing up the mundane with the surprising and unpredictable demonstration of my love and affection for Aliza. When I wrote this letter in the early 70's I meant every word I wrote down and many a time I delivered. For our 25th anniversary with the help of my children we arranged a surprise full blown party at a city hotel where we invited family and many friends that we still had at that time. We lost them since we started to focus all our attention on the wonder of grandparenthood. Aliza was

sure that we were going to see a movie and that before, we are going to stop at a hotel for a drink. The surprise was total especially when her brother from New York showed up as well. Aliza once spotted on the road a canary yellow car and told me that this color will become trendy and she would like her next car to be a canary yellow car regardless of the brand. For her birthday we had the entire family kids and grandkids for dinner. I hid the keys to a Canary Yellow Mercedes Benz Roadster inside her napkin. The car wrapped in ribbons was parked in the garage the day before and Aliza knew nothing about it.

But there were two other occasions that in my opinion merit a much more detailed exploration:

The Opening of the La Scala de Milano in December 2004

Over the years I have surprised my wife many a time on important events such as birthdays or anniversaries and sometime just because... Most of my surprises were quite elaborate and generally, were truly, surprising. But none like the opening of the La Scala de Milano in December 2004 after 7 years of extensive renovations. Aliza mentioned to me one day after reading an article about the La Scala's Gala opening how great it would be if we could be there. Of course, this was to be the event of the year in Milan and the gala was to be attended by such luminaries as Sofia Lauren, Andrea Bucci, the Three Tenors, Prime Minister Berlusconi and many more. There was absolutely no way that we could get tickets to the Gala from Toronto and it wasn't even worth the try. A good friend of mine who is originally from Milan was in Milan at that time to see his mother. I e-

mailed him and asked him if he or anyone he knows in Milan could get us tickets to the Gala. He responded by saying that the performance is sold out however there is a law or a practice that requires the La Scala to make a certain amount of tickets available to the general public on-line during a one or two hours at a certain date starting at 3 am EDT, however the chances to get in to the site are remote because of the volume of people.

On the designated date starting at 2:30 am I started linking to the site only to be rejected time and again. Suddenly, I managed to get in and purchase a ticket. I quickly realized to my dismay that in my rush to go through the purchasing before I timed out, I forgot to enter the number of tickets, so I ended buying the default of one ticket. Determined I went back to the site by which time there were only 3 tickets left and after a few false attempts I managed to get the very last remaining ticket naturally not next to the first. By 5 am I went back to bed next to my wife who slept through the night. A day or two later the topic came up again and I mentioned that there was absolutely no way to get tickets although I have sent a letter to the Italian Consul General in Toronto literally begging on behalf of my wife to get us tickets but that the chance that anything like this would happen are practically nil. By then I already had the tickets printed. But to make the surprise a real one I contacted my friend in Milan and asked him to send me back an Italian translation of the following letter:

Dear Mrs. Zohar

The President of the Republic at the request of the Italian Consul General in Toronto is pleased to fulfill your wish and extend to you and your companion an invitation to join him and other dignitaries at the gala opening of the Teatro Alla Scala de Milano on December 7th, 2004.

The reopening of Teatro Alla Scala after three and a half years of extensive renovation and restorations will be celebrated with the performance of Antonio Saleri's Europa riconosciuta conducted by the musical director of the Alla Scala Richard Muti.

You and your companion will be staying at the Hotel Rosa in Via Pattari in Milano upon your arrival in the city on December 3rd, 2004 as special guests of Allitalia, one of the corporate sponsors of this splendid event. During your six nights stay you will be treated to exquisite Italian cuisine at amongst others the Bagutta restaurant in Via Bagutta and have tea at Cova on Monte Napoleone. Enjoy the beautiful sights of Milano including tours of il Cenacolo, il Castello Sforzesco, il Duomo, la Galleria and Cuomo, the capital of the silk fabric (30 km outside Milano), visit Sirmione on the Lago di Garda and stroll down the famous Monte Napoleone. Experience shopping on Vittorio Emanuele and at La Rinascente On December 5th you will be the guests of Internazionale de Milano in its Serie A football match against Messina at the San Siro stadium.

We look forward to your joining us on this festive occasion and to extending to you the traditional warm Italian hospitality as our guest during your stay in Milano.

Sincerely,

President

As you can tell by then I have made all the arrangements for our trip to Milan. When the translation arrived, I transcribed it onto a fake letter head as you see in this photo and mailed it (through the Post Office) to my wife's attention. A couple of days later I received a call from my wife at my office saying that a letter arrived, and it has something to do with the La Scala di Milano, but it is written in Italian. I dismissed it by saying that it must be the Consul General who notifies us that he could not arrange for our trip. I said that as soon as I came home from work, I am going to ask my friend in Milan to translate it for us. That evening I printed the original English version of this letter and casually left it on the kitchen counter. The surprise was total. Fast forward we managed to change places so that we could sit together, and my reward was to see the woman my wife always reminds me of, Sofia Lauren up close.



PRESIDENZA DELLA
REPUBBLICA

Gentilissima Signora Zohar,

Su richiesta del Console Generale di Toronto, sono lieto di poter accogliere il suo desiderio e di invitarLa, assieme al suo compagno, il giorno 7 dicembre 2004 al Gala di apertura della Scala di Milano.

Dopo tre anni e mezzo di lavori di restauro, la Scala riapre con l'opera Europa di Antonio Saleri condotta da Riccardo Muti, direttore di grande fama internazionale.

Lei ed il suo compagno sarete ospiti dell'Alitalia, uno degli sponsor di questa bellissima serata. Sarete alloggiati presso l'albergo Rosa di Via Pattari dal 3 dicembre.

Durante il vostro soggiorno di sei giorni potrete gustare alla cucina italiana al Ristorante Bagutta di Via Bagutta, farete il giro della città firmandovi a visitare il Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci, il Castello Sforzesco, il Duomo e la Galleria.

A soli 30 km da Milano, visiterete Como, capitale mondiale della seta, e Sirmione, una bellissima cittadina medioevale sul Lago di Garda.

Infine, di ritorno a Milano, vi rilasserete passeggiando per Via Montenapoleone, conosciuta nel mondo intero come la strada più elegante d'Italia, e vi fermerete a prendere il tè da Cova.

Farete del shopping in Via Vittorio Emanuele dove troverete la Rinascenza ed i negozi di scarpe più famosi nel mondo come Magli, Pollini, Moreschi e Ferragamo.

Il 5 dicembre, sarete ospiti dell'Internazionale di Milano, squadra calcistica di Serie A, che vi invita a vedere il loro incontro con il Messina allo Stadio di San Siro.

Nell'attesa d'incontrarLa personalmente, Le mando, gentilissima signora Zohar, il nostro più caloroso saluto italiano di benvenuto a Milano.

Carlo Azeglio Ciampi

Presidente della Repubblica Italiana

In 2013 we had our Golden Jubilee 50th anniversary. This time I planned to stage a mock-up wedding for us to renew our vows in Maui, Hawaii. We flew our entire family, my

older son Eyal presided over the ceremony and we ordered a professional videographer to “document” the proceedings. I subsequently produced with the help of a professional cinematograph a movie titled “Hawaii 50”.



*From left top: Mitzi, Eyal, Mark, Sharon, Aliza, Amnon, Alon, Tracey
From left bottom: Zachary, Emily, Alexandra, Jaime, Ethan, Jacklyn,
Erin*



That started a tradition where when my three children turned 50 years old, we would take the entire family for a 10 days trip in order of their birth: Eyal to Costa Rica 2015, Alon to Corfu, Greece 2017 and Sharon to Belize, 2019

In 2018 Aliza turned 75 her Diamond Jubilee. Aliza comes from a Bulgarian family where their spoken language was Ladino. Ladino is a variation on the Portuguese language with a sprinkle of Hebrew words. It dates back, to the time of the inquisition in the mid-15th century. Many a song have been written and sung in Ladino and for Aliza Ladino is home and brings back nostalgic but also, tragic memories of the loss of her parents and her Omama. I managed to convince Aliza that this Ladino singing group is performing in town, on film the evening of her birthday. To make this authentic I “doctored” an e-mail from the Hot Docs inviting her to attend. She loved it. In the meantime, I produced a feature length film about her life and had all family members participate in it. I titled it Madre Querida translated it means Dear Mother. When we arrived at the screening Aliza was surprised to see the entire family and that cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were being served. We went to the screening room and sure enough the first 4 minutes of the movie was a YouTube video of this Ladino singing group. Aliza loved it but was concerned that the entire family especially the grandchildren will be bored listening to 90 minutes of Ladino songs. On minute 4 the screen blasted with her baby pictures to the tune of Dancing Queen. This was a total surprise and remains a digital heirloom on the Zohar website <https://azoharamnon.wixsite.com/amnonzohar/movies>

As you read my love story, you may get the wrong impression that our lives have been all peach and cream or that our love is one sided. Nothing can be further from the truth. First of all we had our share of disagreements, arguments, and outright fights probably no less than any other normal couple in a long marriage. People have been asking us many times: “what is your secret sauce for sustaining this relationship, for so many years?” Tune in to listen to our secret: Never throughout our relationship when

arguments, fights break out, and they do, none of us retreats to their corner in silence. For as many days that we have known each other we never walked away from a fight. We talked it out no matter how painful at times. We never allowed viciousness or vindictiveness to creep into our arguments and we never kept score as to who won and never held a grudge. If you can do this for almost 60 years of a relationship, you are well ahead of the game.

