

Foreword

At 7:07 a.m. on October 7, 2023, Ofir's life was cut short in battle at Kfar Aza.

On that black day, we also lost his son Nitzan, and with them the lives of so many Israelis were cut short. Ofir died at the age of fifty, but the legacy he left behind is timeless: a legacy of Humane Leadership that will continue to illuminate our path for generations to come.

This book is not a biography. It is a living record of Ofir's Way, Humane Leadership, a distinctive approach that places the human being at its center. Ofir Libshtein was no ordinary leader. He saw the humanity in every person, knew how to listen with his whole heart, and believed that the truest way to lead was through genuine human connection.

Ofir's Way found expression in every part of his life: as a devoted son and a loving brother; as Vered's beloved partner; as a dedicated father to Aviv, Nitzan, Idan, and Uri; as head of the Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council; and as a community leader who worked tirelessly for the people of the region, the citizens of Israel, and the Jewish people throughout the world. He never regarded any position as a job or a title, but as a calling. For him, leadership was a way of life, giving, listening, and acting on behalf of others, whoever they might be.

Humane Leadership, the term we chose to preserve and carry his memory forward, embodies the deep moral vision that guided him. It brings strength together with compassion, determination with sensitivity, breadth of vision with attention to the smallest detail. Ofir believed that authentic leadership grows from a profound connection to people and their needs, and that lasting change begins by building trust and creating a strong, united community.

The tragedy of October 7 changed Israel, and changed our lives, forever. Yet it is precisely in this time of pain, loss, and uncertainty that Ofir's legacy speaks with renewed urgency. The immense challenges before us demand the kind of Humane Leadership he practiced: a path of unity and dialogue, of building bridges between people and communities.

The Or Ofir Foundation, established to honor his memory and continue his legacy, and the book you now hold are more than tributes to someone precious whom we lost. They are practical means of sharing and putting into action the Humane Leadership Ofir embodied, a way that can and should guide us as we build a better future, one in which leadership speaks the language of humanity and closeness and serves people, never the reverse. The Or Ofir Foundation follows his light: honoring the man he was while carrying forward the initiatives he imagined and brought to life.

In the pages that follow, you will encounter Ofir's story in my voice, marked "Ofir told me", in the voice reconstructed for him, and in the voices of those who knew him. By reflecting on his actions, his work, and the way he lived, I have shaped a model of leadership that preserves his values and invites every person to become a leader and a source of influence.

Some of the words and messages attributed to Ofir in this book were not spoken by him during his lifetime. All of them, however, arose from the deep bond between us. As I wrote, I continued speaking with him, in my heart, in my mind, and in my soul. This book grew from listening to that inner dialogue. It reflects both the life he lived and the presence that continues to guide me, and all of us, after his death.