

HELMUT WELLISCH

By Claudia Dobkin, Ph.D.

There is so much beauty to be found everywhere by those who seek it.

Elsie Wellisch

Para Eva, la mujer que me enseñó a vivir



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

8

MILESTONES

10

THE EARLY YEARS

14

Another Life and Time
Kristallnacht
The Deller Sukkah
Getting Out
Another Side of Paris
Freedom Sail
Strangers in a Strange Land
Coming of Age

INSPIRATION AND FAITH

32

Elsie
Ernst
Hugo
Edith
Making Dreams Come True
Praying for Rain
Mission Impossible
Taxi Ride
The Last of the Just

WORK AND CAREER

48

Innovation
Execution
Perseverance
Product Knowledge
Incorruptibility
Luck
Creativity
Determination
Ethics

FAMILY LIFE AND TRAVEL

64

Eva
Ricardo Leo
David Max
Building Our Dream House
A Glass Half Full
There's No Free Lunch
The Natural Order
Joie de Vivre
Adventures of a Retiree in Miami

FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN

90

FAMILY TREE

94

FOREWORD

Germany, 1931. The country was facing an economic and political abyss. The government was on the brink of bankruptcy and pursuing fierce austerity policies. Public employees were taking huge pay cuts and taxes were drastically increased. The economy was in a slump and unemployment rates were exploding. People were fighting each other on the street while banks collapsed and international capital was drawn out of the country. Two years later Hitler would be in power, eight years later the Second World War would begin.

In Munich, a newborn baby boy looked up from his crib to adoring parents who were looking at their firstborn with pride and joy. The boy decided to send up a steady spray, his first life-affirming act in a world soon to be shaped by adversity and immorality.

The story of Helmut Wellisch's life is representative of Jewish life in the 20th century. Where he came from and what forces molded him reflect the education and fulfillment of a pioneering man who largely invented the rules of life as he went. A central paradox of Helmut's life is that he is simultaneously the ultimate establishmentarian and an adventurous man. This self-taught entrepreneur ran his business with infinite attention to detail, a passion for perfection, and a ferocious drive to succeed. Yet this guardian of ethical standards for work and human relations has colored his life with a whimsical desire to explore the world, understand how things work, and share his enthusiasm and humor wherever he goes.

Helmut can explain why the Greater Blue Mountains in Australia are blue. He can tell you when a striptease show is art and when it is pornography. He can convince you without a shadow of a doubt that the best way to beat out competitors in any business is to know more about your product and more about your clients' needs than anyone else. And in a world where belief in God's presence and concern for humanity has been searingly tested, Helmut stands as a beacon of faith. There is no better example of his commitment to Judaism than the radical amazement with which he lives every moment of his life. As the great Jewish thinker Abraham Joshua Heschel once stated, "Wonder, rather than doubt is the root of all knowledge."

This book offers glimpses of life's adventure through the wondrous lens of Helmut Wellisch. In the course of many hours of conversation with me, Helmut shared his stories with verve, vivacity, and great precision. His tale is filled with lessons about character, leadership, values, and love of family. It is my hope that the readers of this book will also learn from Helmut how to live with spark and sparkle.

Claudia Dobkin, Ph.D.
Miami, 2013

MILESTONES

							November 9-10. Kristallnacht "Night of Broken Glass", a series of coordinated attacks against Jews throughout Germany. The attacks leave the streets covered with broken glass from the windows of Jewish-owned stores, buildings, synagogues including Helmut's school. December. Ernst Wellisch and Hugo Deller families leave Munich and wait in Paris for their visas to Uruguay. The visas do not come through, and after ten weeks, they finally obtain visas for Ecuador.			
1929	1931	1933	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	
Ernst and Elsie Wellisch marry in Fischach and move to Munich.	June 19. Helmut Wellisch is born in Munich and grows into a delightful child full of humor.				Ernst Wellisch and Hugo Deller go to Neuendorf, to attend agricultural school. With assistance from HICEM, a Jewish migration association, they plan to learn farming skills in order to escape Nazi Germany and move their families to a rural settlement in South America.				Ernst Wellisch and Hugo Deller part ways and Ernst sets up a small cheese farm. Helmut and Edith begin attending catholic school, the best school in the rural town where they lived.	
				Berlin Olympics. Hitler tries to showcase his country as a model of dynamism and progress. At the same time, he begins a systematic policy of discrimination and harassment of the German Jewish population and any other segment of society that does not fit in with the Aryan ideal.				Ernst Wellisch and Hugo Deller rent a small farm.		
			Hitler enacts the Nuremberg Laws stripping German Jews of their citizenship.					March 21. Wellisch and Deller families arrive in Salinas, Ecuador after three weeks of terrible conditions aboard the ship Orduña.		
		February 20. Edith Wellisch, a beautiful baby girl is born in Munich.								
		Ernst Wellisch is dismissed from Dresdner bank where he serves as general manager of the investment division for the bank's top clients.								

				Eva and Helmut meet in Quito and are engaged six months later.						
1942	1949-1952	1952-1962	1962	1965	1966	1967	1970	1998	2008	
			Helmut moves to Los Angeles, CA to attend Northridge University. He is forced to return to Ecuador after six weeks to be with his parents as his father has a massive heart attack. Helmut purchases 75% of his father's factory Cintas Textiles S.A. of which he already owned 25% and takes over management of the company so his father could retire.			July 2. Ricardo Wellisch is born.	February 20. David Wellisch is born. March 29. Death of Ernst Wellisch, in San Diego, CA.	July 6. Death of Elsie Wellisch, in San Diego, CA.	Helmut and Eva move to Miami, FL.	
			Helmut becomes a partner in the distribution business Representaciones Dr. Otto Seidlitz and opens the Guayaquil office. He serves as representative of some 150 foreign manufacturers of complex machinery and raw materials.							
			Helmut is hired as general manager of the store Salchichería Suiza. After one year, he resigns and is hired by a Jewish entrepreneur in the food business. Shortly thereafter, Helmut comes down with typhus and spends 8 weeks convalescing. He makes a full recovery and then studies window display, returning to Guayaquil to start his first company, Arte Decorativo.		January 9. Marriage of Eva and Helmut.					
			Helmut is sent to Quito to attend public school. He lives alone, renting a simple room from strangers and takes his meals in the home of his uncle Arthur Falk.							



Helmut, approximately 3 months old

Helmut in his office in Guayaquil, 1953



Helmut in front of the Palacio de Gobierno, Plaza de la Independencia, Quito 1955

Helmut writing a client order, 1954

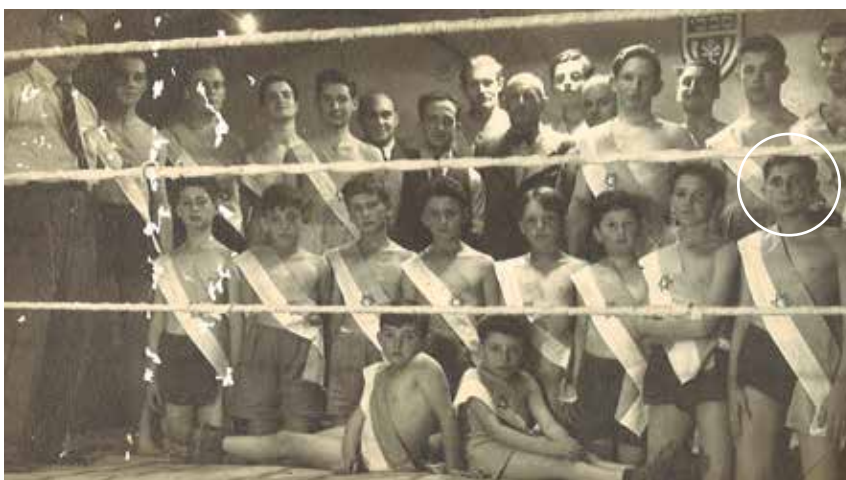


Helmut visits clients, 1953



Helmut, 1956 and 1969

Helmut (second row, first on the right) at the Club Deportivo Macabi, 1946



**Helmut with his favorite animal,
Mergentheim, Germany, 1958**



THE EARLY YEARS

Leave your country, and your father's house,
and go to a country which I will show you.

Genesis 12:1

Do we define who we are, or does our culture or country define us? And when we are living in exile, do we lose, or do we instead reaffirm, our identity? Helmut's story begins with these questions as his family moves through different degrees of desperation on their way from Nazi Germany into the strange world of Latin America in the 1940s. And while the answers they found were very different from the ones we see in our time, these questions have remained fundamental to this day.

The Jews of Germany, most of whom until the 1930s, considered themselves an integral part of German life, found themselves in an existential and severe identity crisis under Nazi rule. They shared the culture, esthetics and joy of German culture; they in fact felt nothing in common with the poor Eastern European Jews. Munich Jews still had an acceptable life in snobbish society and still found places where their conversation was welcomed, where their Jewishness was either acceptable or overlooked. In time, however, whether rich or poor, assimilated or traditional, western or eastern in appearance and custom, all Jewish stereotypes fed the anti-Semitic imagination, and all Jews came to be seen as an alien presence on German soil. After World War II, German Jews became a community of refugees, survivors, and broken souls who had lost their family and sometimes even their faith.

Jewish mass immigration to Ecuador started in 1933 and by 1945, about 6,000 immigrants have arrived there. But statistics do not tell the story of immigration; people do. Assimilation is seldom smooth, and if you were a German intellectual entering rural Ecuador in 1939, it is pure adversity that revealed your character.