Aliza expresses her love in different, not as demonstrative ways as I do. It is her personality and her calm and assuring manner. The love and support that I received from Aliza in difficult times and under challenging circumstances only increased my indebtedness to her. When the 2008 financial crisis exploded in my face minutes before the company that I started in 2002 was ready to go public, Aliza was there. When I lost my way post retirement and sunk into a deep depression, she was there to pull me out. She was the one who encouraged me to seek professional help and she was the one who taught me that sometimes you must reach out for help. This is what I experienced in the Winter of 2017:

For a period of roughly two months my prevailing mood has been one of sheer unhappiness, mostly sadness at times emotional to tears for no compelling reason. This feeling has been accompanied by fear and anxiety as if anticipating a dreadful future event. Physically it manifests itself in a constant state of tension at times sending streams of what feels like static electricity up and down my body, loss of appetite and feeling nauseous. I have lost interest in almost anything, I am looking forward to nothing, and I am fighting my psyche to find a rational reason for my state of mind. Attempts at meditation, breathing exercises, walks have had only momentary calming effect. I do not have suicidal thoughts although I am in a constant state of anxiety for what

is to come. Being a reasonably rational and analytical person, I am tempted to attribute my state of mind to financial insecurity in the face of a prolonged retirement, a sense of underachievement, social and professional isolation, and absence of a motivating future goal. Physically I am in reasonable, good health, enjoying full mobility and notwithstanding my depressive mood intellectually and cognitively as alert as ever. Yet I am flooded with negative feelings and negative energy including self-loathing, envy of peers, low self-esteem, and self-worth. In hindsight I may have inadvertently contributed to my situation when some five months earlier I abruptly stopped taking two medications that I have been taking regularly for many years. The first one was Ativan of which I was taking a 5 mg tablet every night before going to bed and that was prescribed by my family doctor many years ago to allow me to “shut my mind off” and have a restful sleep. I clearly became addicted to this drug and although I have never abused it by taking more than one pill at the time and never during the day, I became dependent on the drug for my sleep. Absent the drug my mind will be racing full throttle during the night with little to no sleep periods. I decided to abruptly stop taking the drug when a doctor substituting for my regular family doctor warned me that continuing use of this drug even in this low dosage increases the risk of an early onset of Alzheimer. It spooked me and I instantly stopped taking the drug. Also, for almost as many years I have been taking one 20 mg of Prozac as a mood stabilizer. Having been spooked by the doctor’s warning and although she did not refer to the Prozac, I immediately stopped taking it for fear that any mood, or mind-altering drug may have a similar risk. As a result, I went through a period of at least three months of disturbed sleep including persistent terror dreams. In a subsequent visit to my family doctor we agreed that I should go back to taking

the Prozac as in his mind it did not have a similar risk, yet we agreed that I should not renew the use of Ativan. My sleep patterns have changed as a result and the terror dreams have gradually dissipated. I still experience very vivid dreams with some familiar themes mainly to do with my directionally challenged nature and my sense of undervaluing my accomplishments and fear of disappointing others. Another contributing factor to my depressive mood may well be the lack of professional engagements that I have experienced for the past two months. The combination of lack of intellectual challenge and social engagement and absence of supplementary income for the first time in my professional life has weighed heavily on my mind.

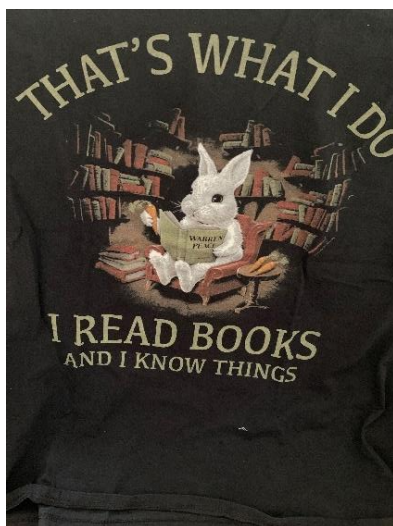
Today while in voluntary home isolation in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic I am as good as new for a 1943 model. The professional help I sought did nothing to improve my situation, but Aliza did. She asked me this one question that changed my situation completely. That is who she is. She just knows what is right and gets to the heart of it without a lot of fanfare. *“What is it that you are totally passionate about and that with the proper motivation you can embrace and engage others?”* It took me little time to come up with *Football!* The rest is history. I developed a web site www.footie-fanatic.com I registered to a Harvard University course and commuted from Toronto to Cambridge 8 weeks in a row for their course: The Global Game: Soccer, Politics, and Popular Culture as a result I developed a course on: “Football A National Mirror” and delivered it at the Life Institute Ryerson University. That kicked off my career and my calling in waiting: lecturing on global affairs, International relations, the Middle East and other subjects that I studied at York University and at Tel-Aviv University after my company imploded in 2009 as a result of the financial crisis. This has now become my

passion and occupation of which I will write in the next Chapter. ...and I owe it all to Aliza who gave me the encouragement and the motivation to pursue my passion. If that is not love – what is? So, I left her a thank you note. A lover's note:

*My heart has long been given
To you my wonder mate
My soul has been on loan to you
For ever since we met
The case for my indebtedness
Has long ago been made
Without your love and wisdom
What's left is emptiness
And now as we mature
Perhaps more so than ever
I need you by my side
To love, to live, to matter*

Chapter 4: Doing it with Passion

The thing that Aliza and I have in common, is that we embrace life and life experiences with a passion. Never half-heartedly. Some we share, or better yet as we evolved learned to share, such as exotic travel or theatre and opera and some that are our own individual passions which we, the other, learned to respect and even share. Aliza is a ferocious reader. She is a fountain of knowledge in almost every aspect of the human experience. From ancient history, philosophy, religion, art, politics, and current affairs. All on one condition: printed on paper, no digital. Many a time I find myself asking her: How did you know that? Her answer is always the same, I read a lot. Recently I bought her a T-shirt it reads:



I by contrast love learning, reading, and researching for a specific field of interest or a project. I first go to her to save myself some screen time. Then as with the case of Dan I am convinced that there is no topic of interest that has not been researched, written about, or commented on, on the internet.

I utilize it extensively in researching my lectures on topics like Global affairs, Leadership, International Relations and Security studies and Middle East Affairs and of course – Football. Football on Aliza's urging allowed me to emerge from what I am certain was a clinical depression, to my present state of mind of excitement, vigor, and enthusiasm. This is my football story.

As a child in Israel your entire life is experienced outdoors. It is not only the climate. During my childhood, all we had at our home in the category of entertainment was a radio. For that reason, I become sentimental whenever I listen to French Chansons of the Edith Piaf and Charles Aznavour variety, or Spanish and Latin songs, or romantic Italian songs. We did not have Television in Israel before 1969, we did not have a telephone at home as there was a 12 year long, waiting list for installing a phone even if you could afford to own one. We children spent all our time outdoors, except for school and after dinner. We had or made up our own games for the outdoors. Children's creativity in finding or creating fun outdoor games was boundless. With me as with many other boys my age it was football. Just across the street from our home there was a large leveled open sandy pitch, just in front of a school and this was the birth of my love for and later on my passion for and beyond that to becoming a self-declared football fanatic.

Football is of course the most popular sport in the world. It is played in 220 countries around the world and in most of them is the national sport, except of course for North America where the sport is relatively new and lacks the cultural and historical connection transferred from generation to generation. In some countries like Brazil football is as meaningful as religion for most Brazilians.

Writing this story in my home office watching me from a framed signed painting is my inspirational hero, the King of Football – Pele. If you the reader do not know who is, Pele, you may as well skip a good part of this chapter.

The main reason that football is the most popular sport has to do with a few simple factors: first and foremost is affordability. Unlike other and especially North American sports all you need is a ball. Not even that. In poor countries children weave some household materials like old cloths into a ball shape and begin to kick it around. Secondly, accessibility. All you need is a large enough flat sandy surface or now adays with the “luxury” of a grass surfaces, which was non-existent when I started playing football at the age of 5 and even up to 16. Thirdly, normalcy of physic. Anybody can enjoy and even excel at the sport regardless of height, strength, or weight (within reason), so long as, they are reasonably fit. By contrast, most North American sports as well as other global sports like Basketball, American football, Ice Hockey require different physics for different positions like height, strength, or exceptional agility. To prove the point, the greatest footballer of all times (G.O.A.T) the Argentinian Lionel Messi is only 1.7 meters tall and weighs 72 kilograms. Finally, the rules of the game are simple and the skills easy to learn. Kick the ball with your feet or advance it with any other part of your body except for your hands and get the ball into the goal with the help of your other 10 players who are trying to do the same. – Simple.

From early age I exhibited above average and later, in my youth real talent for football. I was small, lean, bordering on thin, but I was exceptionally fast, had good ball control, and the ability to leap high and heading the ball towards the goal. But most of all I loved the game with a passion. Every

