

Friend and Girlfriend – BFF

The story of friendship: Dalia and Michael Striem



On September 17, 1974, we went out for that [trip to the wadi](#), started at Kibbutz Afik.

Here we are, today, 47 years later, with many more trips and places we went through.

These places provided us multiple opportunities to collect impressions and memories.

But most important of all is the wisdom we accumulated, the diverse life experience and knowledge.

So, now the legacy of our life will be put into written words for you to have.

The “Big Bang”

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Like the beginning of the universe, we usually refer to the '*slap on Dalia's cute butt*' which I provided, as the first direct, intimate, and intentional action to have started our relationship. This is our "Big Bang". It happened in the early summer of 1974, when crossing HeChalutz Street (רחוב החלוץ) in Haifa, after the Garin Toren (גרעין תורן) meeting. Dalia was sure that I am interested in another girl of the group, so she was quite surprised with this sudden slap on her behind. I must admit that I was surprised too with this spontaneous act which I did, almost primitive, kind of trying to "herd" everyone together across the street. It was an unethical behavior of the Group's Guide. Furthermore, I was even more surprised with Dalia's instinctive, intuitive, and immediate response: "You made me horny" ("ייתמתי"), she said right there, on the cross walk. It took me several hours, on my way back to Afik from Haifa, to comprehend the situation.

There are three main issues right here, regarding the rest of our 47 years since that Big Bang:

1. Proactive actions, mostly outside of the comfort zone, do bring results.
2. I cannot tell Dalia what to do.
3. Been 'Horney' has little to do with our sex life.

The story has some background information which could shed some light to those who are not familiar with the persons involved. Michael was sent to guide the group because the group has rejected the Kibbutz's first guide appointed. Michael was at that time a bachelor (no girlfriend), with little to no experience with girls in general, and with no experience in either teaching or leading youth groups. Michael was a quite guy which liked to do his job (managing the orchards) as best he can, with little to no need to be at the center of cultural and social life of the Kibbutz.

The "slap" in Haifa was probably the result of no ethical awareness and no social fitness to such situation. It was a pure intimate response to situation Michael was rarely at, of been admired by young girls, intelligent and smart, beautiful, and jumpy. It was an action one could tag as "hand of God". There was no plan, no hopes for any anticipated result, no consideration of future potential outcome.

In retrospect it seems to me I was probably "overdosed", drunk (not from alcohol or drugs, but from hormones), not completely "in control". I am now thankful and understand that my mother and grandmothers were there with me, helping me "grab the hand of luck stretched out for me" (or grab the cute tusik walking in front of me). I know that if I had to plan this situation, it would probably not happen. In my dreams it does not get better than that 'slap'.

Dalia seemed to me at that point to be highly respected in the group. Very intelligent. Very experienced in social life (and I assumed romantic life too, at least much more than I was). There is no specific image of Dalia in my memory which pops up before the 'slap'. The connection between me and her was ignited and extrapolated on that day, at that crossing. The wonderful, amazing thing is that it lasts 47 years now 😊

Guiding Garin Toren continued despite the connection between me and Dalia.

Members of the Garin Toren would come to visit Afik from time to time. At one of these visits Dalia and I played backgammon (שש-בש). It was fun letting her win many games 😊.

Later in the summer of 1974, the group spent a month at Kibbutz Ayeleth-Hashchar, and I enjoyed the stay with them there (and work at the orchards). The Garin also did the raft-crossing of the Kinneret (רפסודיה). Few months later they started their military service, and I started my studies at the Faculty of Agriculture in Rehovot.

Children

Having children is the main reason we got married. (See at the end of the [Adhena poem](#)). The plan of having children kept us happily together, grow together.

We decided to get married at the time when Dalia finished her military service. She would not stay at Afik with me and live with me not married. The reason for getting married is to have children. So, we got married on 17 August 1976. I was 23 years old, and Dalia was 20 years old. Ophir was born 15 months later.

We did not know much on how to grow children. One may say that having children on a kibbutz is easy. This was true for us at that time. There were other families in our situation. It was natural, this is how life is.

Having children is important. It brings joy and satisfaction to the family. It gives life a meaning, a reason to make efforts to improve, to build, to create. With the care after children, we got confronted with actions and events that would not have happened without them (reading, playing, museums, trips etc.). It is a great bond, a glue, a subject that created reasons to explore, to renew.