Helmut's parents made a wholehearted effort to pierce the chaos of the world and make a life worth living for their family. While they always appeared optimistic, it was no secret to their children that difficult choices and many sacrifices were made every single day. A major lesson in Helmut's story is that the identity of Jews cannot be formed on the basis of catastrophe and trauma, which ultimately turns every Jew into an eternal victim. Helmut's life-affirming journey helps us to see that while the Holocaust broke the spirit of the Jewish people, their spiritual vocation is renewal.



Helmut, 5 years old and Edith, 3 years old. Munich, 1936

Another Life and Time

My very first memory of Germany is of the first grade, when Dr. Berlinger forced me to use my right hand even though I was left-handed. This practice was very common at the time, and could be traumatic, but I was wired differently from other children and was not negatively affected by the incident. I always look for the upside of everything that life brings my way, and I never let anything stop me, not even the German way. Today, I write with my right hand, but I also play a mean game of tennis with my left.

By the time I was in first grade, it was 1937, and the situation in Germany was deteriorating rapidly. The tension at home was palpable. I say that now, but in those days, I only knew good times. Weekdays seemed normal to me, going to school, doing homework and playing with my friends – sometimes even finding something I was able to read in father's 5,000 book library, which seemed like a glowing tower of hidden treasures for a young child. Jewish holidays and vacations were especially wonderful as they were spent in Fischach, my mother's birthplace. The simple three-story house where various generations of Dellers had been raised was a magical oasis where I spent countless hours with my cousins Menni and Henry Stern, Alberto Deller, and Walter Falk, as well as my best friend Kurt Dorfzaun, creating marvelous memories that still put a smile on my face. Winters filled with wild sleigh rides in the snow, and summers with climbing the tallest trees I had ever seen until then. Even going to synagogue was a thrilling experience. We ran up and down dark stairwells making believe we were like Zorro, defending the people of the land against villains, while in the sanctuary, our fathers and grandfathers prayed for an end to the horrific situation that Jews were facing under Nazi rule.

A few years before, in 1933, a general boycott against German Jews had been declared, and the German SA, the original paramilitary wing of the Nazi party, stood outside Jewish-owned stores and businesses in order to prevent customers from entering. The word "Jude," German for "Jew," was often smeared on store windows, with a Star of David painted in yellow and black across the doors. Approximately one week later, Hitler enacted the first major law to curtail the rights of Jews so they could no longer serve as teachers, professors, judges, or in other government positions. Shortly afterward, a similar law was passed concerning lawyers, doctors, and tax consultants. That year, my father, the youngest but most senior investment advisor in Dresdner bank, was fired.

I was only two years old when Father lost his job, but I recall the drama of the moment as if it were happening to me this very day based on what Father had told me many years later of that day's events. Most Jews who considered themselves normal German citizens, especially those like Father who did not grow up as observant Jews, did not heed what was going on around them. Business was still good, so they ignored all the signs that pointed to the fact that life as they knew it would never be the same. Imagine that one morning you go to work as usual, and out of the blue, someone comes into your office and tells you that you are dismissed. That is exactly what happened to Father. With

tears of shame flowing down his face, the general manager of the bank handed Father a telegram signed by Hitler ordering the dismissal of Jewish employees. In the twenty minutes that Father had to clear his office, his lifelong dream and promise of a brilliant career in Germany's most prominent bank came to an end. He could not understand or contain the conflicting feelings he had toward his manager: compassion for the man who, like so many other Germans, was simply following orders and rage at his unconscionable cowardice.

Father returned home to face the harsh reality of having to care for a young wife, a two-year-old son, a two-month-old baby girl, and no savings. Somehow, he mustered the courage to set up his own office, and within a few hours, his largest clients at Dresdner had left the bank and placed their assets with him instead. Although Father was allowed to work until 1938, life in Germany became intolerable for Jews. In 1935, Hitler began instituting the Nuremberg Laws and Jews were stripped of their citizenship.

Kristallnacht

From the Nazi rise to power until 1938, Nazi policy sought to expel Jews from society and strip them of their rights and property while simultaneously engaging in campaigns of terror and violence. The goal was to make the Jews leave Germany. Those Jews who managed to leave turned out to be the lucky ones, and we were among them.

On November 9, 1938, everything changed. During the night "of broken glass", a night of rampant violence against Jews, the Nazis burned my school and our synagogue. From that night of madness until December 1938, when we finally left Munich, I recall the confusion I observed all around me. It was only much later, when I silently faced the fear of making a life for myself all alone in Ecuador that I came to recognize that sense of overwhelming helplessness I had felt that night in 1938.

Just a couple of hours before Kristallnacht, Father had been alerted by a Christian friend that the Nazis were coming, so he left Munich with uncle Hugo, my mother's brother. They hid for several days in the *Oktoberwiese*, where the remainders of the recently celebrated Oktoberfest were still standing. Later, they fled in the trunk of a car to Stuttgart. The two men hid at my aunt Herta's house in Stuttgart, where apparently the violence had not escalated as it had in Munich. The day they arrived in Stuttgart, the Nazis came to search my aunt's house. They broke everything in sight but did not find Father and Hugo who were hiding in the attic. Meanwhile, in Munich, my grandfather Max was taken from his home to Dachau. He was released with the help of a friend after four months, but by the time he returned to Munich, we had already left for Paris. A year later, my grandparents found their way to Paris, but shortly after, France fell to the Nazis, and my grandparents were taken to Auschwitz. We never saw them again.

After Kristallnacht, Father returned to Munich, but he did not return home right away. He hid in the English Garden located in the center of the city. He remained there and wandered for eight days, taking refuge in the shaded paths near the brooks, and ponds, aware it was not safe to return home just yet. He was right. One night, the SS came to my house, and I remember the terror I felt when I saw their uniforms. They went through all our things looking for arms. When they found nothing, one soldier spitefully ripped a Blaupunkt radio from the wall and took it under his arm. Days later, we saw our radio for sale in a store window.

The Deller Sukkah

Our family's beautiful Sukkah is currently on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. It is an exceptional piece of history. For me, the joy the Sukkah brought to us as children is another sparkling moment in the rich memories of Fischach. Every year, all the children would help assemble the Sukkah in the garden. It was a family project which would begin soon after Yom Kippur. The occasion was especially joyous for all us to relish in the colors, sounds, foods and smells of autumn. And what kid doesn't love to be outside all the time, building the Sukkah as well as eating all the meals there.

One of the most important things that our family life in Fischach did was to present us with a version of adult life that was appealing and worth striving for. Always placing family first, finding joy in all you do, striving for intellectual and professional accomplishments but always coupled with integrity, honesty, and a good dose of humor; and most important, living a Jewish life. I realized much later just how extraordinarily difficult it must have been for our family to instill these values, which would become the cornerstone of our existence, while the world around us was falling apart.

Much like the Sukkah of the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years, the Deller Sukkah remains a precious reminder of when we were forced to leave the safety and security of our permanent homes and put ourselves under the direct protection of God. I am certain there were moments when Father had to face his doubts. And Mother, an observant Orthodox Jew, surely was pushed to explore the limits of her faith. But they never gave up their faith.

Our Jewish identity took on new shades as we journeyed through our life in Ecuador, but the brilliant colors of our Sukkah still shine in my heart along with all the values that were planted in Fischach.

Getting Out

Well before Kristallnacht, my parents had already made the decision to leave Germany. They felt it was best to join forces with Hugo's family so we would not have to face our destiny alone. In an act of remarkable courage and foresight, they put into action their plan to move their families to a rural settlement in Argentina that had been created by the Baron Hirsch Foundation. In 1891, Baron Hirsch founded the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), a philanthropic organization to assist Jewish refugees from Russia. The organization was quite innovative in that it did not seek to give charity. Instead, the ICA purchased agricultural land in Latin America so the Jews could learn farming and become self-sustaining. In time, the foundation attracted many wealthy shareholders including Baron Edmond de Rothschild, Baron Osmond Goldsmid, and many other British Jewish magnates of the day. Unlike Rothschild, Hirsch believed that Zionist ideals of an independent Jewish state were an illusion. Luckily for all Jews today, Rothschild was correct in his assessment and his investments in Palestine paid off, making Israel one of the most vibrant centers of innovation in the world. Most fortunately for my family, Baron Hirsch was also right and his agricultural program saved our lives.

In order to qualify for the Hirsch program, at least one member of the family needed to have knowledge of farming. Most German Jews were living in large cities and were, for the most part, professionals and merchants, so the foundation set up schools to provide the basic training needed. In early 1938, Father and Uncle Hugo attended agricultural school in Neuendorf, which is located near Berlin. They lived at the school for six months, and in addition to farming, they each learned a trade. Hugo became a mechanic and Father a cabinetmaker. Those months were terribly difficult for the two men, especially for Father who had to accept his transformation from an intellectual to a simple farmer. But his determination to leave Germany was stronger than any other emotion, even his pride.

Now that we had the agricultural certificate required by the Hirsch program, and had been given assistance from the Jewish migration association HICEM to obtain visas, we needed the signature of the Argentine Consulate in Munich for our visas to be valid. The day we went to the consulate was a pivotal moment for me. I can still see the Argentine Consul, a tall elegant man, laughing and saying "We have enough Jews in Argentina." We were thrown out into the street. Those were critical days in the life of our family that somehow instilled in me a keen sense of survival, where the desire to escape drives you more than the fear of the unknown destination. Once again, we received help from HICEM to obtain visas for Uruguay. Since we needed the signature of the Uruguayan Consul to validate the visas, and the closest Uruguayan consulate was located in Paris, we were able to leave Germany before the impending catastrophe.