Saturday I would try to get to watch my home team Maccabi Rehovoth play against other cities' teams. I either charmed my way into the stadium or climbed a tree near the stadium to watch the game, as I could not afford to buy a ticket. At the age of 14 or so I joined the Maccabi Rehovoth junior team and for the first time became part of organized football. I still remember my first match and the feeling of my coach posting my name in the starting eleven. I remember the thrill of donning the team jersey with the number 7 on my back and wearing relatively new cleats rather than the old discarded ones that were used for practices. This has become my "stage". My parents thought that football was too rough a sport for my puny physic and feared that I will be injured. But being busy as they were, were not aware that I was playing organized football. I learned to lie to my parents from a very-early, age like most kids do even today when their helicopter parents are not tracking their every move on GPS. I also remember and can practically visualize the first time I scored a goal, and a spectacular goal it was. We were playing our cross-town bitter rivals Hapoel Rehovoth on their turf. They had the only grass pitch in our town and playing on grass at that time was a special treat. My position was that of a right wing on the forward attacking line. I remember passing the ball from right to left to a teammate and rushing towards goal to receive a pass back. It was a cross about two feet above the ground just ahead of me. The only way I could reach it was with a diving header and so I did and scored. As a player I had a good understanding of the game and how to utilize space and, also the ability to leap high over defenders that were taller than me to head the ball. I do not remember the date or the opposing team in one of the matches. But when I close my eyes, even today, I can visualize the situation vividly. I leaped high over a defender for a high cross. I remember heading the ball toward the goal (which I

only later learned from my teammates hit the cross bar) the defender, attempting to reach the same ball headed my nose and dislocated or broken it. When I fell to the ground, I was already unconscious and woke up in the hospital where the doctor made a poor attempt at straightening my nose. If you ask my grandchildren, they will point out that he did less than a great job. Now I had to face my parents and admit that I was playing football and waiting for the wrath. My father surprised me by saying that he heard the word on the town and encouraged me to continue my pursuit. He even promised to come and watch my games which made me real proud. As a junior I was an above average player but not really a star. When I turned 16, I was spotted by the coach of the senior team who invited me to practice with the “big boys”. Then the incredible happened I made the senior team squad. First as a bench warmer substitute rarely called upon to replace a first team player. Every Saturday before the 3 or 4 O’clock football match, we the players gathered in the dressing room in our “civics” waiting for the coach to post the starting line-up and the substitutes. Some of us, me included, did not make any of the lists and went on to watch the match and cheer our teammates from the stands. Then, in one of our away games I spotted my name in the starting line-up. That was the pinnacle of my football career. Our team was playing in the Israeli premier league (although to be fair was relegated to the second division that same year not necessarily because of my fault) I was in football heaven with me on the pitch was one of the best Israeli footballers playing left back for my club and for the Israeli national team. I could not believe that I was on the same field with him, who was Rehovoth’s town pride as the only one to ever make the national team. For the life of me I cannot remember the events of the match or even the score. But I do remember the thrill of see my name printed in the newspaper as part of the

line-up in the match report. After the relegation I continued to play for the junior team and was called to join the expanded 35 men roster of the Israeli under-18 national team that was scheduled to play an international tournament in Europe. The roster was cut from 35 to 22 players who made the squad for the national team. I was not one of them. Then, in one of our away games our goal tender was injured. At the time we did not have the luxury of having a back-up goalie, so I volunteered to play in net for the rest of the match. Some people believe in “beginners-luck”. Not only was I not scored on and made a few decent saves, but I managed to save not one, but two penalty kicks, a rare feat in football. My teammates could not believe their eyes and asked me how I did it. I shared with them the secret that worked for me a few times in later matches. I happened to have a great lift on my left foot that allowed me to dive across the net to my left but not so much to my right. At the time, even on grass fields the area in front of the net was bare from all the traffic in the “box”. As a goaltender you generally need to stand in the middle of the goal between the two posts to have an equal chance to reach the ball on both sides. To remind you of it you use your cleats to scratch a line extending from the net to about 10 feet towards the infield. In both cases prior to the opposing player approaching the penalty kick, I would deliberately “scratch” the line, first to make the kicker wait a little longer and then I deliberately positioned myself to attempt at saving the penalty kick about a foot or so to the right of the line. This gave the kicker more room to shoot to my left and so both times he did. As soon as he kicked the ball I dove to my left and sure enough managed to save the kick. Football aficionados understand the psychology of the cat and mouse mind games between the kicker and the goalie were nerves, gamble or deceit are normally involved. This launched my new “career” as a goaltender, but not for long.

At the age of 18 just as I graduated from high school and ready to join the army, I was injured badly, incidentally on the same grounds. I approached an advancing player to reach a ball that landed between us. I was able to punch the ball and he was able to tear a ligament in my groin area that required surgery and for that matter terminated my football career as an active player. Or did he? Many, many years later, now in Canada as CEO of a software company I used to stay late at work and one evening struck a conversation with the janitor who came late to clean the premises. He was a wonderful gentleman, soft spoken, a Peruvian Canadian immigrant. Well, the conversation quickly turned to football which between two football crazed individuals immediately results in a tight friendship. We exchanged football stories and he told me that he is playing indoor soccer (That is what they call it in Canada) in a league with other Canadian immigrants of other nationalities like Italia, Brazil, Spain etc. He asked me if I was playing and I laughed it off. I was 57 years old, out of shape and in no way capable of keeping pace with younger (thirty-forty something) players. He mentioned that their goaltender broke some ribs in the last game, and they were looking for a replacement. This I could not resist when offered to join the team. I remember preparing to play in a semi-serious game and getting the same pre-game sensations. We were playing the Italian team and I held my own in the first half. When you played the game seriously before, your instincts kick in even though your mind, and body think that you are crazy to put them through this. In the second half an Italian player broke away and it was me and the ball between us. I dove to parry the ball away and he broke my ribs. I had little of a logical explanation to offer my wife and asked her to drive me to the hospital. Sure, by now you think that I learned a lesson and that I was ready to hang my cleats for good, but not so. When we came to Canada, I

became active as a football coach for my two boys until I was suspended by the disciplinary committee for two years, but this will come later. At the age of 68 my two boys now grown up men to whom I transferred the love of the game told me that they joined a well-organized Italian football league playing every Sunday. Believe it or not their goaltender was injured and could not play and they asked me if I wanted to step up to play in goal. The temptation was too much. The match was played on a regulation size field with regulation size goals. Suffice it to say that without ever practicing by all accounts I made some incredible saves to the astonishment of my boys, my grandchildren that attended the game and my teammates and the opposing team. It was like I was in a different zone and astonished myself. I was back for the next Sunday match, this time riding on my reputation from the week before. Once again, I astonished myself with the courage that I demonstrated in diving to the feet of approaching player who could not believe that I would dare. I was in heaven and apparently designated to go there when a week later I was diagnosed with a heart condition and had two stents “installed” in one of my arteries. My cardiologist informed me that I am a moron and that any future thoughts of playing football could be fatal. Now you think that this was the end of my football “career”. Not so. For my 75th birthday the family gathered on a soccer field and we had a contest as to who can score more goals on the old man. My instincts were still kicking in, but my old bones and my mind refused to cooperate. When my youngest granddaughter managed to score on me, I knew that my career was over.

Now that I went full circle let me take you back to my youth again. In 1958 The World Cup of Football was played in Sweden. As a football fan I could only read about the games in the daily papers. But the World Cup Final between

Brazil and Sweden was broadcasted live on radio by the Israeli football commentator Nehemia Ben-Avraham. The game ended with Brazil winning 5:2 with two goals scored by the 17 years old Brazilian Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pele'. I have no way to explain it but just listening to the live broadcast (remember no visuals) there remained in my mind a vision of good parts of the match. The Brazil national team at the time had the best 11 players ever assembled on one team and Pele emerged as the greatest football player of all times and my lifetime inspirational hero. Later in my life and to this very day, and especially when under stress, anxiety, or depression I have the ability, to call back this vision from my memory and literally watch some of the highlights of this match. How is that for psychology students to study?

As a football fan you must have YOUR team. The team you follow, you root for and follow every match and every player. My team was and remains Manchester United. It began even before and certainly, after the 1958 Munich Air disaster. Manchester United lost eight players among 23 fatalities and 21 survivors as British European Airways Flight 609 crashed on takeoff at Munich-Riem Airport. I remained a rabid fan of Manchester United for almost 65 years. Over the years Manchester United became the most successful club football team in the world under the leadership of the now retired Sir Alex Ferguson who became an iconic figure in world football. In the past few years, I lived through the agony of true football fans who see their team performance and achievements deteriorating under the management of four different wannabe successors to Sir Alex Ferguson. But I endure, I keep the faith.



When we came to Canada, I realized that soccer was not the most popular sport but in Canada to say the least. Because of my love for the game I wanted to contribute to its development and to infect my two boys with the love of the game. I was coaching in a house league. That means that while the game is competitive, and winning is the goal the kids are playing to develop an appreciation and a love for the game. I enjoyed going out on the field for practices and on the sidelines during the game. I thought of myself as a good coach with not only the technical skills but even more importantly the motivational skills and even more than that my passion and love of the game. In the final game of one of the seasons, a game that did not mean much in terms of the standing, the kids became a bit rough and the young referee lost control over the game. He was calling some fouls but not others on some outrageous tackles. The parents watching became irritated bordering on riotous. The game ended, the other team won 2:1. If I remember correctly and as is the custom the two teams lined up to shake hands in mid field with the traditional “good game” greeting. As this was taking place one of the other team’s players rushed one of our

players and was ready to kick him with full force. As he was lifting his leg to follow through on the kick, I picked him up by his shoulders and warned him not to attempt to do it again. Little did I know that for one, he was the son of the president of the regional soccer association who rushed to the referee and convinced him to put the incident in his match report, claiming misconduct for manhandling the kid. It was only brought to my attention later when my league administrator told me that I was summoned to a hearing by the disciplinary committee of the league. In my mind I was certain that I did the right thing by preventing a serious injury and declined to attend the hearing and instead offered to resign. The administrator convinced me that the disciplinary committee is a benign procedural matter that may result at worst in a warning or a two-week suspension which means nothing as the season was already over. I agreed to appear before the committee. I was relatively new to Canada and was not familiar with the culture and politics of parents holding positions of “power” that they could not possibly hold in the real world. I was ambushed by the entire committee for my “aggressive, child molesting egregious behavior”. I was asked to offer a public apology to the family of the child and to their team. My argument of preventing an injury and not hurting the offending player by just lifting him to avoid contact, fell on deaf ears. I was told or better yet lectured that in Canada you cannot touch children. Weeks later I received a letter saying that I was suspended from coaching or attending soccer matches for a period of 2 years after which I would have to appear in front of the committee and convinced them that I was rehabilitated and are worthy of coaching soccer again. I appealed the committee’s decision all the way to the highest authority, the Canadian Soccer Association who refused to hear my appeal on a technicality. This ended my coaching career in Canada and my interest in

Canadian soccer. In hindsight I may not have realized coming from Israel from a different more tactile culture how Canadians react, but I am personally convinced that politics was at the heart of the matter and that it should have no place in kids sport. Canadian youth soccer and soccer in general has increased in popularity since this incident some 45 years ago but not in quality or competitiveness. Canada remains a hockey country. So, what remains is my confession: I am a football fanatic.