Children are not an obstacle to spend time and enjoy. We spend time with kids. Kids grow up with their parents' spending time together, living full life. The children become another reason to do things^{*1}, and sometimes do things^{*1} differently. Being proud of my children is a major source of happiness and satisfaction for me. Being able to help them in any way, to make them happy, makes me happy too. It is my desire to watch my children grow, succeed, and be happy.

^{*1} These "things" are not always real 'things'=objects. They can be activities as well, which we regard as "doing" them.

Having children is probably an egoistic act of the parents. The children have not asked to be born. Having children is putting a burden, a commitment on the parents. Not taking care properly of the children is wrong. [Nowadays you find single-moms dads having children. Even gay and lesbian people have children. They acquire the children in different ways. They adopt them, they get fertilized in a hospital or in someone's bed. Biologically two genders need to get together to have a healthy child. At some point these children will wonder who the second parent is. This egoistic act of parents might negatively affect the children. What kind of idea regarding the meaning of 'family' will such children have? My opinion is not relevant now here. Maybe at a different time.]

There are many ways, methods, to raise children. It has become a science. Getting advice and counseling, take courses, read, and study the subject. It is now easier than ever. It was Dalia who knew

best how to grow children. Most of the times I followed her and did what she said. I trust(ed) her. Look how well she did!! 😊 I am very proud of her!!!!

Now, don't get me wrong here, it is something that I knew in advance to be like that – Dalia will take care of the children. It was something we agreed about. It was not difficult to reach that agreement, there was no argument. Children come first. Job – second (it was also mentioned in my father's 'Letter to my Descendants' that he acknowledged the fact that he was not at home enough).

Having said that I include here my studies. It was more difficult for Dalia; I am sure about that. But it was a temporary situation (of few years). I think that Dalia supported this way of life for us. She would have stepped on the breaks if it would not align with her expectation. In this line of philosophy, we have conducted our life, especially in regards with major decisions: Move to NY for Post-Doc (and return a year earlier than anticipated), Move to California (and return even it was not anticipated), Move to Pardes Hana (not going anywhere yet 😊). I hope that everyone agrees with me about these declarations. You are welcome to share with me your thoughts and feelings. It may not change the history – but we may learn something for the future, mainly your future.

Having grandchildren is even further joy, but it is not something you do yourself. But you can set the stage properly to provide the right conditions for grandchildren to come.

Getting Divorced

When you get married – you can get divorced. For Dalia, the option of getting divorced was on the table for many years. Every time that I have said something with some kind of criticism on how she did something, she reminded me that if I am not happy with her, we can get divorced. Well, you know now that this did not happen. As a matter of fact, in the last few years Dalia did not mention it anymore. I wonder if this is because I became less critic about her doing, or did she get used to my criticism?

I know that for some people getting divorced was a workable solution. I am glad that we never really got to that point. So how did we survive not getting divorced?

When getting married **a new entity is created: the family**. Two individuals agree to work together, love together, grow together. The focus of each individual partner shifts from himself to the family. Now the personal desires^{*2} of each partner in this agreement, partnership, collaboration, are put aside in priority. This sounds not so good to give up your desires and dreams. The reality is that our desires and ideas were similar. My main focus was on staying happily together. We agreed on many aspects of our life. We had the same idea on how and what we want to do with our family. We talked about the issues, sometimes we even argued. But at the end we managed to understand each other and find the way to continue together. I do not remember issues of sharing responsibilities of maintaining the family. It was very obvious. I know that in many cases the burden is shared not 50-50. And this is OK. These issues also change at times. First you stay home and later I stay home. And so on.

^{*2} I am aware of the fact that I tend to have very few, almost no personal desires. I will elaborate on that issue later.

Criticism of the way handle situations is important. It is also very important that the children learn to have their own critical view of their life. As parents it is our responsibility to provide the children with the tools to observe, analyze and deduct the proper action. Usually giving them the right way by example and personal behavior is the most influential and affective way. When the family acts properly, discuss issues and reach consensus, is best for everyone.

From a different point of view, I wish to emphasize the need to add fuel to the *fire of love*. I love to continuously keep manage life in ways which will strengthen our bond. This includes, for example, serving coffee to Dalia's bed every morning and after nap time. It makes her happy and then I am happy too. It takes the attention of the mind to look for the tings one can do in order to make the partner happy and bonded. I tend to do things^{*1} for Dalia rather than expect (or as for) her to do things^{*1} for me.