I do not think my parents were aware of how terrified I really was, and how I made sense of the senseless events that were taking place. This period of my life shaped my

conviction that all situations have some purpose and our obligation is to persevere and make the best life we can with what we are given.

When it came time to leave Germany, we took a train from Munich to Stuttgart. We spent the night there at the home of my aunt Herta and uncle Albert. I recall overhearing Father and Hugo spending the entire night trying to convince my relatives to come with us. They tried until the last possible minute, but my uncle did not want to listen. His decision cost him and some of his family their lives, which were ended brutally in a concentration camp. Their son Henry was saved by the Kinder transport, a program which brought thousands of refugee Jewish children to Great Britain. Their other two children, Menni and Ruth, did not qualify for the program, so they were sent to the camp. Ruth, the oldest of the three children, lost her life, but Menni survived to tell his chilling tale of torture. Through this experience, he lost his faith.

The rest of Mother's family fortunately survived. My grandmother Sofie, my aunt and uncle Paula and Arthur Falk as well as my aunt Cilly and her husband arrived in Ecuador in 1941.

On Father's side, his sister Else began early and very astutely to plan her escape. She scoured the New York City telephone book, searching for anyone with the last name Wellisch. One of the families she contacted responded and gave her an affidavit to come to America on the condition that she work as an au pair for three years – a miraculous exit in 1938. Father's other sister, Trudl, was married to a very courageous and honorable Catholic man, Max Rizzi, who was able to hide his wife and three children – Fred, Peter, and Rolph – in the German countryside during the entire war. After the war, Fred moved to the United States, and the rest of his family remained in Germany. Rolph still lives in Munich and Peter in Berlin.

Another Side of Paris

We arrived in Paris in December 1938. It was so bitterly cold and dismal that even the organ-grinders with their performing monkeys in the streets could not transform our arrival into anything close to pleasant. We were in transit waiting for our visas to Uruguay. With very little money or possessions, no friends, and no ability to communicate, we spent some of the most difficult months of our lives, that is, until we left for Ecuador three months later.

We spent our first night in Paris in a maggot-infested hotel. The next morning, Father and Hugo went to the Uruguayan embassy only to be thrown out as we had from the Argentine Consulate in Germany. This time the reason was that the visas were counterfeit. We were devastated. We did not know a single person in Paris, so we had no choice but to remain in that horrible hotel until we could find a way out of Paris.

Noise, stench, and bugs were everywhere around us, and there were men milking their goats in the middle of the street to earn a few cents. This was the Montmartre section of Paris for Jews in the 1930s, a very different place from the picturesque colony of artists it was in the early 1900s. One of the things that Father and Hugo did to use their time productively was learn how to slaughter animals in accordance with Jewish law so they would be able to provide us with meat once we found our way to Latin America. I was fascinated by the novelty of the ritual, and I learned that in our tradition, the animal must be killed with respect and compassion, and the special knives, as well as the way they are held, make the animal almost insensible to pain. We took the knives and the lessons with us to Ecuador.

One cold night in February 1939, Father and Hugo came home and announced the good news. We had visas. The problem was that they were for Ecuador and nobody had ever heard of the place. At that moment Father unfolded a small map, and we all gathered to look as if getting ready for a treasure hunt. With as much enthusiasm as I have ever heard in my father's voice, he showed us our new home.

Freedom Sail

We had to travel to the port of La Rochelle in the north of France to board our ship to freedom, the Orduña. We were thrilled to finally start our journey although we had no idea what the future held for us. On our way to the ship, we stopped at a fish market like I had never seen before. I remember wondering how people could eat those dirty earthworms that were hanging like limp spaghetti from rusted hooks.

In March 1939, we finally boarded the ship and discovered our new quarters: two tiny cabins located at the very bottom level of the ship to house four adults and three children. I thought it was a step up from our hotel in Paris until everyone around us became seasick. Three days later, I came down with appendicitis which turned out to be a blessing. I spent the entire trip in the ship's infirmary located on the top level. Within days, I made a speedy recovery and wasted no time to conduct my first business deal. I built a bridge on one side of the ship and made the passengers pay a fee to cross to the other side.

Strangers in a Strange Land

From the shabby rafts that were used to take us ashore in Salinas to the cattle that walked across the train tracks while we were trying to make our way to Guayaquil for all the necessary arrival formalities and to the first papaya I ever ate in my life, the early days in Ecuador were filled with adventure. For my parents, it was an entirely different story. Getting settled in this strange new land was one difficult transaction after another, for which they needed a dictionary in hand to make themselves understood. We spent two weeks in the small town of Ambato on our way to Quito. I remember looking at the Indians walking around with children like me, but wrapped in dirty blankets. We finally arrived in Quito, where Father and Hugo took care of all the paperwork.

We finally arrived in our new home, a simple farm located 17.5 kilometers from the rail station near the village of Lumbisí. My parents had leased a farm as was stipulated in their visa, but they had absolutely no idea what they were doing in spite of their farming lessons in Germany. They eventually learned invaluable life lessons from the locals, from selling our crops at the local market to taking care of the viruses that would infect me on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the farm did not generate enough money to support both families, so Father and Hugo had to make the difficult decision of who would stay and who would go. Ultimately, a random drawing of two glass balls decided our fate. Father drew the red ball, so we had to leave.

As difficult as it was to leave, staying on the farm was certainly not the easier path. I remember Uncle Hugo telling the story of a friend in Fischach who asked him "What does a Jew do when he cannot feed his family?" "He starves", answered Hugo. "Not at all," continued his friend, "he feeds others so they can provide the money he needs to feed his own family." Uncle Hugo remembered this lesson, so my aunt started baking *schwartzbrot*, the much-loved German bread and Hugo started delivering it to German community in Quito. It was a full day's journey from the farm, but the effort was well worth it. These bread sales became the beginning of his vocation in the hospitality business, which in time became legendary in Ecuador.

After this first experiment in farming, my father worked on another farm in Sangolquí, but the results were no more impressive. For me, however, the adventures continued. Mother had enrolled me in a Catholic school. It was the only school within a reasonable distance, so when the sisters promised that they would not convert me, Mother let me go. My best friend was an Indian boy named Guayasamín who was as curious to learn about my Jewish ways as I was about his indigenous culture. We were the only two boys in a school of 519 girls, and we had to hide every time the inspectors would come. I had so much fun.

Unfortunately, the fun did not last. After one year, my parents sent me to Quito to attend a more appropriate school.

Coming of Age

At nine years of age, I found myself living alone in Quito. I was supposed to live with my aunt and uncle Paula and Arthur Falk. My uncle was a very pious and knowledgeable man, and he eventually prepared me for my bar mitzvah. But there was simply no room in their tiny apartment to accommodate me, so my parents decided that I would live in an apartment building nearby where they rented simple rooms. I would only return to my parents' house every few weeks.

I lived alone this way for three years. It was great not having anyone telling me to put on a scarf when it was cold or that it was time to do homework. But I can assure you that it was painful to think that nobody really knew when I was scared at night, or if I needed a hug to make my world better.

Everyone in the community was struggling in those days, and Father suffered greatly, but always in silence. Some of the Eastern European Jews who knew it would be easier to make a living as merchants bribed officials and did whatever it took to change their agricultural visas. Father had signed up to be a farmer, and he was not about to give up. Keeping his word was especially important for Father in the culture of lawlessness that permeated life in Ecuador. Eventually, Father changed our visas as well, but we lost many valuable years.

In time, my parents rented a small house and began producing cheese in one of the rooms, and once a week, Father would make the trip to Quito to sell his goods. In spite of his tremendous efforts, cheese-making was also a failure. So my parents moved to Quito and established a small business inside their apartment, selling a handful of products that a few farmers were willing to give to Father on consignment without demanding a large sum of money in advance as was customary. My parents barely made ends meet.