Aliza and I travel around the world as you may have concluded by surfing the Zohar Web. My wife taught me to like Opera, Ballet, Theatre and Classical music and I taught her to like Football. We have been together to Wembley in London, San Siro in Milan, Olimpico in Rome, Camp Nou in Barcelona, Bernabau in Madrid the Bonboniera in Buenos Aires and the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro. Myself, I traveled from Toronto to Paris for less than 48 hours to watch the European Championships final at the Stade de France, I took my brother Motti from Israel to Istanbul to watch the European Championship match between AC Milan and Liverpool that to this day is considered by football aficionados as the best most exciting football match – ever, where Liverpool came back from a 3:0 deficit at the half to win in penalty kicks after 120 minutes. My older son and I worked together and travelled to England on business and went to key matches in Old Trafford, The Kop, White-Heart Lane, Highbury, Upton Park. In 2014 my older son Mark, his son Zachary, my granddaughter Jaime, and I went to the Mundial in Rio de Janeiro to ensure the continuity of football passion in the Zohar family. I have been an avid fan of Manchester United (and totally frustrated since the departure of Sir Alex Ferguson) and of Barcelona for their unique style of play featuring by far the best footballer of all

times (may be at par with Pele) Lionel Messi. On October 23, 2017 Edson Arantes do Nascimento better known as Pele turned 77 years old. As you know by now, Pele has become my inspirational hero and on the occasion of Pele's birthday I produced, directed and narrated a documentary on the Life and Times of the [Black Pearl- PELE](#) Did I say fanatic?

In 2014 I realized the football fanatic's dream: You get to attend the World Cup of Football in the country that gave birth to the Jogo Bonito the Beautiful Game in the city that houses the Mecca of the soccer world, the Maracanã stadium and the birth place of my hero and inspiration the majestic Pele. But this is only the beginning. To attend the 2014 World Cup in Rio de Janeiro with my oldest son, a soccer fanatic in his own right, and his son, as well as one of my granddaughters, three generations of Zohars, and to do all this for nine of the most memorable days of my life with all expenses paid by FIFA with a \$2000 left over profit, now that is beyond a dream. This is more like a fairy tale. This is my story and it all happened Let us first dispose of the mystery of the FIFA (the International Football Federation Association) "sponsorship" of our trip. A few months before the World Cup FIFA announced that it will hold a world - wide lottery for World Cup tickets at face value. All my family members signed up for it and weeks later only Aliza and I were informed that we were the winners of 40 tickets to 5 matches at a face value of \$100 per ticket, to be held at the Maracanã. Fast forward, a few weeks before the games were to begin, I sold 32 of the tickets to a reputable event ticket company for an average price of just over \$500/ticket. Can I be accused of sculpting? By the letter of the law, may be, but by the spirit of soccer passion, absolutely, not. With a tidy profit of \$11,000 we were headed to Rio. We booked in advance a one-bedroom apartment in Rio Centro

(downtown) through Airbnb. While we heard about crime and violence in Rio, we did not understand that Rio Centro is considered to be the most dangerous neighborhood, especially for tourists. So much so that on the way back from the famous Copacabana beach the next evening a taxi driver refused to drive us there for fear that we would be violated somehow. As it turned out choosing this location turned out to be a highlight of the trip. The neighborhood was fine, while with the park, the market, the shops, the bars, and we could experience and breathe the air of the "real" Rio. Downtown Rio is going through a rapid transition from an old residential to a new commercial center. Old apartment houses are being demolished and being replaced by office towers. The remaining citizens are the ones who still cannot afford to move out. But this is not the reason we came to Rio. The next day we were headed for the Maracanã to watch Argentina beat Bosnia Herzegovina 2:1 highlighted by Leo Messi 's spectacular goal. Walking toward the Maracanã, soaking the pre-game buzz and the electric atmosphere in the stadium, was a culmination of a dream come true for myself, my son and my grandchildren who couldn't possibly understand the significance, but were caught up in the excitement of the spectators in the stadium. Two days later we were back at the Maracanã this time a bit smug of having been there before, to watch one of the better matches of the World Cup with Chile beating the pre-tournament favorites Spain 2:0. As for quality and excitement, especially the deafening noise of the Chilean fans this was by far the soccer aficionado's best. Contrary to prior predictions of potential crime and violence the atmosphere in the city in general and on Copacabana's fantastic fan zone where we watched most of the other matches in the tournament, was electric. Watching and mingling with soccer fans from all over the world was downright exhilarating. On our days and evenings

at the fan zone we and especially the kids' fun meter was off the charts. We took a tour of the artist colony of Santa Teresa and a walking tour of one of the (now open to foreigners) Favelas. It was great. But as we completed our tour at the foot of the Favela the local crowd gathered in front of a large TV screen at the Favela's sidewalk bar, to watch the Brazil - Mexico match. We joined them. Of all the wonderful experiences this will forever be etched in our memory. Soccer is more than a religion in Brazil and watching and rooting for Brazil to beat Mexico, as equals among the fanatic crowd with high fives and cheers at every Brazil chance, and sipping beer with the locals is something we could not possibly plan in advance.

In the fall of 2017, after two miserable months of sulking Aliza kicked me in the butt and motivated me to get of my sorry ass and do something that I love, something that I have passion for and something that I could share with others who have the same interests. Football came to my rescue. Today every maven or wannabe maven in any field has their own podcast. In 2017 it was a blog. My first foray into football commentary was to start a blog. The blog was dedicated to people who live, love and enjoy the "Beautiful Game" of Football and who are interested in the history and influence of Football on their and their fellow citizens' lives wherever they are on our planet Earth. How Soccer more than any sport effects and reflects their culture, effects their local, regional, national, and global politics. and contributes to their popular culture. Our aim is to create a community of followers and contributors and engage them in testing their knowledge of the game, sharing their opinion and experiences, learning the history and influence of football on

global societies, ranking global players, teams and events, debating soccer related topics and contributing content and opinions from their own experience and love of the game. Shortly thereafter I created www.footie-fanatic.com



During the 2018 World Cup of Football in Russia I began blogging commentary of each of the games all which I watched on TV. I began to receive encouraging feedback from my readers (just a few dozen) who appreciate the unique style of football commentary from the perspective of a good football mind and a fanatic fan of the game. I began to spend more and more time in building and developing content and having the time of my life. I was creating, I was invigorated, I was as intellectually stimulated through my research, writing, and learning new digital media skills. I was back to my old energetic, enthusiastic, and romantic self and only Aliza to thank for pushing me over the ledge (spiritually although at times she wished she could do it literally. That is how miserable I was)

As I was getting immersed with my love and passion for football, I came across a news item that set me in yet another

direction. Diego Maradona is considered by many to be at least the second greatest footballer who ever lived, and by most Argentinians as the absolute best and in my mind second only to the great Pele'. Now this argument as to who is the G.O.A.T has by many been revised to elevate the "magician" Lionel Messi, also an Argentinian to the top position, over both. The news was that Diego Maradona will be coming to Harvard University as a guest speaker in their course: The Global Game: Soccer, Politics, and Popular Culture. This news item blew my mind in more than one way. First, while Maradona was one of the greatest footballers of all time, he was also known for being a drug addict and an altogether not too savory a person and not known for his oratory prowess. But than a guest speaker at Harvard? I was totally surprised to discover, that Harvard, one of the most prestigious schools in the world will have a credit course on " The Global Game: Soccer, Politics, and Popular Culture" Immediately, I contacted the Harvard school administration and in my naivete asked if I could register to this course. I was gently but firmly notified that this is a credit course in the faculty of fine arts only for Harvard students. Never mind my age but for many other shortcomings I would likely never qualify to study at Harvard but for a football course I was more than qualified probably as much as teaching the course. I would not take no for an answer and tried another angle finally for the admission officer to concede that for me to attend would require the approval of the two professors who were teaching the course. I contacted them immediately and after a short exchange they not only welcomed me, in fact encouraged me to attend the course. They were thrilled to talk to someone who is so knowledgeable of the game and thought that it would contribute to a greater engagement by the students. Most of the students elected the course mainly for the credit and had little background or interest in the game

prior to taking the course. This is where football fanaticism reached new heights. For a period of 10 weeks I would catch the 6:30 am bus to the subway station to catch the 8:00 am shuttle from down town to the Billy Bishop airport to board the 9:00 am flight from Toronto to Boston to catch the 12:00 pm train to Cambridge, to attend the 3-5 pm lecture and to go back home in the reverse order arriving home just before midnight. The course was interesting but left me with the feeling that I could likely be teaching a football course especially when I “graduated” from Harvard (course). The students and the professors whom I befriended were flabbergasted by the commitment and dedication to commute to the lectures from Toronto.