This *fire of love* is not the sexual lust. In our case it is almost the opposite.

This *fire of love* is the tedious daily routines, the boring simple things^{*1} done all the time. Don't let the fire become extinguished due to lack of attention. You need to "pay-attention" to these issues. They stay fresh and vivid with carful attendance.

Bottom line: keep your attention and actions adding fuel to the right fire of love rather to the bad fire of personal ambitions (which would inevitably lead to walking two different paths).

It takes two for a tango

Dalia loves to dance. I love watching Dalia dance. She dances much better when I'm not dancing with her. I can enjoy her dancing much more from looking at her rather than dancing with her. Since first-year at the Kfar-Hyarok I tried to learn how to dance, even folklore dances, in circles. Every year I would start with the beginner's class. At some point I stopped.

At Afik Dalia danced with Shlomi. Dancing is fun when done right. I am glad Dalia is open minded to stay married with me even that I do not dance.

This is only one example on how married people can get along even if they do not "fit" to each other. It is of course not so easy at all aspects of life which might be crucial to the function of the family. There are no rules and borders to this type of forgiveness. Some people may never forgive their partner for shouting and lying, been dishonest.

Thank you, Dalia, for been so forgiving that I sometimes disagree with you. I also forgive you for disagreeing with me on some issues. Let's not make lists.... Having a short memory helps me here.

Takeaway lesson here: try to find the way to live peacefully, with yourself, with your partners, with everyone else. When there is a conflict – and there is a will to solve it – be open minded and agree to make compromises.

Compromise is a key ability to happy life.

I do recognize the fact that personally I have almost no strong personal desires. It is easy for me to compromise. I see others, who are very ambitious, strongly motivated, have clear idea of what they want. That's very different of what I am. I am not sure if this is a genetic trait or environmental influence. In either way, I put it here, kind of giving example on how to do things the I do them.

I also admit that I am not sure that having no personal strong desires is a good thing. Actually, in many instances, I wonder if I could develop such desires. And then I reconsider and stay happy with what I am.

When you agree to compromise, your need for 100% accuracy and perfectionism, you are very likely to stay happy. Those who try to have everything perfect may not become fully happy ("suffer") forever.

My parents used to tell me: "אל תרשע הרבה ואל תצדק הרבה" which basically means that you cannot, and should not, try to be perfectly at anything. For example: we were not allowed to take avocado from the orchards, so I was putting them in the sweatshirt and/or jacket sleeves....

It must be said that I sleep better knowing that I am not steeling and/or lying to the authorities, income-tax, banks, etc.

"The best is the enemy of the good" belongs to this item too.

When taking this thought to the extreme I can tell you that usually my drawings do not end up as I imagined them to become. Sometimes they turn out better 😊 Doing art and been creative relies on a certain degree of luck, random variability.

Not connected

In modern times it is very common to lose connectivity. There is no available WIFI network, or Bluetooth is not paired. This is how I can simply describe the term I was tagged with: "Astronaut", not because I am floating in space but because I am not part of the leading group's language. "Not connected to their network".

I am not sure if this is something in my biology or in my education which makes me a "lonely wolf", or in my case a "lonely sheep".

Nowadays there are many ways to diagnose social struggles, learning (dis)abilities, misbehaviors of children. When I was in first grade I suffered of headaches. I was taken to a psychologist or psychiatric evaluation. They have asked my parents to forgive me for being a low-grade student. Do not expect too much, don't put much pressure on the child. Just let him finish school peacefully. He will be fine.

So, I have problems with reading and keeping in focus on written text, which seems very blurry to me at first sight. It takes real concentration to actually read the content of texts. In many situations, especially when reading scientific articles, I find myself reaching the bottom of the page with not noticing the content of the last lines. My mind had drifted away... Despite this "disorder" and with a lot of help and hard work I did pretty good so far.

Yes, I have very few friends, if at all. No need to call names. I am very friendly with many and have no enemies. This is not something that I am proud of. I just do not know otherwise. I am glad that you have more friends.

Disabilities have many forms. I assume I have some disabilities. So what?

Do not look around to show me the perfect one. I believe no one is perfect.