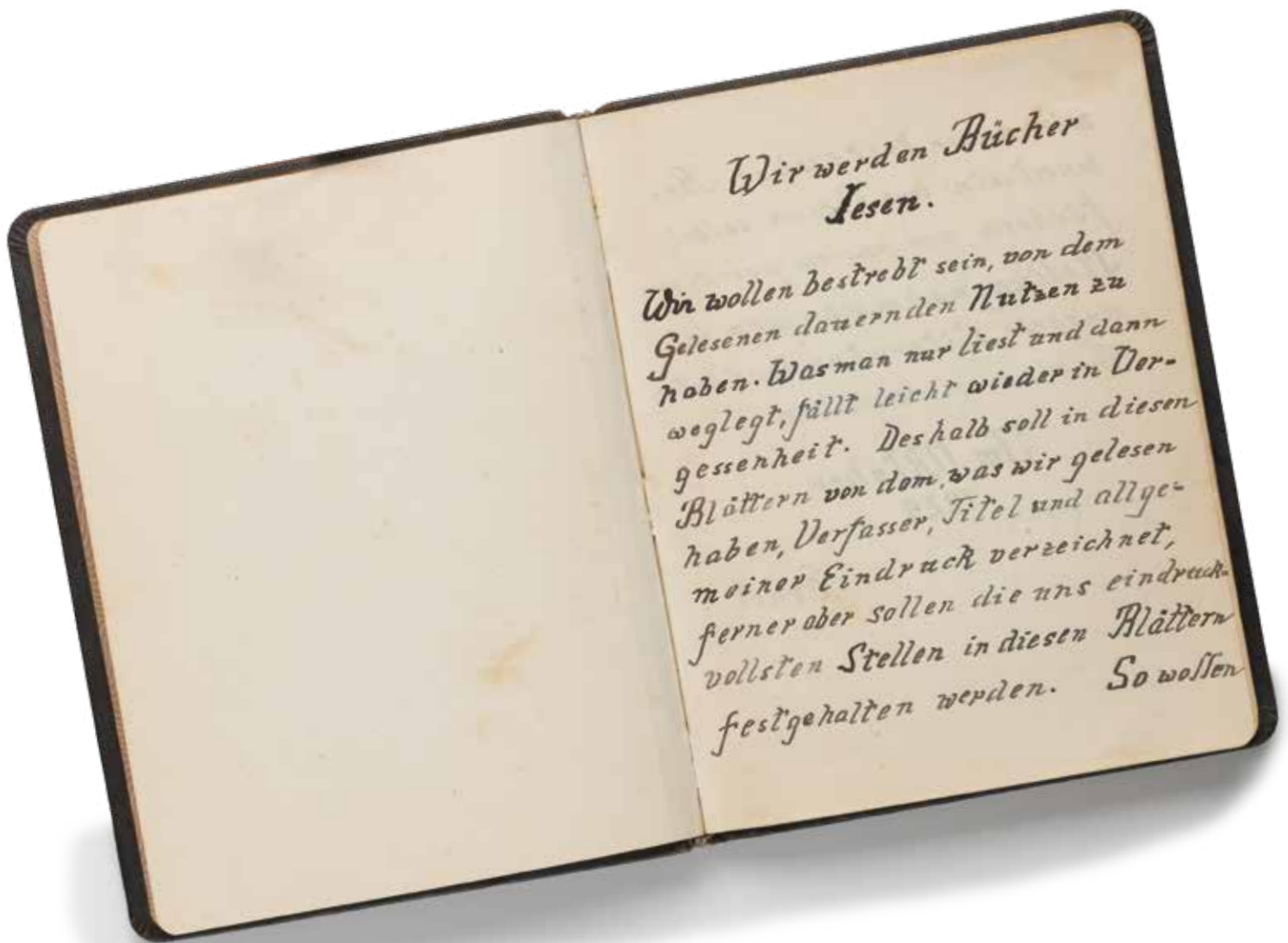
In spite of the difficulty we faced as we tried to prevail with our values, honesty remained a hallmark of the Wellisch family name. Slowly my parents' store progressed; they also made some friends, and finally they rented a bigger store. Still, financial problems remained at the center of our household for as long as I can remember. My parents could not afford to send me to the much-coveted American school in Quito, so I attended the public high school.

At sixteen, I make the pivotal decision to leave school and move to Guayaquil to start earning my own money. I never looked back. Of course today I value education more than anything else in life, but I do not believe in regrets. Nothing good comes from second-guessing your decisions.



The Deller Sukkah was used every year by the Dellers until 1936, then Heinrich Feuchtwanger convinces Abraham Deller to donate it to the Jerusalem Museum. The painted wooden boards were numbered so that they could be easily reassembled every year on the Feast of Tabernacles. It was used until the beginning of the twentieth century and then stored in an attic to prevent deterioration. The artist who painted this sukkah incorporated motifs inspired by both everyday scenes from traditional German folk art, and Jewish religious sources. On the walls of the sukkah one can see the genre hunting scene and a view of the village, including the synagogue and the Deller house. Five vignettes relating to the major Jewish festivals are interspersed on the walls, the immediate model for which seems to have been the High Holiday and Festival prayer book. The wall opposite the entrance to the sukkah bears a monumental vista of the Holy sites of Jerusalem as seen from the West.

(Adapted from *Hebrew University Art Journal*)



Wir werden Bücher Lesen.

Wir wollen bestrebt sein, von dem
Gelesenen dauernden Nutzen zu
haben. Was man nur liest und dann
weglegt, fällt leicht wieder in Ver-
gessenheit. Deshalb soll in diesen
Blättern von dem, was wir gelesen
haben, Verfasser, Titel und allge-
meiner Eindruck verzeichnet,
ferner aber sollen die uns eindruck-
vollsten Stellen in diesen Blättern
festgehalten werden. So wollen

Opening pages of journal written jointly by Elsie and Ernst Wellisch

Let's Talk About Books. We long to learn as much as we can from what we read, but if we simply put away our books after reading them, the lessons are surely forgotten. For this reason, we wish to memorialize in these pages the authors, the titles, the most relevant sections and the general impressions we take away from our reading. In this way, we aspire to improve our critical thinking and refine our understanding of the issues addressed in literature.

—Ernst, October, 1929

"No book is truly evil, they all contain something good"

—Zink Apoplit 1 p. 217

All the remaining pages will be used for the most beautiful book ever written, a human life: Our son. God willing, he will help our son develop in positive ways and we along with him will become more pure and better human beings. In this way, we will find our most profound happiness. Our darling Helmut was born on June 19, 1931 at midnight. His hebrew name is Zvi ben Itzhak.

Spinat mag er nicht, er versieht gar
sauer das Gesicht le. Auf 2 x Gewicht
trinkt er auch seine Portion.

Vorhergänglich möchte ich die Zunahme
der ersten Wochen eintragen:

Datum	Gewicht
28. Juni	4450 gr.
26. Juli	3580 gr.
2. Aug.	3950.
9. "	4240.
16. "	4530.
23. "	4750.
30. (Bis)	4800.
6. Sept.	5210.
6. Okt.	6140.



3 Mo.



3 1/2 Mo.



16 Tg.

9. I. 1932

Tim ist das Putzke schon 6 1/2 Mo. alt
setzt sich öfters allein auf, gibt Hände
macht Linsbuck; alles was nur nach
Kanne & öfters bei Tütungen nicht, als ja
so greift nach allem mit einer besondern
Sicherheit, holt auch seinen Schmelzer
von selbst raus & rein & ist im ganzen
ein frohlicher Bursch der inneren Künste
hat. Alle Gemüse alle Suppen, Brühe
& Obstsorten kriegt er. 16 1/2 & wiegt
er. - Wir freuen uns (unbeschweren) soviel
an ihm.

13. I. 32 Hanna, der neue Zahn ist da!
(7 1/2 Mo.) ganz ohne Schmerz ist er gekommen.
Seine Entwicklung nimmt G. o. D.
schöne Fortschritte. Er sitzt fest &

Our Son. I often wonder how this tiny yet perfect baby, this sweet creature, can be my son. I have never felt so complete. From the time I was a little girl playing with dolls until I became a woman, I was obsessed with having a child. Yet as of now, I wish to get used to the idea that this life that I created with God's help will develop into an individual and live his own life. My role will be to help him accomplish this autonomy. For this reason, and perhaps somewhat selfishly, I wish to prevent the pain that many mothers feel when their children identify more with the outside world. I do not even want my son to thank me for all my efforts now, it makes me happy to see him grow and that is rewarding enough.

He already smiles at 5 1/2 weeks. Everything in him smiles, his eyes, his little nose, he is beautiful.

-Elsie, August 13, 1931

At 8 weeks old, he weighs 8 1/2 lbs. I am hopeful that in a few weeks, he will gain another kilo.

-Elsie, August 14, 1931

I have let too much time pass by without writing, We have been in Fischach where Helmut celebrated his first quarter of a year and as of three weeks ago, he weighed 10lbs 200gr!

-Elsie, October 10, 1931



Sofie Hofmann Deller

Abraham Deller



Albert Stern, Herta Stern, Ruth Stern, Cilly Deller Gerstle, Isaak Gerstle, Menni Stern Sharon, Fischach, 1930s



Lilly and Henri Stern with their grand-daughter Nilly, Israel, 1970s



Helmut, Mennie Stern Sharon, Ruth Stern, Henry Stern, Alberto Deller, Edith Wellisch, Stuttgart, 1935



Erna Sharon, Helmut, Eva, Menni Stern Sharon, Israel, 1996

Dresdner Bank
Filiale München.

Direktion.

Telegramm-Adresse:
„Dresdner Bank“.

München, den 30. Juni 1933.

Herrn Dr. Ernst Wellisch

im Hause.

Auf Grund der Durchführungsbestimmungen des Gesetzes vom 7. April d.J. kündigen wir Ihnen vorsorglich Ihre Stellung bei uns zum 31. Juli 1933. Soweit Sie nach diesen Bestimmungen noch nach dem 31. Juli Ansprüche an uns haben werden wir auf ihre Regelung zurückkommen.

Hochachtungsvoll

DRESDNER BANK FILIALE MUENCHEN.

[Handwritten signature]

Dresdner Bank
Filiale München

Direktion

München, den 22. Juni 1933

Abschrift

Herrn Dr. Ernst Wellisch

im Hause

Infolge des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 7.4.1933 müssen wir feststellen, welche Angehörigen unseres Instituts unter die Bestimmungen des Gesetzes fallen. Wir bitten Sie, uns demgemäß durch ☒ entsprechende Ausfüllung und Unterzeichnung der untenstehenden Erklärung zu bestätigen, ob Sie nichtarischer Abstammung sind oder nicht, bzw. ob die Ausnahmebestimmungen zutreffen.

Als nicht arisch gilt, wer von nicht arischen, insbesondere jüdischen Eltern oder Grosseltern abstammt. Es genügt, wenn ein Elternteil oder ein Grosselternteil nicht arisch ist. Dies ist insbesondere dann anzunehmen, wenn ein Elternteil oder ein Grosselternteil der jüdischen Religion angehört hat.