Back in Israel, after I completed my compulsory service, I was immediately offered an attractive job as a civilian public sector employee. Most army “graduates” enroll in universities, but I was already married, was a member of the first generation of the Israeli Hi-tech community with a smooth career path, so I did not. For years it weighed on me. Even as my career progressed rapidly in Canada with Control Data, a company with which I spent 21 years. Something that would be unheard of in the fast moving, sometimes volatile hi-tech industry. When I left the civil service, the Israeli economy was strictly run by the public sector. The multi nationals Control data and IBM just entered Israel. I accepted a job at the University of Tel-Aviv and was about to start the next week. The person who hired me lived in my town of Rehovoth and was just about to leave for a time period, to serve in the army reserves as has been a routine in Israel. He was relieved that I could fill in for him immediately. It was a Friday evening. The same day I received a call from a friend saying that Control Data would like to offer me a job and that I should come to their offices Monday morning to sign the offer letter. Working for a multi-national private company

was a dream of mine. But I missed the opportunity as I already committed to another job. I was young and inexperienced, and my sense of responsibility precluded me at first from accepting my dream job. Once again in consultation with Aliza, she encouraged me to do what I thought was right for me. Friday evening after the Shabbat entered, I drove to my (to be, new) boss to tell him that I need to rescind my job offer. I circled his home a few times before I mastered the courage to ring the bell. I was open and honest with him and he understood immediately. I promised to recruit to the position a person I knew to accept the vacant job and so I did. He was understanding and thankful That is how I joined Control Data. I loved Control Data. It was then a member of what the computer industry fondly referred to as the “seven dwarfs”. A reference to all the computer companies that were trying to compete for market share with the industry behemoth – IBM. Needless to mention – IBM is the only computer company to survive the personal computer and the digital revolution and remain a powerhouse. The “dwarfs” went by the wayside one after another in the late 80’s. What I liked about Control Data was its culture of innovation and entrepreneurship which perfectly suited my personality. It allowed me to progress to senior executive position from R&D, to Professional Services and in 1984 to make a complete career change from the technical realm to sales. In fact. it took a voluntary organizational “demotion” to move from a “C” level to that of a sales manager. In retrospect I was a frustrated salesman throughout my technical career. I remember that when an opportunity was created for a significant promotion at Control Data for which I was a natural candidate and it was given to someone else for what I believed were “political” reasons, I walked into the President’s office and resigned on the spot. I will never forget calling Aliza on my drive home and telling her that I

quit my job on principle. That I am scared but proud and that I gave my president whom I liked very much an earful for what I thought was an injustice. I had no idea what I was going to do next. By 3 PM the same day the President called my home and asked me to meet with him after hours. We met and he, whom I respected so much, told me that he made an error in judgement and offered me the promotion, a job which I started the next morning. That was not only representative of his integrity, but also representative of Control data's culture. There has been an interesting pattern to my professional career. The first and last job interview I had was back in 1968. In the ensuing 50 plus years I always created my next career opportunity through my own initiative and entrepreneurship. When Control data was on its death bed as a viable company, I created my next opportunity with a newly created through merger a data services organization as vice-president marketing. Ironically, this company was sold to IBM, my nemesis for years. I only lasted one year at IBM. The regimented, process oriented, austere culture of IBM was alien to me. This one day I walked into the CEO's office and offered to be "fired" with severance pay. IBM up until that time never fired employees. If you can believe it. When you joined IBM, it was for your professional life with a great pension at retirement. The CEO, a born and bred "IBMer" was stunned at my chutzpa but I walked out with a full year severance pay by noon that day. I was also not afraid to take significant risks at critical times during my career. When I left or got fired from IBM at my own request, I vowed to never work for a large corporation, no matter how attractive the job may be. Corporate cultures and their political intrigue and power plays are not my cup of tea. Yet I have never been independent and always been assured of my paycheck to clear the bank every month. In no time I teamed up with a good friend to found Performax, a Sales

effectiveness global consultancy. I had a lot of trepidation to venture into independent consultancy. I remember meeting with an acquaintance, who made the transition from corporate to consulting and asked him what I am getting myself into. I remember word for word what he told me and in time shared the same words of wisdom with others in the same predicament. He said, there is one thing you need to remember: Consulting is not about delivering it is about selling. Before you make the move, you must consider 3 things. If you cannot live with any of the three – do not do it! First, you are going to be very lonely. Your phone is not going to ring for long periods, and you are going to miss the buzz of the corporate environment. Second, you will have no resources but yourself to do everything, and third you may wake up in the middle of the night in cold sweat not sure when your next paycheck is going to come from. I was OK with the first two. Selling strategic solutions to business enterprises was my strength and my specialty. I hated the corporate environment after IBM, and I was terrified about the third. That is when Aliza came to my rescue and encouraged me to believe in myself and to not worry about finances – go do it – she said. I did. The next 4 years were the most productive, lucrative in terms of earning and totally rewarding in terms of client feedback and satisfaction. My partner and I , and at times with our spouses travelled around the world consulting and training salesforces of some giant tech companies like SAP , Oracle and even , wait for this, IBM who embraced our business-to-business sales effectiveness methodology to great advantage. As may be common to successful consultants I was offered to take the job of a CEO of a company I consulted to. The founder tempted me with an unsolicited offer to become CEO and take the company public. When you have served in executive positions in large multi-national corporations you normally

have a ceiling to your progression. Deep down you dream or wish and believe that if you sat in the corner office as CEO you will do as good or better a job than the incumbent. Here I was with an opportunity to be the top honcho, mind you in a small tech company, I could not resist the temptation, as much as my career at Performax was at the peak. Six years later and after the 2000-2002 .com crash the company seized operations. Once again, I was confronted with a major decision: Go back to consulting or corporate, or venture on my own and start my own tech company. I offered to license the technology IP from my last company and needed to find at least a quarter of a million in capital to start the new venture. I did not have it and I was not sure how I could get it. A good friend, with whom I shared my vision offered to lend me the money which I offered to repay within a year with above market rate interest, came to my aid. The new company View22 became profitable after 3 quarters and within a year I was able to repay the loan to my friend without whom none of it could happen, No. That is not true. Without Aliza, none of this would have happened. Once again, she believed in me and encouraged me to take the risk and fulfill my vision. This is who she is. One of my first employees was my own daughter who inherited the gene as head of marketing and business development. Later she temporarily retired and left to marry and raise two beautiful girls, I recruited my two sons who stayed with me until the company was sold in 2011. Working with your children in a fast-paced entrepreneurial tech business is a subject for a separate book. Suffice it to say that we worked it out including a succession plan without any of the drama you see in in a TV series by this name. All of them are now entrepreneurs and have started their own companies time and again.

Not having attended university was a burden on my mind. In 2009 I finally after semi-retiring from active day-to-day running of my own business, enrolled to York University in Toronto in the faculty of political science and completed my studies in International Relation and security studies at Tel-Aviv University was a fulfillment of a long standing ambition. But now on my “resume” I could proudly add: “graduate” of *The Global Game: Soccer, Politics, and Popular Culture* from Harvard University. I remember walking the hallow grounds of Harvard University in awe of the majestic buildings and the young student body (or bodies). This was a special satisfying feeling. Oh, and Diego Maradona, whom I wanted to meet in person having watched him in his greatest ever match at the Azteca stadium in Mexico City during the 1986 World Cup, right after the Falkland war when Argentina beat might England 2:1. Maradona scored the two most famous goals ever scored in world football known as “The hand of God”, when Maradona rose to a high ball and punched the ball with his fist to score which the referee allowed to stand. The second goal is one known as the “Goal of the Century” were Maradona dribbled his way from mid-field through six English players including the goaltender to score the winning goal. Diego Maradona never showed up. As it turns out Maradona is a convicted felon and did not get an entry visa to the United States. Shortly thereafter I developed a series of football lectures. This course informs both the Soccer novices, the Soccer enthusiasts as well as the Soccer fanatics on the influence of Soccer on the lives of communities, Nations, and people all over the world. The global power of Soccer to bring people together and by contrast start wars. The appreciation of the game’s origins, traditions, popularity and as a business, industry, and a political tool. I delivered this course twice now at the Life Institute at Ryerson University dedicated to

life-long learning for the “third age” and embarked on a new career as lecturer at the Life Institute and many other community centers on topics that I studied in university at the ripe age of 65 and that I am interested and passionate about in the realm of Global Affairs. So, what is the moral of my football story? First, listen to your life partner who as at least in my case, always, but always knows better. If given the opportunity especially as you age and are not burdened with either health or financial challenges, follow your love, with great passion and it will lead you to a desired destination which you may not have envisioned at the start of the journey.

A life-long relationship is likely to be sustained when both partners have the desire and the opportunity to pursue their interests with a passion. Aliza’s passion for learning, reading, and cooking or mine for football and teaching makes for a good start. But when both partners share the same passion it makes for a happier and exciting life-long relationship. Ours is exploring the world by travelling by now to over 70 countries around the world on 7 continents. We travel for culture, nature, and adventure. In 2004 we became “empty nesters” Aliza describes this in her book:

“Usually the term “empty nester” conjures up images of loneliness, depression, old age. This was not the case for us. We welcomed our togetherness. Being responsible only for ourselves is a great feeling. We did not have to rush home, no one was waiting to be fed or taken care of. Spontaneity is something that Amnon and I have in common and because of our lifelong partnership, instant decision making has never been a challenge. We made many spontaneous decisions and learned to live with their consequences without second thought or regret. “

We traveled extensively, most times, even to the most remote and exotic places. We prefer not to travel in an organized

group. When it is just the two of us and the guide/driver we find that we befriend our guide who would naturally be more open about himself, his family, and the country. This has been our experience when we travelled to the Himalayan kingdoms of Tibet, and especially Bhutan. The contrast between the Chinese oppression of Tibetans and the sheer happiness (an official state metric) of the people of Bhutan is jarring. Yet they both are drawn on the canvas of nature's breathtaking pristine landscape. Our guides feel much more comfortable to open-up and share or disclose more intimate aspects of life in their country and even critical commentary about social and political challenges facing their nation. We learn a lot more this way. When we travel we have our respective duties. Aliza selects the destination and the itinerary, and I do the travel arrangements and on location I am the chief photographer and documenter. Everyday literally in real time I document our impressions and experiences so when we come home we quickly post our travel log interspersed with photos to share with family and friends on the [Zohar web](#). In deference to Aliza's preference for a tactile rather than a digital experience we also create a hard cover album of which we collected so many. We love Africa. We fell in love with Africa when we first travelled to South Africa in 1981 when it was still under the apartheid regime. We were taken by the incredible beauty of the land yet sensing that the racial injustice of the abhorrent apartheid was about to explode. Years later we came back to Africa and took a 14 days luxury train ride from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to Cape Town in South Africa and along the way the majestic Victoria Falls and the wildlife sanctuaries in Namibia. Along the way we drove through the poorest areas

on the continent where children were knocking on the train's window begging for food or money. Yet here we were drinking Champaign and feasting on gourmet dishes. This was our first eye to eye encounter with the essence of economic, and social inequality. Aliza and I are also compatible in our social and political views. We are both Liberals. Aliza gravitates toward the humanistic spectrum of Liberalism farther to the left of center than my more pragmatic strain of Liberalism. Our core values emanate from Zionism which means love of Zion, love of the state, love of Israel. They connect us to the land to its people and to its survival. This was Israel of our youth, pioneering, collaborating, creating, and taking care of each other. This is all gone now. Israel may well become the 51st state of the US. It is as viciously divided between liberals and conservatives entrenched in right vs left, so called ideologies, and forgetting the greater good. When we grew up there were political parties on the left/right spectrum advancing their vision of a safe free Israel. But they were not the "other". They were not the enemy they were ideological competitors in a free democratic society. People like us are frequently being accused of old age sentimentality remembering the "good old days" as better than they were and far better than they are now. Not so. Our ideological turf was paved with humanity, compassion solidarity and patriotism. Look around you and you will see a world and world leaders void of any of these values.