I was shy^{*3}. This basically means that I did not try to have the attention at me. I did not raise my hand to answer the teacher's question even that I am sure to know the right answer. Life could have been very different if I had in the past more self-confidence. I am not sure if it was fear of failure, or lack of "chutzpa" to do what I wanted and rather comply with the herd. I think that during the years I have developed a better confidence. I also give less weight to what others may think about me. I know myself good enough not to care what "they" think.

^{*3} Today I am not shy anymore. I can stand Infront of classrooms of pupils, audiences and give presentations, be part of multi-participant meetings.

Other people may take advantage of my nature. In many cases I would step aside and let them pass. Is this the right way? Is this what you wish for your children? I am not sure what the answer is. Is it something that can be changed by education? I want to believe that certainly YES! When diagnosed early by the right professionals, I think that self-confidence can be esteemed. For example, by pointing out the good and proper letter on a page of un-readable handwriting. "Yes, you can!!! Here, look how beautiful you made this drawing".

No need now to worry about my self-confidence anymore, I'm fine now, thank you. Please pay attention to yourself and your children. I see with joy that you are already doing the right thing, keep it up!!

In our friendship I feel that Dalia and I have good understanding of each other in these issues. This does not mean that we share the same disorders or disabilities. On the contrary, it may well be that we fit together by complementing each other. I would not be able to give examples. It is just something I feel. However, you already know that we share the philosophy of "one is enough" when dealing with been angry at a child. One parent is the "stick", the other one is the "carrot" (you may want to switch roles at different times, not at the same event). We also share the habit of giving away often the positive response rather than continuously be critic and having negative remarks.

When becoming a teacher, we were taught to have eye contact with the class, with each individual kid. They notice it that you notice them. At that way you can provide their need of attention before they do something (disturbing) to get your attention. At that way, a quick smile when in eye-contact serves perfectly. Sometimes a quick head nodding, NO, is sufficient.

The issue of been connected is elementary. This what it is all about. Stay connected, with attention, not by 'accident', not 'by the way', not 'from time-to-time'. **All the time**. A small note, a smile, a flower, a kiss, hug, or soft patting. You'll find the best thing working for you. I am also including here the

connection via telepathy. Unfortunately, I have no idea how to demonstrate or to give advice on how to perform it. Maybe in the future mankind will be more talented, and more sensitive in this sense.

Turn 'ON' your inner light and shed it around. It reflects back onto you in warmth and happiness.

Creative

When you go for a job interview, they tell you to be creative. Think outside of the box. This is probably a good advice. This is not the only time one should be creative. Everyday life, making salad, shopping, even when asleep, creativity can help.

In my case, creativity goes together with infinite imagination. It helps me build things, fix, and repair things make drawings and paintings. I like to use my hands, at work, with arts.

At night this imagination is hard to deal with. Meditation and self-awareness help me overcome hours of sleep deprivation.

This brings me to the takeaway lesson: Everything has at least two sides. Everything can be positive and negative. Everything goes on a scale between good and bad, right, and wrong, true, or false.

If I take this one step further, you may agree with me that what we have today can be better and can get worse. We are at no time at the end of any scale, for better and worse. This is of course a very philosophical argument and not too practical. But it might help you with not getting too worried or too happy. Situations tend to change, and the scale of good and bad as well.

Having said that I wish to emphasize that personal awareness and self-control are very important to have. Try to develop a good method to stay in control of your mind and body, in touch with the universe.

I thank God for Dalia's creativity. We have a very good understanding in this field of life. Not so much in self-awareness and self-control, but not too bad to disturb the relationship. Sometimes a good fit means not been the same, maybe even been opposite could work when finding the way to cooperate, to fill gaps and do teamwork.

Unfortunately having many friends is not my best qualification, and it seems that Dalia has much better abilities to keep friendships. This ability however is not the same as the desire and need to invite and host people at home (with or without meal).

Bottom line: unfortunately, we have not many people come visit us too often. We have very few people (friends) to keep in touch with.

This issue goes back to my childhood. Is this a genetic trait or an environmental effect?

8 October 2021

Matters I am thinking and feeling – Dadio Michael Striem

More questions than answers.

There is no right place to start this so I will just “jump into the water”

The “cold water” makes me wonder if it was the right thing to do....

This is very normal to have this thought (or feeling of the water been cold).