Entsprechend den gesetzlichen Vorschriften wird in bestimmten Fällen noch ein besonderer Fragebogen auszufüllen sein, den wir Ihnen gegebenenfalls noch zustellen werden.

Dresdner Bank Filiale München

gez. Fischer Raithel

Ich erkläre hiermit,
dass ich ~~arischer~~ Abstammung bin

dass ich nicht arischer Abstammung bin

dass ich Frontkämpfer bin *(Wohnungsgeld bei Kriegsanstehen in France ab)*

dass mein Vater im Weltkrieg gefallen ist *Am 20. Aug. 1919*

dass mein Sohn im Weltkrieg gefallen ist *von der Infanterie*

(Unterschrift) *[Handwritten signature]* *Leinwand*

Letter from Dresdner Bank to Ernst Wellisch containing Nazi decree that all employees must certify their Arian race origins and Ernst's hand-written response stating that he came to Germany following the German empire annexation of the Alsace-Lorraine territory



Elsie Deller Wellisch, Hugo Deller, Cilly Deller Gerstle, Paula Deller Falk, Isaak Gerstle, Herta Deller Stern, Sophie Hofmann Deller, Abraham Deller, Fischach, 1920s



Mathilde Marx Wellisch, Max Wellisch. Munich, 1936

Helmut, Elsie Wellisch Solinger, Fritz Solinger, Edith Wellisch, Ronald Solinger, 1950s

Inside the Deller Sukkah,
1930s
Arthur Falk, Albert Deller,
Albert Stern, Isaak Gerstle.
Sofie Hofmann Deller,
Elsie Deller Wellisch, Ernst
Wellisch, Paula Deller Falk,
Tilly Marx Wellisch,
Else Wellisch, Hugo Deller



Cilly Deller Gerstle,
Elsie Deller Wellisch,
Fritz Solinger,
Else Wellisch Solinger,
New York, 1950s



Betty Deller Wappenstein,
Quito, 1950s

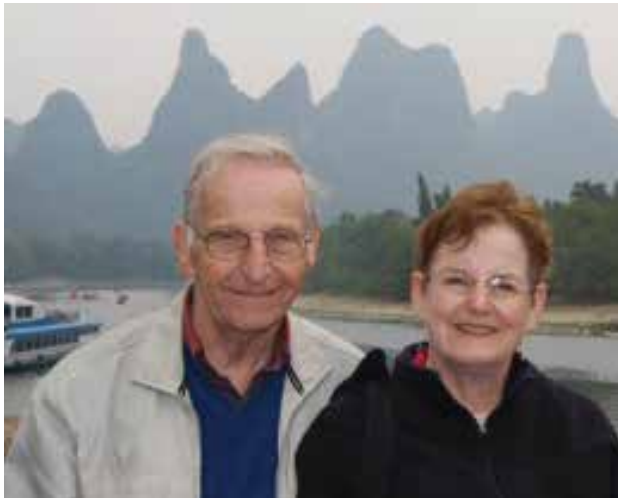
Deller house, Fischach, 2000



Arthur Falk, Jerusalem, 1960s



Trudi and Max Rizzi, Munich, 1979



Walter and Gretchen Falk



Trudi Rizzi, Fred Rizzi, Eva, Max Rizzi, Munich, 1986



Rolf, Fred, Peter Rizzi, Munich, 1940s



**Elsie Deller Wellisch, Edith Wellisch,
Elio Schaecter, San Diego, 1970s**

Edith Wellisch, Quito, 1966



**Helmut, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Ernst Wellisch, Edith Wellisch,
Gert Koppel, Quito, 1950s**

Edith Wellisch, San Diego, 1980 Edith Wellisch and her artwork



INSPIRATION AND FAITH

Today is the best day of my life,
and tomorrow will be even better

Dale Carnegie

To achieve great things in life, we need more than talent, hard work, and a relentless desire to succeed: we need inspiration and faith.

All of Helmut's role models were people of great personal integrity, starting with his parents and his uncle Hugo. When he was just a little boy, Helmut read the book *Men of Wealth*, the story of great fortunes made by the most notable men of wealth in history from Cornelius Vanderbilt, to J.P. Morgan and J.D. Rockefeller. But the story has a special twist since the author places special emphasis on the difference between market means and unjust means of acquiring wealth. Much like Ernst and Hugo, the honesty with which these magnates achieved their success inspired Helmut and formed the foundation of his work ethic and world view. Even humorous anecdotes collected over a lifetime of seeing the glass half full offer a big lesson in integrity. When all is said and done, for Helmut, every story of success, and failure, is also a story about the virtue of persistence despite obstacles.

Like virtually all Jews who emigrated to Latin America from Europe around World War II, Helmut grew up to become a staunch traditionalist in his Jewish observance, attending synagogue on a regular basis. In this respect, he resembles many of the Jewish men of his generation. The synagogue was the great unifying factor. There may be a range of observance, but as long as one goes to synagogue, he declared his religious and social place in the community. There is no doubt that Helmut identified deeply with this social tradition. He even rose to the presidency of the Jewish community in Guayaquil for seven years. Still, there was much more to Helmut's Jewishness than his communal identity. In 1958 he found himself in a hospital in Mergentheim convalescing along with many patients who were former SS and German military. Much to his surprise, Helmut discovers he is incapable of hating the Germans. In fact to this very day, he still travels with a German passport.

Helmut has unwavering faith in humanity, even after having seen the worst of it. This is a core Jewish value that helped to buffer the hard blows of anti-Semitism that he has encountered throughout his life. All of Helmut's values are Jewish values. Living a Jewish life, for Helmut, has meant acting ethically towards family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and strangers. It has meant that the reputation of a fellow man is sacred, that honesty in all dealings must prevail, and living life affirmatively trumps regret and revenge.

And for a man whose search for scientific truths about Jewish history, and just about everything else in this world is never ending, he has given more than equal time to the mystery of creation and the creator. Knowledge is the building block of Judaism, or as Einstein once said, "You cannot be a man of science and not believe in God." Helmut is one such man.



Elsie Deller Wellisch, 1960 - 1990

Elsie

One of the best decisions of my life was to go to San Diego every year to spend uninterrupted quality time with Mother, or “Oma”, as the children called her, which means grandmother in German. We would go to Palm Desert to a restaurant she loved, and she would marvel at how wonderful it was to look at the menu without having to worry about prices after so many years of deprivation. I loved my mother deeply, and we were extremely close my entire life. We saw the world in the same way. Curiosity was just one of the elements of her personality that made her such a singular human being. I learned from her the importance of never deviating from my ethical standards. I also inherited my love of nature from her, and perhaps the greatest of all lessons, the ability to find beauty in life’s journey.

Mother was born in Fischach, Germany, the youngest of five children, and was raised in a family of Orthodox Jews. In spite of the restrictive roles assigned to women, she followed in her mother’s footsteps and became the intellectual of the family. In the early years of marriage, however, it was not her inquisitive mind and gregarious nature that served her best. Rather, it was her strength of character that helped her adjust to life in the tropics and raise a family as a new immigrant, while working long hours managing a small hotel on the beach, and never managing to make ends meet.

After a few years they managed to buy a small factory that manufactured elastics and shoe laces, and in 1966 that they moved to San Diego. Unfortunately, they only enjoyed four years of their retirement, then Father passed away.

After Father died and the difficult years were far behind, Mother embarked on a new life. At sixty-five, her zest for living was rekindled and finally blossomed. Mother always knew exactly what she wanted and always persevered until she achieved her objectives. Once for her birthday, I wanted to buy her flowers. Upon reflection, it occurred to me that cut flowers don’t last so I decided to give her a plant of African violets that were not yet in bloom. The following year when I returned, I was amazed at how beautiful they had blossomed. I knew that she loved plants and had a bit of a green thumb, but how she got the African Violets to bloom is a good example of Mother’s unconventional approach to things.

When Mother first got the plant, she tried everything she knew to make it bloom, she put fertilizer, water, sun, then she took away fertilizer, water, sunlight, tried one combination, then another, everything to no avail. Until one day, she zoomed in on the word “jealousy”. She bought an exact replica plant made of plastic and within one week, the real plant was in full bloom. Unbelievable but true, Mother was definitely an out-of-the-box thinker.

Mother set out to learn how to drive, to learn English, to play bridge, and to experiment with sculpture – all this, in addition to being active in several charitable organizations.

Her English turned out to be more of a personal amalgam of German and Spanglish, but she had no inhibitions and everyone she met was seduced by her spirit, even if they did not fully understand her language. With an uncommon passion for Judaism, it was Mother who instilled the religious framework in our home. She believed that everything in this world is God's creation and that we must therefore embrace the adventure.

Embracing the adventure of life every day as joyfully as Mother did is truly an art and surely her greatest legacy.

Ernst

Living in the narrows between utter brokenness and the unwillingness to give in to despair has always struck me as the quintessence of Father's life. A brilliant man who never boasted his intellectual prowess, he was a born fighter who never talked about the past. He was a man of few words but always the right ones. He was straight as an arrow in all his dealings which is perhaps the way that I resemble Father most.

Father was born in 1904 in Pirmasens, Germany. His high school years were spent in Strasbourg, and he went on to university in Munich, graduating with a doctorate in macroeconomics. Father was raised in a very liberal Jewish home, and one of the reasons he was attracted to Mother was her faith, which he felt guaranteed modesty, tranquility and happiness. To demonstrate to Mother's parents that he was willing to enter their world of observance, he learned Hebrew to perfection. Not surprisingly, they accepted him with open arms.