We both love nature especially when combined with adventure. Tracking Silver Back Gorillas in Uganda and Rwanda allowed us to discover the beauty of the continent and its habitat. Aliza and my daughter Sharon share the same

birthday they both on that occasion 15 years apart explored the Article Circle and Antarctica on both ends of the globe. They described their experience in unison with only two words “awe inspiring”. Aliza best describes the joy and excitement of exploring the world:

Our political views are shaped and changed by visiting developing and underdeveloped countries. We develop a greater understanding and empathy through the larger perspective of the world. We enrich ourselves by visiting and seeing different wonders of the world.

Sharing values, interests and world views allows us the experience our happiest times when we travel across the world. Perhaps we are aided by the fact that our individual interests do not tend to dictate our destinations. We do not Ski; We do not Golf; We do not mind the ocean if it happens to be there and we vowed to never go on a cruise or snowbird in Florida and we never have. Aliza’s interest sometimes and some say, many times influences our destination. Her interest in ancient history took us to Egypt, Turkey, and Greece. Her love of opera took us to the Opera houses of Sydney Australia Vienna, Milan Paris, and New York. We are by no means rich people we are comfortable, and we are spontaneous and risk takers and Aliza when it comes to travelling is not economically compromising. This allows us to reflect, remember and cherish our travel experiences and memories and reminisce about them in periods when life seems dull and mundane. There is yet another area where fortunately. or unfortunately Aliza's and I have compatible attitudes - Money. Aliza's life philosophy is that of living in the now, that money is a means to finance your chosen

lifestyle responsibly and is not meant for accumulation. We are convenient shoppers and spend our money on things that give us pleasure including gifting our children and grandchildren on special occasions. Aliza has a saying: "You get what you pay for" so we hardly ever compromise quality for price. We are not bargain hunters and would not recognize a bargain if we fell into it. Myself I am a poor money manager when it comes to our personal finances. I share Aliza's spontaneity which is not a prudent money management practice. I also trust Aliza to make the right decisions when it comes to spending money. We are both risk takers and arrive at decisions very quickly without extensive research of more cost-efficient alternatives. As a result, we promised our children an extremely rich inheritance of great memories and a very modest inheritance in terms of money. We feel that we invested as Alexandra aptly put it, in happiness and our return on investment in terms of love, attention, presence and care has been and continues to be paying us great dividends that money cannot buy.

Our joint attitude toward travel and seeking new and exciting experiences is a source of great happiness for us and for our relationship. Sometime ago I had lunch with my youngest granddaughter Alexandra. Sometime earlier Alexandra invented a board game where the reward for winning the game was a combination of "coins" and "stamps" with a "happy face". The winner is the one who at the end of the game collected the most balanced combination of coins (money) and stamps (happiness). During our lunch, the conversation intensified when Alexandra asked me if I had some regrets as I reflect on the course of my life? I was stunned by the question coming from a 13 years old. I

hesitated for a short while and then I said that my only regret is that I did not managed at my age sufficient financial security for retirement. She retorted in an instance and said: “How could you? You spent all your money on happiness” and indeed we did and most of it on our world explorations by ourselves and with our entire family.

Our first taste of cultural exploration as distinct from tourism was when Aliza in 2007 studied in Paris at the Le Cordon Bleu. We rented an apartment in a residential quaint neighborhood away from the iconic tourist attractions of Paris. Every morning we would go down to the street, get fresh baguettes, shop for fresh vegetables and cheeses and have a Parisian breakfast in our tiny kitchen. We went to farmers markets, we walked the town for miles and discovered every exciting corner, we went to the opera and dined in neighborhood bistros and we were living in a dream. We did not even after six months pick up much of the French language, but we experienced what it is to be a Parisian in Paris. Years later we spent 3 months in Malaga, Spain a quaint town where we studied Spanish in the mornings and walked the town in the evening and experienced the most (for us) bizarre ceremonies, festivals and parades during the week of Semana Santa and later on ventured to the Feria in Seville. The Seville Fair is held in the Andalusian capital of Seville, Spain. The fair generally begins two weeks after the Semana Santa, or Easter Holy Week.

We are fortunate to be able to prioritize our passions over accumulating riches. Occasionally when we reflect on our travels and our explorations of culture, nature and adventure and the rewards we enjoy from our family we begin to

believe that we are the richest people in the world. This chapter cannot be completed without reflecting on a once in a lifetime opportunity to spend almost a full year in our homeland and birthplace Israel 40 years after we left the country for Canada. Me, as a “foreign” (Canadian) student almost 70 years old on a scholarship from York University and Aliza as a “guest” student in Hebrew Jewish studies.

The experience of coming back to live for an extended period of time in the country you were born in, where you met and married your wife , where your three children were born and where your siblings live and where your parents are buried , is surreal. It is hard to describe the feeling of living in your home country for almost a year after an absence of 40 years in which we established life and a large family in Canada. There is this strange mix of it being your home and yet you're only a guest, that things have changed so dramatically in term of the society's values and norms and morals and in your mind (nostalgically) not necessarily for the better. On the other hand, objectively it is the best of all worlds. At the ripe age of 70 we are back on campus as University students, we rediscover Israeli culture, cinema, theatre and above all rediscovered the beautiful country that it is and which has not changed but only improved in terms of beauty and charm. We traveled to places in Israel that we have not been to before in our entire life and we soaked the smell, the taste, and the sounds of our homeland with all our senses. We wrote much about it. Some good, some bad, some critical, some sarcastic, some nostalgic. Above all we had to remind ourselves that we are only here as observers and not citizens, that we did not watch the evolution and did not

experience the struggles that our contemporaries may have experienced in the past 40 years.

In her memoir, Aliza reflected on the same period in much a similar manner:

“It was one of our most joyous time. We attended classes four days a week. We felt like we were young students, a powerful feeling. We enjoyed the courses we took. I was always curious to know and learn more on different aspects of Judaism. We were not tourists in a strange country and not residents in our own country. We enjoyed the best of those two worlds. We knew the language, familiar with the places and customs. We toured the country extensively, enjoyed cultural experiences like theater (in Hebrew) lectures and the company of friends and family. The best part was that we did not have the worries and the stress of every Israeli about work, money, politics and much more. We were spectators enjoying only the good parts. There is a lot of good and beauty in Israel”

Ours is a story of love, passion, trust, and commitment anchored in strong family values and Jewish traditions. We are simple, everyday folks of average height and modest if not humble beginnings with a deep love and appreciation for the core values instilled in us by family and country. Our circumstances, if not unique are unusual. We made our investments in the spirit of unending love for our family and we expected no reward and yet already reaped enormous rewards of love and appreciation. We both independently felt the need to reflect on the arc of our lives and leave behind a record to allow our children, our grandchildren and their successors to remember who we are and later as we approach

the final chapter of our book, who we were only so as to remind them all of as to who they are.

Chapter 5: Reward

On a personal level I have little to no confusion about my Jewish Identity and my ability to reconcile my Israeli heritage with the fact that I live in Canada for almost 50 years now. Most of my Canadian friends and associates and particularly Jews who have been to Israel before, think of me as a “cultured” Israeli when compared to their stereotypical image of Israelis. They do not associate me and rightly so, with the Canadian Jewish community towards which admittedly I do not have a special affinity. I remember a Montreal born colleague of mine once telling me: “Are you sure you’re Jewish? I lived in Montreal for many years in a Jewish neighborhood and you are nothing like them”. Thus, outwardly I proudly present my Israeli identity with its implicit Jewishness thereof together with a good dose of Zionism. However, and more importantly, inwardly my Jewish identity trumps my Israeli origins. When you were born and live in Israel your Jewish identity is linked to the land as it is of course the homeland of the Jewish people. Even as a secular or even an atheist your Jewish identity and your connection to Jewish values and traditions is implicit. But when you live in a foreign land your Israeli identity becomes nostalgic and no longer implicitly coupled with your Jewish identity, you need a different connection to your Jewishness. If I were to characterize my association with the Jewish faith, I would likely create a new stream, that of Jewish “familism”. Even though we were brought up in an entirely secular home, and likely through our education as a

children in Israel, we have tremendous pride in the Jewish traditions, heritage, culture and many of its customs and rituals especially when celebrating Jewish holidays. Familism to me is a duty, an obligation, and a privilege to ensure that my children and my grandchildren are exposed, engaged, and embrace the core traditional Jewish values following our personal example. We do so not so much for fear of break in continuity, assimilation, or any other reason than the belief that it will make them for better people and make our family a better unit.