I now (age of 68) know that probably it was my curiosity, with some **Braveness / Stupidity (BS)**, which led me to do certain things along my life. In retrospect I have the feeling that at many times of my being – I was not BS enough. I was too scared, ashamed, careful, shy... “*let me stay in my quite corner...*” I was too much concerned of what people might think of me if I will not meet up with their expectations. Now I think that maybe I should have done what I wanted to do, giving a dam shit of what they think. As a matter of fact, in many cases, especially as a Kibbutz member, by **not doing what I could do**, I ended up disappointing many, which is exactly what I was afraid off 😞

I am not giving any of you any advise here, just putting it here....

Why did my father write his “Letters to my Descendants”?

I think that he missed the opportunity (which I had when he was around) to ponder about life, make evaluations and decisions in a more organized manner. Trying to consider properties of the present versus potential future outcome of doing this or that...

Having said that, I am not sure that my father had actually “hit the nail on its head straight”. I mean that I did not get all I was expecting. I think he did not emphasize enough the take-way-lessons of the events and decisions he made. Personally, I also missed his own personal feelings and emotions with the history he told us about himself.

One major conclusion I got is:

If you are lucky enough – you have the brains too.

And my mother would probably add that it is better to see how lucky we are, so we can enjoy it too



I do feel that we are very lucky.

To be lucky requires acting – to grasp the ‘outreached-hand-of-luck’, hold to it tight, know (or see) that you got lucky 😊

Furthermore, I think that to *become lucky* (if this something you can do at all) you need to keep your eyes and heart open for the next opportunity. You also need to try, ‘make an effort’, to stay awake, to

ask, be interested, know what is going on, to keep floating forwards ... - I think that we call it: to follow with the stream (the Striem), or to "catch-the wave".

I buy the lottery ticket – otherwise there are little chances to get the prize. However, this is not the only way to become lucky. As a matter of fact, it helps me recognize how lucky we already are, well, not in the amount of money we have. We have many more things money cannot buy! They say that it is addictive – this is true. I am an addicted dreamer (artist, much more than a scientist). To have dreams is very important to me. It gives me the optimistic attitude to do things towards fulfilling my dreams. Realistically I know that I need to (a) "buy the ticket" and (b) to grasp the hand, and (c) see that there is "gold" in the possession.

- (a) Is making an effort – pay the money, work hard, take a chance, send a letter, apply for a grant, meet people when mingling,
- (b) Is follow up on the link – check the ticket if it is the winner, harvest the crop from the work you did (cheers is also a "crop"), keep in touch with the people you met,
- (c) Is to build the dream on the skeleton (make the dream come true) – once a connection is created, an opportunity seems to be realistic, a crop is "sweet" – put more efforts this direction.

Now that I am retired, the boss of myself (and of Dalia) It happens to me, more often lately than before, that I am lazy, especially in the mornings, with little energy to start do anything. I find it instrumental to start doing routine chores. Wipe the floor, clean dishes, put thing to place, with a cup of tea or juice. There is a "Merry Poppins" song about this... (spoon of sugar) than things warm up and I find myself being more "tuned" to the "waves transmitted", more lightened up with energy, with the realization of what I should do next. At this point I always have the problem 'what to do first' because the list of things I need to do, things I need to repair, things I started doing/building need to be continued and concluded....

Prioritizing is difficult.

How do I decide what needs to be done before the rest?

It so happens that in many cases life is dictating this. A phone call, an email, or something I found on the table....

This is relevant for the day-to-day activity but also as a general attitude.

Now, seriously, this is how to prioritize?

No.

Everyone has his own life he needs to live. Everyone has his own wishes and dreams, feelings of right and wrong, expectations for family happiness, work demand, community to fit into... but first and most important, to my opinion, is that everyone needs to take care of himself first. Eat right, drink and sleep, keep clean, create something, fulfil a dream.

Unfortunately, I think we rarely can do all the above. There is the crunching-machine of life, wife and children to love, etc.

So, following what my mother taught me is: “you better like/love to do what you have to do”. Which means – be very happy and satisfied with doing many things which are not for yourself only. **THIS is NOT accurate.** Better say: you better add the “things you have to do” to the list of “things you want and love to do”.

Adding some philosophy and using methods of self-awareness meditation:

There are things – like a rock, table, book, person – which are facts. There is no reason to become angry or upset about them. It will not change the fact.