Father became the youngest director of investments that Dresdner Bank ever had. While he would never have dreamed of working independently before, as only corporate life was acceptable for the educated class at that time, the day he was dismissed from the bank, Father was forced to set up his own practice in order to survive. His clientele included some of Munich's wealthiest elite, and most of them followed Father, continuing to seek his investment advice. The irony of history is that between 1933 and 1938, when Father worked as an independent investment advisor, he earned more money than he ever could have over the course of an entire career at Dresdner. Father was diligent about paying taxes when he left the bank, and this reported income served as the base for calculating the restitution payments made by the German government after the war. Father received the maximum amount given, but no amount of money could ever make up for the humiliation and the utter despair Father felt the morning he left Dresdner.

We just don't know what the future brings. What seemed like a catastrophe at that time, a young man with two small children left jobless, provided much financial

security for his retirement years. Father endured much hardship during the Nazi regime and even more duress in attempting to make a life as a farmer in Ecuador. He may have abandoned his Zionist ideals, his fancy office and his greatest dreams when we left Germany, but he never abandoned his professional conduct, his code of ethics and his moral compass.

These lessons have served me well my entire life.

Hugo

Hugo Deller, my mother's brother and the father of my cousins Betty and Alberto, has always been my role model in business. He had a big nose like me. When he was in school, his classmates were constantly making fun of him, so one day, he proudly proclaimed: "A great man needs a great nose." With these words, he stopped all comments forever. This bold statement was the beginning of my inspiration.

Hugo was not only witty and bright, but also an extremely hard worker. He founded the largest hotel chain in Ecuador, the Hotel Colon, which later became part of the Hilton chain. The Colon started out as a small hotel, just seven rooms, offering excellent cuisine prepared by my aunt and impeccable personal service. After many years, Hugo was approached by tour operators in Ecuador who wanted to establish a modern hotel. They wanted to invest in Hugo's company and especially wanted him to run their new operation. Hugo was known to make his rounds every day to every single floor and inevitably find something the others had missed.

Hugo's personal integrity put the name Deller in hotel and restaurant history in Ecuador. His business savvy and reputation made his hotel great and ultimately made the sale to investors. When the time came to transfer ownership of the hotel, Hugo set aside a block of shares for the family, giving us the opportunity to invest in what he was sure was a winning proposition. At the time, I was concerned that the country was moving to the political left with a drunk for a president who would embarrass himself in public, and a government that was establishing too many ties with communist Cuba.

My decision turned out to be the worst business decision of my life. In six months, the Hotel Colon shares tripled in value.

Edith

My little sister Edith was born when I was almost 2 years old. When they brought her home, my parents placed her in a crib near mine, and Mother told me that I greeted Edith with a big smile and the informal “tag” which is the abbreviation for the traditional greeting *guten tag*, German for hello. If I had understood at that time that this beautiful baby would completely usurp the exclusive rights I had on my parents’ attention as an only child, I wonder if I would have been so welcoming. Like all children, we had our fair share of fights when we were growing up. And while it is true that my extremely close relationship with Mother was often a source of rivalry, over the years Edith and I have developed an excellent relationship. Not a single day goes by that I don’t speak to my little sister. She is a woman of few words but extraordinarily insightful. Having Edith to help me navigate the hard course of this life has been a blessing.

Like me, Edith attended public schools instead of the American school where most Jewish children of our generation went. You have to understand that not being with other children like us made it more difficult to make Ecuador our home, but our parents simply could not afford the luxury of paying for school. In some ways, I think our separateness, even from our own cultural group, made us strong, determined and creative adults.

Edith was a very reserved young woman but she always knew what she wanted and always achieved her objectives. From an early age, Edith displayed her gift for all sorts of crafts. She studied fashion design and in a very short time obtained a very high position in the best haute couture shop in Quito. Edith was and is a woman of great style and creativity. Over the years she has mastered the art of stitchery and has developed a great deal of notoriety for her Japanese paper sculptures which she exhibits and sells.

I can’t help but think that one of the most mysterious and marvelous events in life, finding your life partner, is an act of divine will. Certainly there is a special hand that helped write Edith’s story. At seventeen, she was dating a very promising medical student, and we all thought he would become her husband. Yet, one day, Edith met a young man who had just arrived from Guayaquil and quickly swept her off her feet. With uncharacteristic decisiveness, Edith accepted his marriage proposal and was married within one year. Many years later they had children, settled in the U.S., but unfortunately they divorced. This was a very difficult time for Edith but she handled it in her customary way with great dignity and strength. Then one of Edith’s long-time suitors from Quito who, by then had also moved to the U.S. and rose to become Dean of microbiology at Tufts University, achieved his life-long dream of marrying my little sister. Today they are retired and living in San Diego.

There is no rhyme or reason for how our life evolves, but sometimes with God’s help, some dreams come true.

Making Dreams Come True

In addition to family and historic figures, I have drawn great inspiration from my reading and travels.

Among the many books that impressed me is *Sorrell and Son* by George Warwick Deeping, which I read when I was no more than 12 years old. It had profound impact on me. At the end of World War I, Captain Stephen Sorrell comes home a hero, but finds that his wife has abandoned him and their young son. With no money or job prospects, Captain Sorrell is forced to take jobs that are beneath his station. The sacrifice is one he is willing to make to give his son a future. Desperate to improve his lot, Sorrell sets off to Brighton, a very popular luxury resort town at the time, hoping that one of the hotels may need help. With only his army credentials and no real skills, he starts knocking on doors, but nobody will have him. At the end of the day, he reaches a luxurious hotel. A bit embarrassed, the general manager tells Sorrell that he has an opening for a night porter, and Sorrell accepts. Being an industrious man, he devises a way to stay busy at night and decides to leave a newspaper for each guest under their door. The following week, Sorrell offers to shine shoes as a free service. The guests are thrilled with these new services. Everything that Sorrell does, including the most menial of tasks, is done with resolve and style. Over time, Sorrell develops a reputation for excellence. Eight years later Sorrell becomes general manager of the hotel.

Excellence in all you do really matters.

Decisive Moments in Human History is an extraordinary book written by Stefan Zweig, one of the most famous writers in the world in the 1920s and 1930s. The book is comprised of five stories describing moments in history that changed the world. Ironically, the heroism of many of the characters and their influence on the stream of history lies in their failure to succeed in their missions. One of these essays, "The Fight for the South Pole," depicts in great detail the failure of the British explorer Captain Robert F. Scott, in spite of his dramatic journey to be the first man to reach the South Pole and his discovery that his Norwegian competitor Captain Roald Amundsen had arrived just one week before him. Scott died on his return journey in 1912, and all that remained of his quest were the memoirs. With his last breath, Scott managed to capture every last detail of his journey.

Life is cruel sometimes, but we must persevere. And always, try our best.

The perseverance of the Israeli people is perhaps the greatest life lesson any of us can learn. I grew up in a world without Israel, though being Jewish has always had great meaning for me, life as a Jew now has more meaning with the existence of the state.

Israel has been called the "Start-up Nation". It has produced more start-up companies than any large, stable nation. The percentage of Israelis engaged in scientific and technological inquiry, as well as the amount spent on R&D in relation to GDP is among the highest in the

world – remarkable for a country of 7.1 million people, only 60 years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources. How do they do it? Persistence and other traits essential to entrepreneurship such as risk-taking, a positive attitude toward failure and an inclination to question authority. I have a great deal of respect for the accomplishments of the Israeli people, but I do not believe they can survive alone: their future is tied to the United States. For this reason, I have become a great supporter of The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a wonderful lobbying organization committed to ensuring Israel's security.

Praying for Rain

I was visiting my cousin Henry Stern in Israel, and the events I witnessed touched the very core of my being. Of course I had known how to pray my whole life, but until my visit to Kibbutz Lavie, prayer was about hoping for proof. At Lavie, I learned that prayer is rooted in the belief that something exists beyond the tangible. I learned that believing is knowing.

Lavie is an Orthodox kibbutz situated in the Galilee. It was founded in 1949 by the British branch of a religious Zionist youth movement. Many of the founders, including my cousin Henry, were among the 10,000 Jewish children who were brought to the United Kingdom from Germany as part of the Kindertransport following Kristallnacht. The economy of the kibbutz centers mostly on agriculture. They also make furniture for synagogues all over the world, and they run a very large hotel.

When I was visiting in the 1960s, the kibbutz was not very wealthy. That year, the kibbutz had borrowed a large sum of money from the bank to purchase seeds. Unfortunately, they had a terrible drought and were at risk of losing everything if rain did not come. Rain, especially in Israel, is an essential element for existence. They literally had everything to lose.

I will never forget how the community came together and did what only fervent believers do: they prayed. That moment remains engraved in my memory for the community's faith was palpable and heartfelt. Sure enough, the following day, the rain came. Everyone was ecstatic, dancing with joy over saving the harvest and avoiding financial ruin. Of course, the scientific process of how rain is produced is well-understood: it has to do with temperatures and condensation. But why it happens, this is divine grace.

The rain continued well beyond what was needed, risking destruction of the crops, so the community went back to pray for the rain to stop. Of course, the rain stopped.