When we came to Canada for what we thought was only two years, we made sure that we maintained our ties to Israel. We registered our children to a daily Hebrew school. In hindsight though we made a real mistake by not insisting to speak only Hebrew at home. Most minorities in Canada do so for the same reason of cultural connection. Ironically as we were struggling with the day to day English language, we were worried that the children who did not speak a word of English will be handicapped at school. As we were struggling with the language ourselves, we encourage the kids to speak and spoke to them in our broken English. We were so wrong. Within a few short months our kids were fluent in English and mocked us for our immigrant accent, pronunciation, and limited vocabulary. As a result, they forgot their Hebrew and today, have only limited command of the language. As it became evident that we may stay in Canada longer it became imperative that we maintain the Jewish traditions and values and celebrate Jewish holidays in a more traditional manner. As they almost immediately lost their Israeli identity strengthening their Jewish identity became so important. Aliza saw to it throughout the years. Having come from a Bulgarian atheist upbringing, Aliza embraced Jewish

traditions and fed our children and later, our grandchildren in the Jewish spirit. For almost 50 years our family, now 15 of us, gathers around the table for Shabbat dinner every Friday night preceded by the traditional blessing of the food and wine. We do not, even during the high Jewish holidays go to the synagogue, but we celebrate the holidays in the full Jewish tradition. As our grandchildren grew up Aliza used to assign them “homework” and present it at the dinner table on the high holidays. We are happy that our children married within the faith and that they share common values which is always an important ingredient in the making of a good marriage. We would have accepted inter faith marriages, maybe with a hidden disappointment but with absolute support and endorsement. Aliza is the guardian of our family and Jewish traditions. Both of us are great believers in creating our family’s own traditions and rituals. For each one of our granddaughters at the age of 8 or 9, Aliza designed a unique, one of a kind, pendant that the girls will cherish for life and that they wear with great pride and appreciations on special occasions. At the age of their Bat-Mitzvah we gifted each girl with sterling silver candle sticks that they will keep for a lifetime hopefully to continue our tradition of honoring the Sabbath and the high holidays. The boys for their Bar Mitzah received silver Kidush Cups, and a Prayer Shawl. We even created our own family blessing which we call in Hebrew Birkat Ha Zohar. Translated from Hebrew it reads: *“May the lord bless you and guard you and may he fill your heart with love and joy from now and forever”*. We are proud, that we created a warm Jewish home and family and are greatly rewarded by our children embracing our traditions. This is perhaps our greatest reward. Our family traditions are not only anchored in Judaism. They are also created for fun and games. Every year one of our children’s families host the annual Zohar Olympics. It is a series of

competitions in original events, mostly silly and fun that are held on land, water, and home. Some athletic, some cerebral and some outright funny. The winning family gets the Zohar Trophy and bragging rights for the year. In the past few years we held the Olympics on foreign soil when we celebrated the Zohar 50 in Hawaii, Costa Rica, Corfu and Belize, so our enterprise is going global. Aliza is of course the Zohar family Chef De Maison. On these family gathering occasions, she conducts a Zohar Cook-Off. Each family has to prepare dishes with the selected ingredients and Aliza, and I judge the competition on taste, presentation and creativity. We have junior cook offs for grandchildren only, and family cook off for all. There is something wonderful when an entire family engages in fun and games with a pinch of competitive spirit.

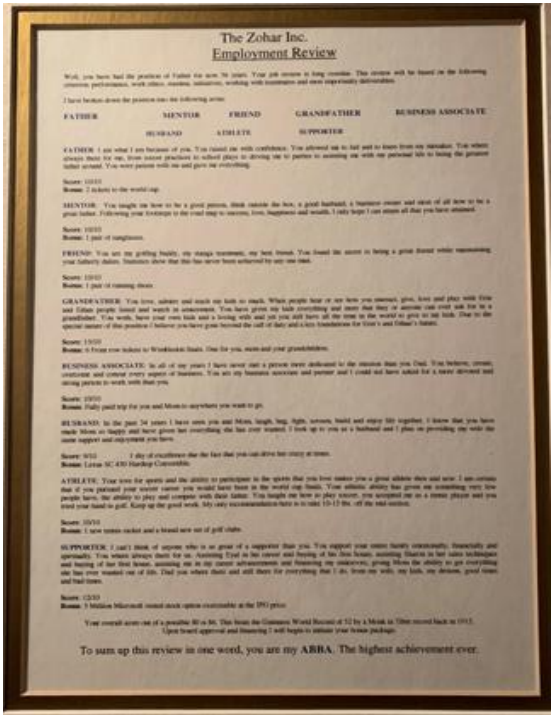
We are also fortunate that with the exception, of two years when Eyal's family lived in the United States, all our children live in the same city within a short driving distance from ourselves and each other. Our children all worked at one point or another in our own company and later in their own and other. As a result, they and their partners have a strong bond as siblings and naturally practice mutual support and friendship. For us there could not be a greater reward. Our parenting style remained consistent throughout and to this day. Open, mutual respect, unconditional support advice and counsel. We are not friends with our children or our grandchildren for that matter as seemingly parents and grandparents aspire to be in today's culture. We are a treasured resource for wisdom, experience advice and conversation, wrapped up in unconditional love.

There is no greater reward to any parent than the unsolicited expression of gratitude from your own children and may be even more importantly from your grandchildren.

In my home office I have framed a few samples and whenever I get moody and starting to doubt myself, I glance at them for motivation.



These are my most cherished report cards:



Now that the bat mitzvah weekend is over and the girls are finally tucked in bed, I wanted to say how lucky I am to have such an incredible family. I know many people say that about their family, but based on the families I've seen 90% don't really get what that means. It means having brothers who truly know how to celebrate one of the most meaningful days of my life with me by dancing and drinking up the night. They don't just show up and take a seat, they come prepared to sweat. I love you guys so much for what you've done for me in my life, but mostly I love every day that I get to spend time and just hang out with you. You are my very best friends and I love you.

Of course none of that would have been possible if we didn't have the best examples to work from. Mom and dad you taught us that family is all about showing up and being there for one another no matter the situation or how inconvenient it might be. And the beautiful part is you somehow managed to create this feeling that it could never be that way, that being together IS what we look forward to. I love you all so much and I can't tell you how amazing this weekend has been for me being able to celebrate it with the my family.

Love you all.
Sharon

From Sharon



Mark Zohar @markzohar · 2012-06-17 ▾

My father is not only a great parent. He is also my best friend, life **mentor**, business partner, footie buddy & sabba to my kids. @amnonzohar



Mark Zohar @markzoh... · 2016-09-04 ▾

Happy birthday to my dad @amnonzohar 🥳 He's been my best friend, **mentor** and role model my entire life. Love you, dad. עד מאה ועשרים



Mark Zohar @markzohar · 2015-06-21 ▾

You can't choose your dad. But you can choose your friend, **mentor**, confidante, biz partner, role model. You're all that & more @amnonzohar



Mark Zohar @markzohar · 2013-06-16 ▾

Happy Father's Day @amnonzohar. You have been & continue to be my role model, **mentor**, friend & inspiration for what it means to be a father.

Grandchildren Report Card

Student: Amnon Sabba Zohar ID No.: 65
 School: 25 Coverwood Thornhill, Ontario Telephone: 416 820 9088

Principal(s): Erin Zohar, Ethan Zohar, Emily Zohar, Zachary Zohar, Jacklyn Zohar, Jaime Eckler, Alexandra Eckler

First Language: English Second Language: Hebrew

Patience	B
Awareness	A+
Playful	A-
Time devoted to grandchildren	A+
Cuteness	C-
Loving	A+
Inspirational	A
Tamper	B-
Supportive	A+
Helpful	A
Fun	A+
Mutsche	A++
Being Sabba	A*****

Principle's Signature:

Erin Zohar *Ethan Zohar* *Emily Zohar*
 Erin Zohar Ethan Zohar Emily Zohar

Zachary Zohar *Jacklyn Zohar* *Jaime Eckler*
 Zachary Zohar Jacklyn Zohar Jaime Eckler

For any questions or concerns please contact Erin Zohar at 947.909.2377.

Our lives changed completely with the arrival of our first grandchild Erin. We were relatively young when she arrived in our early 50s. We were working, travelling, and socializing with friends. But the moment Erin arrived we were in awe of this miracle. From the first time her parents brought her over as a two, or three weeks old, for Shabbat dinner we volunteered to relieve her parents and after Friday dinner we kept her for the entire weekend. This became a tradition that continued for almost four years. When her brother Ethan showed up more than a year later, he joined the party and we would spend entire weekends with them. It was not by design, but we believe that the unbreakable bond

between us and all our seven grandchildren is largely attributed to our presence and accessibility. We were present at all their births and throughout their development, attending their games, graduations, celebrating their birthdays and even today when four of them are already at university they voluntarily and enthusiastically share with us their successes, failures, concerns and seek our opinion and advice. On different occasions sometime spontaneously, they would “take us” out for lunch or dinner. Not all of them together but one or two at the time of their choosing. We travelled with them all over the world but most importantly to Israel where we shared with them memories of our childhood and adulthood in Israel and reinforced their bond with the birthplace of their parents and grandparents. Being able to pass down through our children to our grandchildren the pride of being Jewish and the love of the values and traditions that we uphold including the love of Israel is our great reward. Even a greater reward is to witness the closeness, friendship between the cousins who are connected nowadays not only digitally but also on family trips and holidays and day to day comradery. When each of our grandchildren were about two years old and starting with the “miracle” of Erin I was able to capture their emerging personality and dedicated a poem to each one of them. As time went on, I was amazed to witness how their personality evolved so predictably as I captured it in their poems. Each one of them cherishes their personal framed poem which they all keep by their bed side. I keep them on a shelf in my home office side by side in their order of births.