There are matters that are not facts. Like for example: our knowledge, thoughts and feelings, our plans, our expectations, and disappointments – these are matters created in our mind only. They are not things at all.

So, realizing this situation we can much easier change how we react to them. I mean that now we can change our anger regarding a disappointment, for example, to a better feeling, maybe a hope?

Why is this here?

Because of the “things” we “have” to do. Are these really things or are these just plans we had? Can we have a different plan? YES, of course we can!

This helped me a lot! I got much more relaxed about life, less headaches. More happiness.

Is this helping you?

Please let me give some examples and tell you the “chain of events” of my life from my perspective.

Since ever I was not a “popular” kid. Sitting on the side bench, stay in my corner, dream, fantasize, draw, and tell imaginary stories to myself. Most my life I was “running the other side of where the ball was going” to stay away from physical and other interactions with everyone else. This is how I remember myself. There was very little I remember doing as of my “free will”. I do not remember what and if I actually “wanted” anything. I was kind of “surviving” life. I was quiet, weak, afraid. Very low self-confidence. I was creative in drawing and making art, even writing stories.

As long as I remember I had not more than 2-3 friends (not counting my brother) at each phase of life. I lost touch of those who were my friends in school. This changed a little bit in Afik. Well, it started at the boarding high school (הכפר הירוק). I remember very well seeing my father very sad, weeping with tears, when he and my mother told me that they have decided to send me there. I knew then, and know now, that it was a big issue for him that I was not as good as he was. There were situations when I felt that he is comparing me to his father.... A dreamer, creative nonrealistic guy, basically I assume he considered his father as “a failure”. My father did make many efforts, in many cases in vain, but out of his strong belief in the superiority of the brain. I think that in his “Letters to my Descendants” he mentions the fact

that he accepted the role of luck very late in his life, probably with the help of my mother. She was a descendent of lucky people. Oma (Dora) and her children (Eva and Wolf) survived due to luck and heart (friends).

My first “free will” act was when I choose working in the orchards rather than with cows (רפת) or vegetables (גן ירק). Somehow, I felt that this will be easier work with nicer people. The second most prominent decision I took was to start with the Food Technology studies. Surprisingly I became better at learning, especially chemistry, biology, and physics. I couldn’t believe my eyes – look at the records I got then, amazing.

Socially my time at the boarding school was a disaster. I did not have more friends. I had one good friend (Amos Reiner later Rinat, which the rest of the bullies thought of us to be gay) and 4-5 second best friends. I was not actively interested in girls, but I know I fell in love with some... they of course never knew about it 😞

Once again, it was a dark period of been put into the “cold water”. I had almost no room for “free will” activity. I was too busy most of the time to just survive. For example: Amos and I found out that getting up early before everyone, gives us more room at the bathrooms, more time to have breakfast and get the best seats on the wagon pulled by the tractor to the orchard. You can imagine that the “bullies” did not like us more for been such “nerds”.

I now think that I could have done more with arts. I was too shy and weak to look around, to explore, to volunteer. But this water is now far under the bridge now for me – but not for you! The reason I am telling you all these intimate issues is because I wish you will find more ways to deal with such situations for your own, or your family and children.

It was a brave decision of my parents to send me to the agricultural boarding high school. Probably the best they could do at that time. It was very difficult for me and there was very little they could help me with. Well, they have sent Benjamin there too, which did help a lot. They also accepted us coming home on Saturdays. I do not recall any moral help with studies or arts in any way. I was left “alone”. Maybe they were busy with their own life? Maybe they just didn’t know what else they can help me with. In retrospect I think that maybe some private drawing lessons could have helped me develop a better self-confidence. Nowadays there are probably also counseling systems to support and deal with such issues.

My father made efforts to make my military service easy on me by using my youth illness of rheumatic fever (דלקת פרקים) to my Health-profile as low as 72, which was considered non-combat (לא קרבי, כושר-). (לקוי = כ.ל).

As a result of the agricultural boarding high school, it was just natural to join the Gar’in Nachal (גרעין) and end up in Afik.

Basically, I did not change much in Afik either. Well, I learned not to be such a nurd. I was put into situations to manage, for example the orchards, because of my agricultural background. I became also more involved in the social life of the community. It was much more of my “home” and I had more friends,

less obvious bullies. I say it this way because the fact is that I was not of the “main” group leading the kibbutz but rather kind of the “opposition”.