Mission Impossible I was in California finally enrolled in school. I had a brand new convertible. But I was simply not destined to get a college education. My father had a heart attack and I was called back to Ecuador. I was absolutely distraught by the news of course but also because I knew that getting back to Ecuador was going to be next to impossible. In those days, we needed a visa to return to the country, so I went immediately to the Consul's office although I had very little hope getting my visa with so little time. Miraculously, he issued the visa on the spot. I thought I was set, completely unaware that I was just at the beginning of my odyssey. I ran out of the Ambassador's Office like a madman, trying to get to the airport, and a policeman stopped me for jaywalking. My heart sank. When I explained my situation and that I had less than one hour to get to the airport to catch my flight the policeman did an amazing thing. He put me on his motorcycle, turned on his siren and drove me to a nearby hotel where a helicopter he arranged was about to land and take me to the airport. I could not believe my luck. Unfortunately, when I arrived at the airport, there was no more room on the flight to Guayaquil. I thought I was lost, but it was not so. The airline immediately put me on a flight to Lima so I could make a connection there. The amazing thing is that when we landed in Lima, the pilot stopped on the runway so I could board the Guayaquil plane.

Divine intervention, human kindness, and a lot less airline bureaucracy than today taught me to never, ever, lose hope.

A Taxi Ride Eva, the boys and I were on our way to Alaska and decided to make a brief stopover in Vancouver, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. One evening, we decide to see a performance of "*The King and I*", and we booked our tickets without asking too many questions, just happy to be able to see the show. We got into a taxi, and much to our surprise, we discovered that the theater was in Stanley Park, a gorgeous place, but located thirty miles outside of the city. The show was phenomenal, and we rejoiced in the details of our wonderful evening until it was time to go home. At about 11 pm, everyone left, and the theater shut down. And there we were, four intelligent adults stranded in the middle of nowhere because none of us had given a single thought to how to get back to the city. We laugh about the incident now, but that evening, I can assure you we were not having fun.

It was pitch black, but we finally detected a dim light in the distance and start walking in that direction. We walked for at least an hour in total darkness until we reached a very opulent hotel where a wedding party was winding down. There were six couples still on the dance floor, although dancing would not describe their state. The women were frolicking barefoot, and the men were rip-roaring drunk. We tried to get their attention, but talking

was just not in the realm of possibility for them. We gave up and walked out when we saw a woman sitting in the dark. She graciously offered to drive us to our hotel, an act of kindness all the more striking as she lived on the other side of the city and would have to drive another hour to get home herself. When we got to our hotel, I offered to pay her for her trouble, but she refused to accept any compensation in spite of my numerous pleas. When she finally told me her reasons, I was simply awed.

When the woman was twelve years old, her mother took her to Paris, and they went to the Bois de Boulogne for a walk. The little girl wandered away from her mother and found herself alone, lost, and afraid for her life. She desperately tried to find her way out until nightfall when a car stopped, and the driver graciously offered to take her back to her hotel safe and sound. The little girl's mother, already at her wits' end with worry, was thrilled to see her little girl, and of course offered to pay the man who found her child. The man turned to the mother and said, "You do not owe me anything. Simply do the same for someone else someday." The little girl, now a woman, and our savior in Vancouver, explained "You see, I am the one who is grateful to you, for you have finally given me the opportunity to pay back my debt after all these years."

Stories like this seem one only to happen in movies, yet the story is true and we lived it. Acts of kindness do in fact exist.

The Last of the Just

In 1979, we were preparing for Ricky's bar mitzvah. The Jewish community in Guayaquil consisted of no more than twenty families, so finding someone qualified was truly an intractable problem that worried us for many months. One day, Hugo called me to let me know that I should expect a call from Captain Sheldon Miller. Ten days passed, and I still had not heard from him, until one afternoon while having tea at a local hotel, I heard an announcement paging Captain Sheldon Miller to the reception area. I jumped up and went to see if this was indeed the man I wanted to meet. It was.

Captain Miller, an Orthodox Jew, had been a U.S. naval attaché in Quito. In 1951, the U.S. Department of State asked Captain Miller to assist in designing the naval hospital in Guayaquil. Captain Miller spent four years on this project, delivered the formal project specifications to the Minister of Defense, and went on to work in Brazil, Teheran, and several other countries before retiring in Silver Springs, Washington. Thirty years later, the State Department contacted Captain Miller to enlist his help again as the Navy of Ecuador was finally building the hospital Miller had designed

thirty years earlier. Shocked that the project had not yet been completed, but bored with retired life, Miller accepts the offer to return to Ecuador to help the government. That is when we met.

After getting to know Miller, I finally mustered the courage to ask him to prepare Ricky for his bar mitzvah. Captain Miller's knowledge of Jewish scripture and tradition were unparalleled, so I was humbled that he accepted my request for him to teach Ricky. That same year, we hosted a luncheon for a group of medical sales representatives that were visiting Miller from Chicago. During the event, one of the representatives took me aside and asked me if I knew the book

The Last of the Just. I looked at him in total surprise, and without even answering him, I walked him over to my office and showed him two copies of the book, one in German and one in English. At that very moment I understood that the arrival of Captain Miller in my life was not a mere coincidence. He was in fact one of the "just men" mentioned in ancient Jewish tradition and chronicled in the book. Tradition holds that at all times there are thirty-six just men in the world, whose identities are unknown to each other and who absorb the world's suffering. And were it not for them, all of them, if even one of them was missing, the world would come to an end. To me, Miller was indeed the last of the just, not only because he helped us with Ricky's bar mitzvah, but also because of his deep faith which, I found exemplary.

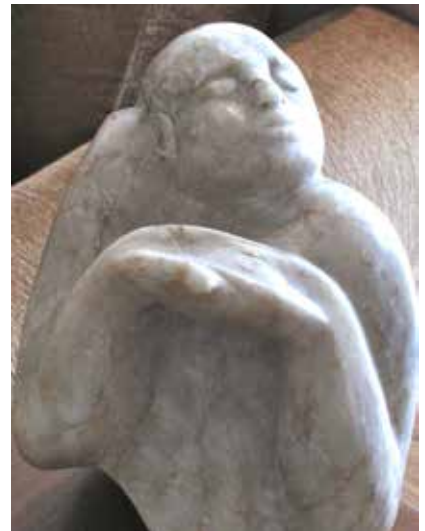
I believe it is only faith, in all this absurdity, that saves us from the abyss. For the generation of Holocaust survivors, Miller would say that the world gives little reason to live except for continuity. And in their children, who protest for change (his own daughters abandoned the tradition he adored), he saw the very essence of the Jewish struggle with God as the way to find new questions and new answers.



Helmut and Elsie, 1995



Elsie's sculptures, created between 1970 and 1998





Ernst and Elsie, 1955-1970



Father's hotel, Pensión Holiday, Playas, 1960s



Hugo Deller, Fridl Meir Deller, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Ernst Wellisch, Playas, 1960s

Elsie and Ernst Wellisch



Ernst Wellisch, San Diego, 1967-1968



Ernst Wellisch's mission statement: "Learning to think. Being sincere before God. Obtaining respect from mankind."



Elsie Deller Wellisch, Helmut, Edith, Ernst Wellisch, San Diego, 1968

Edith Wellisch, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Ernst Wellisch, Cilly Deller Gerstle, San Diego, 1968





Hugo Deller

Edith Wellisch, Helmut, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Hugo Deller, San Diego, 1980s

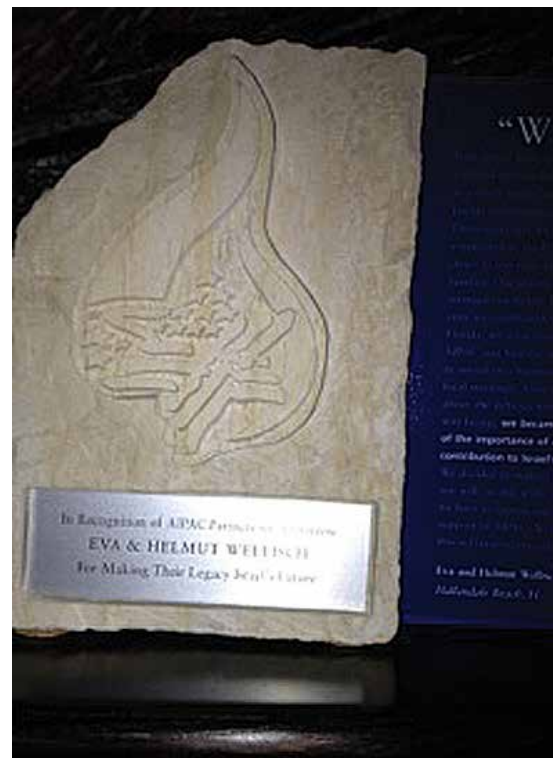
Eva and Helmut at the Western Wall, Jerusalem, 1996



Totally automated factory system for production of synagogue furniture, Kibbutz Lavie, Israel

AIPAC recognition statue

"My wife and I have always been proud Jews, even though we lived surrounded by non-Jews in a small South American Jewish community of 26 families. Three years ago, we retired and emigrated to the U.S. mainly to be closer to our sons and their families. Our dream was also to be amongst fellow Jews. Soon after we established ourselves in Florida, we were connected to AIPAC and had the wonderful opportunity to attend two summits and several local meetings. After we heard about the difficult times Israel was facing, we became convinced of the importance of AIPAC's contribution to Israel's survival. We decided to make a bequest in our will, as this is the only way we have to express our unwavering support of what AIPAC is doing for Israel's survival. We hope that this will inspire our children to follow these steps." Eva and Helmut Wellisch, Hallandale Beach, FL





Pedro Steiner, Judit Hager Steiner, Pablo Better, Jose Hager, Maria Eugenia Better, Dalia Hager, Edna Hager, Helmut Wellisch, Gabriela Steiner, Miguel Better, Carolina Better, Erna Better, Emilia Hager



Inauguration of the new synagogue in Quito, Alberto Deller donated 100% of the funds for its creation

Captain Sheldon Miller, Eva, Rosa Miller, Helmut, 1993



WORK AND CAREER

Successful people ask better questions,
and as a result, they get better answers

Anthony Robbins

All the stories in this book are a testament to the endless “better questions” that helped transform Helmut from an eighteen-year-old salesperson with an incomplete high school education to a successful entrepreneur and business and community leader. Helmut has never known limits in his work life, and his desire to understand also has no limits.