Chapter 6: Poems from the Heart

It all started with the arrival of Erin-Ketty-Tal our first grandchild. We were so happy to welcome her and later, all our grandchildren. In a moment of inspiration this poem just emerged from the depth of my emotions. I never dabbled in poetry, and surely not in the English language. As proficient that I believed I was as far as conducting business and in day to day conversation, I did not trust my grammar and vocabulary to qualify for writing prose or poetry in English. It just popped up. I have not subjected my poetry to any expert opinion and never sought any. My greatest critics are the subjects of my poetry and from them I received nothing but praise. After a few years as more and more grandchildren arrived on the scene, I accumulated a collection of poems. I also discovered later that the poetry gene has been passed on to at least two of my granddaughters Erin and Jaime. For a long time, I had the desire to publish my poetry collection in the “Book of Zohar – Poems from the Heart”. This is my opportunity. In this chapter I share the poems I wrote to my love ones:



Poems

*Family poems by Amnon Zohar,
father, son, grandfather, lover, friend,
brother and uncle.*



A Lover's Note

*My heart has long been given
To you my wonder mate
My soul has been on loan to you
Forever since we met
The case for my indebtedness
Has long ago been made
Without your love and wisdom
What's left is emptiness
And now as we mature
Perhaps more so than ever
I need you by my side
To love, to live to matter*

Lover



Father Child

*I was a child when you were born
You were my first the heir to throne
I watched you closely as you grew
You helped me grow as fast as you*

*I watched as fine a man you have become
As grey emerged with so much charm
Your loving mate whom you adore
And twins so precious to the core*

*Then I remembered what you pledged
When you were only just thirteen
To reach a goal you set you simply must
And reach you have with grace and class*

*But many more are yet to come
And I'll keep watching you as you become
A pool of knowledge passion and resolve
From it's clear reflection you'll absorb*

*The strength to reach for great success
And stop at nothing short of best*

Abba



I Love you son

*I wish that I could peer so deep inside your mind
So deep that I shall reach the deepest of your soul
I feel that just below the surface have I reached thus far
I sense I may be close but then I may be closer to the hole*

*I did not know how big a part that I have had in its creation
I wish you would have told me as much as many years ago
My soul has always been there ready for the taking
How sadly I have missed the mark right from the go.*

*The gifts you gave me enriched my life forever
And for as long as I shall live with them I'll never part
But that's not where the mission ends, for me it's never
Until I'm sure I did what I can do to heal the hole that's in your soul*

*We tried the words the inner feelings; they clearly did not dry
The swelling tears that keep on searching for what so clearly stares us in the eye
That we are both just human beings and whilst we tried it's not enough
To heal the self inflicted pain from drilling at my core and as for you
To shrink if not to seal but either way begin to heal the hole that's in your soul*

A66a



Father's Watch

*If here on earth or from the heavens
Forever watching you will be my task,
I watched you grow and bloom my gorgeous flower
And in your love and happiness I bask,*

*Your slim and slender silhouette - your beauty
It just takes my breath away
But most of all it is your soul
Your sensitivity your goodness
That only few can hope for and to pray*

*And now you're walking down the aisle
Your regal white a dream like sight
And for as brisk a moment as they come
It blinds me dear but than its clear
It is the droplets from my eyes
The sound of prayer in my heart*

*That you shall always know and shall believe
How great my love you really are*

Abba



Erin

*Your eyes do all the talking
Your smile it punctuates
The happiness you brought me
Is absolute no less*

*Towards me you are walking
My heart it simply pounds
And when you hug me little girl
It's like a lost love found*

Sabba



I Wanna Be Like You

*If in the park or in the mall
I love the way you walk
Your manly stride
Your wonder eyes
They always seem to spark*

*As cool as clear spring water
You are my little man
And when I see the smile
You bring to strangers' faces*

I wanna be like you

Sabba

I Wanna Be like You

*If on the pitch or in the stands
I love the way you talk
Your manly pride, your thunder cries
You always seem to spark*



*As loving as new born puppies
You are my big man, and
When I see the smile
You bring to your children's faces*



I Wanna Be like You

Ethan





Jacklyn

*I bet you know some things we don't
You gorgeous little mischief blonde
This magic twinkle in your eye
The smirk that pops up post your cry
All evidence that something that you know
A special thing that makes you glow
Is nothing other than the draw
That makes me love you ever so
Is this the secret of your charm
Or may you know of things to come
Of happy times that lie ahead
That you will cherish to no end
Or is it just as we agreed
That you are very special
Yes - Indeed*

Sabba



Emily

*You are a little fighter you independent you
For just as you arrived
Your body has been challenged
By knives and needles too*

*But not your spirit – nor your courage
As they just grew and grew and grew*

*I see a future full of brightness
Around the corner lies in wait
It is your spirit that will soar
And you shall reach for something great.*

Sabba



Zachary

*A gift from heaven thrust upon you
Just when you saw the light of day
Imagination is the name It's yours
And it will take you far and far away*

*Your charm – it is as rare as you my little man
Are these your wonder eyes- or may be
Spunk or is it just that you are Peter Pan
But honestly it's hard to tell – when you're a blur*

*You keep on running little man
And never stop the chase for more
Your mind is full of tales of wonder, and*

As your Sabba I wish you tell me more



Jaime

*How early in your life
You signed your way into my heart
You knew exactly what to say,
I have no doubt you're really smart*

*I could not wait to see
Your personality emerge
I'm writing you this poem
So closely on the verge*

*Of things as beautiful as morning sunrise
And splendid sunsets on the beach
That will be sprinkled as you grow
And will allow you far to reach*

*Just look around you and observe
And see the goodness and preserve
Within your spirit heart and soul
And so we wish and pray shall be your call*

Sabba



Alexandra

*Your two is yet to have arrived upon us
But flowers bloom and birds they sing
And what a better time than spring to rhyme thus
For you my precious number seven little thing*

*An angel baby you were born
As happy and content as one could be
You have this little smile that you adorn
And with your wonder eyes you tell us what shall be*

*A peaceful somewhat quiet girl by compare
But funny bone you tickle and mischief you will share
So strong and willful do I see you when you grow
May you be so ever happy and may your spirit ever glow*

Sabba

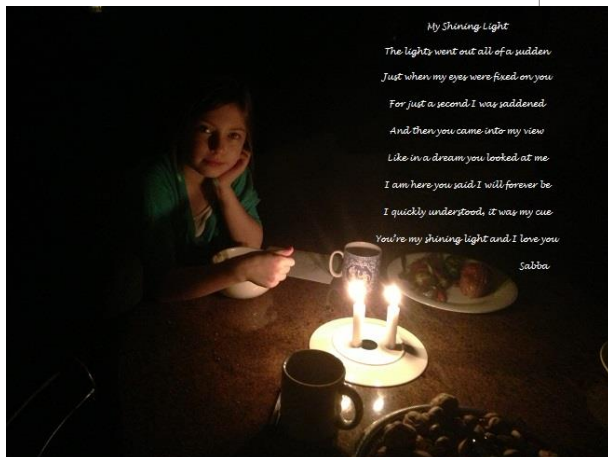
עמית

את מתמיד היית עמית
בהית הגית וגם בכית
אך כעמית כה אמיתית
תמיד חפשת את התכלית
אמנם אי פה אי שם שגית
אך בתבונה במשימה זכית
ברור לי שאת נועדת לעילית
אין לי ספק שנולדת כתגלית
מאז ומתמיד היית ולעולם תהיי

עמית

ברכה לזהר

הרוח היא נושבת עצים הם בשלכת
הסתו הגיע ועמו את מתבגרת
עשור שנים עברו מאז כתבתי לך השיר
והנה את בת מצוה ועתיך עשיר
יפה ואצילה לקראתו הנך צועדת
בחיוך מקרין בשובבות עינים מענינת
ואנו שזכינו לראותך פורחת לתפארת
מאחלים לך ברכת זהר נהדרת
יברכך אלוהים וישמרך וימלא את לבך
באהבה ובשמחה באושר ובתבונה
כי בת ישראל הנך היום ולנו הגאווה
סבא וסבתא



My Shining Light

The lights went out all of a sudden
Just when my eyes were fixed on you
For just a second I was saddened
And then you came into my view
Like in a dream you looked at me
I am here you said I will forever be
I quickly understood it was my cue
You're my shining light and I love you
Sabba

Chapter: 7 - Epilog

At times I wish that I had researched the meaning of my name, Amnon much earlier. As my sister keeps reminding me that she told me sometime ago that coaching, mentoring, writing and lecturing was my true calling. Maybe she knew as she gave me the name Amnon. In recent years I have been lecturing to what is being referred to as “The Third Age” who like me thrive on life-long learning. I did not have prior experience in teaching but with all modesty aside I came to believe that I am a natural. My audiences have showered incredible compliments on my style, content, and engaging delivery. This is my favorite representative sample of feedback I received from my audiences.

“I can’t thank you enough for your inspiring, thought provoking and eye-opening talk yesterday. You held the audience spellbound. I’ve never seen the group stay late as they did yesterday. I find myself thinking about the ideas you offered such as multiple states in present day Israel. We would love to have you come back again next time.”

When I was younger, I did not see myself at the ripe age of 77, being intellectually challenged, motivated and enthusiastic as I am. Who knew that lecturing was my thing and it has been a great source of satisfaction.

This book is destined to have a limited distribution. It was not written for commercial purpose. It is dedicated to the love of my life, my wife Aliza and to the precious gifts that she has given me in the form of our beloved children and the treasures they have given us in the form of our seven

wonderful grandchildren. As Aliza and I promised to our successors, we are leaving them a rich inheritance of cherished memories and little by way of material possessions. I want this book and Aliza's book to be kept as a family heirloom to remind future generations of their roots. We both did the best we knew how to instill in you the values that guided our life: Love of family, love of faith, love of country and love of each other. I think that we did OK. So always remember the thing I used to say: I am OK means that you are OK and nothing, but exchange of love should ever be taken personally.