This fact I knew while still living there. However, I did not have enough strength and self-confidence to lead and act more vigorously, assertively, and passionately about things for my own wellbeing or my desires. I was not a fighter. “*Whatever will be is fine....*” This is wrong!! it puts a burden on me until today.

The lesson to yourself and your children and family here is:

- Encourage curiosity and creativity.
- Support actions of “getting out of my comfort zone”.
- Failures are OK – they are lessons and challenges.
- Don’t give others the privilege to control your actions of wellbeing – I mean that one should do more of what **he feels is right** and not so much what he thinks others think to be right, or thinks they expect him to do.

Some milestones of my life could demonstrate:

When we decided to leave Afik, we wanted to become independent, and live away from our families. Dalia and I were willing to live in Katzerin where both of us could have jobs. My parents did not like this idea of moving to a remote and less developed city. They were willing to provide us with a more expansive apartment and a car. Leaving Afik to move to Rehovot rather than to Katzerin was under the heavy help of my parents. What if.... Not relevant now.

This decision had a major effect on the rest of our life. It mainly put my parents in control. Dalia is still upset and angry on my parents for taking away her liberty. Until today it is HIS money, not ours.... Yes, we had a decent lifestyle. Nice apartments, with a car, good job, studying and promoted scientifically. This by the way was with a lot of luck, hard work and very difficult for me as having difficulties in reading and attention. My father knew that, so he did major efforts to help me with reading and writing articles and letters. I was fulfilling **his** dreams.... I became someone more like he wanted me to be. To my great pleasure I could at least give him this satisfaction. I wonder what he would have thought about Strieminetica.... probably it would remind him again of his father and the many trials he made to make a living....

It is important to point out that the move to Rehovot was “outside our comfort zone” by all means. After 11 years in a kibbutz, maintaining a household, keeping a job, raising children in the big city, these were all very different. Speaking for myself – working at Volcani was only half as difficult. It was still very competitive, and I did not fit into the leading group, was always left aside with promotions and publications etc. In this way I was not different since the day I was born.

I very much agree with the notification my father made in his “Letters” regarding following after personal contacts is of great importance. Shlomo Cohen, the manager of the Israeli Wine Institute in Rehovot was key person to find the job at Volcani and become a permanent wine tasting panelist. There

I met Prof. Amos Hadas, Mimi Ben Josef, many Carmel Mizrahi and other winemakers, wine industry people, with whom I still have contact. It is also demonstrated with Prof. Bruce Reisch from Cornell (Geneva NY), Dr. David Cain, the former grape breeder at Sun World whom I met first at Volcani. Both played a role in my future career.

It was offered to me to do my Master's (MSc.) and Doctorate (PhD.) degrees at Volcani. I did not have to fight and argue for it, and I was allowed to work and study with no restrictions. I consider it under the effects of luck and professional reputation.

In 1991 we made the trip to America and Germany to "plant seeds". This trip was designed with brains and reputation and executed with tons of luck. The Postdoc at Cornell with Bruce Reisch could be listed here.

The invitation to Sun World was a bit beyond my expectations. It is a direct result of all previous events, mainly the excellent personal contact with Bruce Reisch. I was lucky that Dr. Avi Perl refused to the position due to personal inconvenience (I think his son was about to start the military service). This is a major example of being lucky (to have good friends and good reputation). Making this move, all of us together, was a great accomplishment of us as a family. I thank you from the bottom of my heart to have played along so nicely. THANK YOU! It was also a "step outside of our comfort zone" but a wonderful and most enjoyable one. It was absolutely "a dream coming true" for me. It was a great step forward and up!

I know for sure that my father was very happy with our move to California, in spite the fact that it took us far away from him, and his control. He probably realized that my position at Sun World was good enough to make a living and support the family in the long run. I also think that he considered it as building a bridge to America in case life in Israel will not be possible. Our return and surrendering the Green-Card were probably a big disappointment for him.

Maybe my courses to become a teacher compensated somewhat. After all teachers are employees of a Ministry of the Government – which is to my father's opinion, the desired secured situation, in opposite to be an independent business owner (like his father tried to be so many times).

