

Introduction

True wealth almost never begins with money.

I SPEAK FROM experience—I tried to start there myself. I tried to think about money, plan for it, chase it. But every time I did, I ended up right back where I began: exhausted, drained, caught in a race with no finish line.

Only much later did I realize that we had been asking the wrong question. The real question was never “How do I make a lot of money?” The questions we should have been asking were entirely different: How do you create something of value? How do you turn an idea into influence? How do you become someone who doesn’t just survive in the world but actually changes it?

The people who truly changed their own lives—and then history itself—woke up each morning asking questions that sound almost innocent. How do you solve a problem others refuse to confront? How do you create meaning amid chaos? How do you take talent, crisis, or pain and turn it into a force that moves millions?

The money almost always came later.

Money, it turns out, was never the goal. It was a natural byproduct of creating value. That distinction matters. There’s a profound difference between a successful person and an influential person.

A successful person can build a business, amass wealth, gain status, and achieve a great deal. An influential person goes further. They open doors for others, change how people think, and create solutions where none

existed before. They leave behind an idea, a system, or a way of life that keeps working in the world long after they've left the room.

Those are the people who interest me.

Before we go any further, I want to share one statistic with you. Just one. Because sometimes a single number is all it takes to upend everything we thought we knew.

As of October 2026, when this book goes to print, six of the world's ten wealthiest people are Jewish or of Jewish descent, according to the Forbes Real-Time Billionaires ranking.

Larry Page, Michael Dell, Sergey Brin, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Ellison, and Steve Ballmer. Six people who helped shape technology as we know it.

Let that sink in.

Jews make up only about 0.2% of the world's population. Hold those two facts side by side. **A tiny sliver of humanity—and six of the ten richest people on earth.**¹

¹ Forbes, "The World's Real-Time Billionaires," October 12, 2026. www.forbes.com/real-time-billionaires

And it doesn't stop at money.

Look at the top of any other field, and you'll see it again and again: more than twenty percent of Nobel Prize winners, the sharpest minds on Wall Street, the founders of Hollywood who still shape how billions see the world, the fathers of modern psychology—Freud, Frankl, and Kahneman—and the Silicon Valley entrepreneurs writing our collective future.

This isn't about one single genius.

It isn't confined to a single field.

It isn't a fluke you can shrug off.

It's a pattern. And patterns can be deciphered.



But I have to be honest with you.

I didn't decipher this pattern out of intellectual curiosity. I wasn't sitting comfortably in an air-conditioned library, leafing through history books. I came to it through a complete collapse.

In October 2023, my world turned upside down in a single day. Not gradually. Not over time. In one day.

From that day on, two full years passed under the shadow of air-raid alerts, missiles, and combat helicopters cutting across the sky above our home. Two years in which children learned to run for shelter before they could read fluently. Two years in which a sound no one else would call normal became the most familiar sound of all. My husband served five hundred days in the reserves.

Five hundred days.

I write that number down and still can't quite grasp it. Five hundred days of running the household alone, raising the children alone, working alone, and above all, being afraid alone. Not the dramatic fear you see in movies, but the quiet, constant kind. The kind that settles between your ribs and refuses to move. It stays with you while you wash dishes, answer emails, and make dinner—and while you try to smile at children who understand more than you wish they did.

One morning, after a night of air-raid alerts that kept us from sleeping more than two hours straight, I sat in the kitchen over a cup of coffee gone cold. The children were still asleep. The house held the taut stillness that only a night like that can leave behind. It wasn't really quiet. My ears were still waiting for the next siren.

Then I opened my banking app.

Zero.

Not close to zero. Not a low balance. Not the kind of overdraft I could live with and work around. Just zero. No money. No clients. No future I could see.

The screen cast a bluish light on my face. I remember thinking: This is it. It's over. I don't even know where to start. The war had taken everything—my sense of safety, my livelihood, my ability to plan even a week ahead. I closed the app and set my phone face down on the table, as if not seeing it could make it go away.

And for a moment, I really thought there was no point. No point in trying. No point in getting up. No point in looking for another solution in a world that kept knocking me down.

In that moment, every inspirational book I'd ever read felt like a cruel joke. Every lovely line about "believing in yourself" and "your dream is waiting for you" meant nothing. When you're sitting in your kitchen with zero in the bank and air-raid sirens in the background, there's no room for pretty words. No time for motivation. No patience for blind faith.

But sitting there with nothing left to hold on to, one question came to me: If some people can get back up even as the world collapses around them, and if a people can live for thousands of years amid uncertainty and still, again and again, build, create, lead, and make an impact—what are they doing differently?

I wasn't looking for someone to blame. I wasn't looking for comfort.

I was looking for a code.

And when I had nothing left to lose, I did the only thing I could: I went back. Not to retreat, but to dig.

Like an archaeologist digging down through layers of time, I turned to the oldest texts I knew: the stories of the Hebrew Bible. This time, though, I read them with new eyes. Not just sacred stories, but survival guides. Maps for people who lived in utter uncertainty yet built nations, led, created, and came up with ideas the world still lives by.

I read about Abraham, who left everything behind and set out into the unknown with no map, no guarantees, and no safety net. About Joseph—a boy sold into slavery in a foreign land, who would become the economic strategist of the world’s most powerful empire. He could read what was coming and prepare for it while everyone around him was still celebrating. And about King Solomon, who could have asked for anything, yet asked for neither money nor power—only an understanding heart.

I saw a remarkable pattern. None of them began by chasing money or security. They began with something far deeper: Courage. Wisdom. The willingness to venture into the unknown. The ability to see what others could not yet see. And the readiness to take Responsibility for something greater than themselves.

That morning in the kitchen, I made one decision, and it has shaped every day since. I stopped chasing. I refused to keep living as if survival were all that mattered. From that moment, I would act like a person of influence. I pulled a single word from the ancient texts. A simple word. A powerful word that Abraham, Moses, and other leaders had used in their most trying moments.

I said to the world: “Hineni.”

I am here.

I am willing.

I take Responsibility.

The moment I started saying “Hineni,” something shifted around me. No fanfare. No single dramatic miracle. But one door after another began