Now – think about that shy boy who went away from crowds, from bully kids in the playground. A very poor student with mediocre grades considering to be a teacher. Way out of the comfort zone. The fact is that I excelled with the studies and got the best grades I had in my life. The courses were wonderful, being a teacher is a different thing. I remember how weird I felt walking in breaks through the hectic playgrounds of the school, watching the children play and run. It was contradicting my personal instincts of staying out of these interactions. Standing in front of a class of 40 noisy 10-year-old ones, trying to convey a lesson – is still not my favorite place, to say the least (still have some nightmares). Thank God for the Educational Garden in Rishon Le'Zion schools. These lessons in the garden have saved my life! They have made the whole endeavor worthwhile. It also helped me leave being "at the top" of my teaching career.

Timeout: I had great satisfaction and it gave a lot of confidence to have done this experience, and it helped me with overcome some of my own weaknesses. I know now that it is possible to do things thought to be impossible.

At the age of 60 we had this Gordon-Beach party. It was the beginning of my second half of my life (עד 120).

Our move to Pardes Hana is another turning point. It was accompanied with death of both my parents. This by itself gave me a big relief.

The establishment of Strieminetica is (almost) my dream coming true. Yet I must admit that in some points it too, is taking me out of my comfort zone. But now with much more experience and motivation.

My whole life seems to be the preparation to NOW.

I assure you that I enjoy it very much. I wish you all will enjoy your doing as I do now. After all this is the whole point of this monologue – to demonstrate happiness, despite all hardships and failures.

I feel very fortunate and consider this as our best time of life, where we do not have to take care of our parents and we are also independent not to require the help from our children. We do, however, enjoy the proximity to enable frequent meetings with you, and ease to help in both directions.

Summary.

- It is a nice bonus to reflect on my life with a positive result.
 - Most of my life was hard work, boring and dull. Hard – because there were very few routine days. Almost every day was a new challenge. Boring – because I had to do many things repeatedly, picking apples, conducting DNA experiments, collecting data, making crosses, picking fruits, etc. Dull – because it rarely seemed to have a reward at the end.
I think that life of most people is like this. However – it was enjoyable. I became more efficient at everything, I liked the dull routine, I liked being in the orchards and vineyards. I felt that this is what I do best.
 - I have very few regrets. Generally, I think to have conducted my life properly. I was lucky to stay mostly healthy, to have had the ability to work, create, grow and fulfill most of my aims at each phase.
 - I do have some doubts, concerns regarding my own personality. What if I am still that nurd today? What should I do differently now? With no good perspective on the present, it is hard for me to evaluate my own actions. I try to do some theoretical “walks around the block” with my father, but these have very limited real value.
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27 October 2021

There is more I wanted to share with you:

I have learned in the hard way that **I should not expect anyone to do things for me***.

This has multiple examples in various levels:

- At home – I know to do things now that I want, and not expect Dalia to do them, for example – cleaning dust and the floors.
- In business – I need to push my wish forward, not to expect someone else to “see me” or “pick me” to do things. I want to work in the vineyards, so I need to make these vineyards planted and grow.
- In life – if I want to be glad and happy with my life, I must make myself feel that way. Either by convincing myself that the situation is as I wanted it to be (sometimes it feels like cheating), OR – to make the situation become the way I think it should be (this is easier said than done).

There are many situations along my life when I got really “pissed-off” by Dalia, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, bosses etc. I felt betrayed, robbed, stepped-on, bullied-aside, neglected, cheated, etc.

For me - this is my life. It happens all the time, I believe, to everyone.... Unless you are on the other side of the equation – if you are the one not respecting those around you.

There is also another option: I decided at some point, about ten years ago, that been “stepped-on” is taking too much off my “quality-of life” (as an example for all the other issues listed above). These situations would knock me down to the floor, take all the wind out of my sails, make me depressed, sad, angry, etc.

So, I decided to disregard such “actions” towards me (NOT EASY!!). I remember the day when I realized that it is possible to continue with my life “as if nothing happened”. Kind of “fast-forward or UNDO. Basically, I learned to build around me a beerier, a “glass-wall” to prevent these poisonous issues to affect me negatively. I remember telling myself: “This is not getting to you, keep your course steady”. It was like a miracle at that time. I still need to do this miracle from time to time, but now it seems to work by itself, kind of automatically.

I have learned in the hard way that <u>I should not expect anyone to do things for me*</u>

*The other side of this coin is: **I should do things for myself by myself**

The easiest example is to wipe the floor at home. Don't expect Dalia to do it.