Witnessing his parents struggle in rural Ecuador surely contributed to Helmut's decision to quit school, but his father would not allow his only son to simply drop out. Ernst believed strongly that Helmut needed to learn a trade, so he found Helmut an apprenticeship in a furniture store. From there, Helmut moved to a large steel factory and worked as a machinist. In those two years, he discovered what became a critical ingredient of his business success, a fascination with how things work. Helmut also began to discover his commercial instinct. One day, a supervisor asked Helmut to buy something that was needed on the factory floor. Being Helmut, he did not simply go where he was told to go. After comparing prices, he bought the part in a store where he got a better price. This incident impressed management and Helmut was moved to the purchasing department. One year later, Helmut was named a buyer. And so began his rise to success, one small step after another.

There were many years of frustration, even despair, throughout his business career. The later years, as difficult as they may have been, were nothing compared to his difficult start in Ecuador of the 1950s. Still, Helmut always found a way to create a positive state of mind. Classical music has been perhaps one of his most important allies to help soften the edge of his intense life. Yo Yo Ma, Bach, chamber music, and violin in particular, transported Helmut to a place well beyond the dishonesty, corruption, and danger that characterized much of business life in Ecuador. Helmut never lost his humanity and made time to have lunch with each one of his employees on a regular basis.

Helmut's success in business long proves that sometimes, the most complicated questions have the simplest answers. Strategy and innovation—It's about getting things done.

Tough by nature, extremely fair, a strong commercial sense, boundless creativity, and deep honesty, these are the defining characteristics that took Helmut on the great ride of his life. By the time Helmut sold his multi-million dollar business in 2006, Cintas Textiles S.A. was the only company of its kind in Ecuador and the market share leader in distribution of industrial rope, twine and thread to hardware stores, as well for key sectors including sugar, tobacco, fisheries, and bananas.



Sicafe factory, 1962

Innovation

Sales is a great way to arrive at something if you do not have any capital to get started. I read many books and even taught courses on how to succeed in sales. You need passion to innovate and the ability to transform obstacles into opportunities. It takes years and years of persistence as well as patience. But when all is said and done, I believe the salesperson is born.

My father ran a small general goods store and had some very tough competitors. When I learned that they were going to build a steel foundry nearby, I thought about how we could take advantage of this new opportunity. Then, one day, the idea came to me, and it was a winner. I decided that we would sell masks and gloves to the foundry workers. This offering was my first big deal.

Another great idea came as a result of a terrible event. One of father's oil suppliers wanted us to buy large quantities of edible oil that had been mixed with mineral oil by mistake. People were getting sick from this product, so my father did not want anything to do with this supplier. I thought that there had to be a way to take advantage of this situation. It occurred to me that hardware stores could use this oil, so I went to the largest hardware store in Quito and convinced them to place a large order.

The idea of selling to hardware stores was radical in its day as they did not sell oil. From that day, I started building what would become a large portfolio of loyal hardware store clients. These relationships proved invaluable over the years as they allowed me to expand the range of products I provided.

Execution

The first day of work for a man is very important. Mine was August 7, 1949. I remember the date because my knees were shaking, and I could barely stand up straight. What I thought was nerves turned out to be an earthquake.

There was a Lithuanian Jew who had a sausage factory in Quito, and he sold his goods in Guayaquil to small retailers, among them, Salchicheria Suiza. When the owners of this store stopped paying their bills, the Lithuanian took them to court and won the business in exchange for their debt. As a result, he needed someone to run the store in Guayaquil. I got the job.

When I arrived at the store, I found a long list of people who owed money. Surprisingly, these people were the crème de la crème of our city, and everyone issued them credit without asking any questions. The problem was that they never paid their bills. Not

being one to be intimidated by anyone or anything, and in spite of the warnings I had received to avoid rocking the boat, I simply called them one by one and eventually collected most of the money.

I knew there was a job to be done, and I simply did it. Flawless execution is perhaps one of the most important lessons for any business.

Perserverance

I was a twenty-two year old Jewish guy without a penny to my name living in a city of devout Catholics. That was business life when I started as a sales representative for Fisher Scientific, a company that provided products for the scientific research and clinical laboratory market. Working there provided me with one of my first lessons in perseverance.

Jabonería Nacional was the largest factory in town, so it was very important for me to at least get my foot in the door. Every week, I would take a long ride across town, spending bus fare I did not have to see the secretary of the wheel-chaired bound factory manager. Week after week, the secretary would take my proposal and send me away. One day, when he accidentally left the door open, I saw that the manager placed my unopened proposal in the trash can. I was devastated. It was hot and muggy, and mosquitoes were everywhere, so it was easy to get angry and give up, but I decided to ignore this hurtful moment and keep going. I have learned over time that anger does not accomplish anything: I never burn bridges and rarely make enemies unless I absolutely have no choice. I continued to come on a weekly basis until one day as I was leaving, a man came out and asked me to come back the following week so we would go over the products in my catalog. I was thrilled: he even knew my name. The following week I went to see him and he purchased a small device. The sale was a big breakthrough. Unfortunately for me, my sale was only \$79 and the company only paid commissions on sales over \$400.

From that moment forward, this man became my best client and I sold him one factory every year for many years. If I had given up when he refused to see me, I would not have gotten anywhere.

Product Knowledge After taking a course in window display in Quito, I returned to Guayaquil to start my own little company which I named Arte Decorativo. I used to do window displays for beauty products and clothing stores, and with just one employee, I did relatively well. Of course I had no capital to advertise or grow the business in any way. So I created my own promotional plan, going up one side of the street in the city center and then down the other side, leaving my business card that offered window display and general advertising services. I had absolutely no experience in advertising, but I had total confidence in my sales ability.

One day, I happened upon what turned out to be the offices of Abbot Laboratories. Much to my surprise, the manager of Abbot, who was also the Consul General of Bolivia, welcomed me into his office. I was so proud that without so much as a brief exchange to better understand his needs, I delivered a flawless pitch about how my advertising services would help grow his business. The Consul was very cordial and let me down lightly, explaining that in his industry, they did not advertise. Instead, they employed medical representatives who used brochures and product samples and generally used an educational strategy for marketing their products. I was never one to give up easily, so I left him my business card anyway. Three months later, the Consul called me back to his office. Abbot Laboratories had acquired a company that made Warfarin, a very potent blood thinner used in humans and then developed a very innovative application of the blood thinner, using it in high doses to create a new type of rat poison. The Consul wanted me to develop an advertising campaign to launch the product in Ecuador. Who would have imagined that rats would bring me the luckiest break of my life.

The name of the new rat poison was Ratero, and the advertising campaign I developed to launch the product became an instant success. In those days, radio was the primary medium used. While radio has the obvious limitation of being restricted to sound, I used it to our advantage and hired a radio announcer that played with the name, calling out "RRRRRRRRRRRatero" in a manner that soon became contagious. Within a matter of weeks, everyone went around repeating our product name and our radio commercial. Unfortunately name recognition did not translate into sales. This was one of my first lessons in marketing: it is not as easy as "just getting the word out". After the campaign was finished, the Consul called me because he was perplexed about the lack of sales and wanted my help. I insisted that I knew nothing about sales but he was so confident about my abilities he gave me company car and a driver to sweeten the offer. Naturally, I could not turn him down.

To get started, I realized I needed to identify the ideal target client. I determined that the ten rice mills in town, all located in one section, were my primary target. I went to see them all, but nobody had any interest in my product. Discouraged but not defeated,

I decided to solve this dilemma by learning everything there was to know about rat poison. For example, why do all rat poisons fail? The answer had to do with how rats organize their society. Rats live in colonies, and each colony has a rat that is designated as the tester. When the colony sees a new target, they send out the tester rat, and if the tester does not die or get sick, the rest of the rats follow. If the tester dies, the other rats consider one death a risk well worth taking. I finally understood why our product was a winner. The main benefit of the Abbot product was that the anticoagulant in Warfarin takes several days to induce death. As a result, the tester rat displayed signs of being sick too slowly for the other rats to associate the damage with their feeding habits. After four days, however, cumulative effects of the ingredient make the rat's lungs explode.

Armed with the iron-clad rationale for my product, I went back to see the owners of the rice mills, and this time, one mill owner decided to try it. That same day, I went to the other mill owners and informed them that rats are going to be coming their way because their neighbor had just signed a contract with me. The business immediately took off, and it continued to do well for many years.

This was another valuable lesson in business: deep knowledge of your product is the most sure path to success.

Incorruptibility

Still famous in Abbot circles for my success with Ratero, some years later I was called to meet with the new manager of the company, Adolfo Huertas, who was also the Consul General of Mexico. Abbot was selling the Warfarin factory and needed to liquidate the large stock of the product. Huertas thought I was the ideal candidate for this project. Of course I was, but in more ways than I could have imagined.

I was so good, I found a buyer within half an hour. Without wasting any time, I proudly informed Huertas that the deal was done. Unfortunately for me, Huertas felt that since I did not work very hard, I had to return 50% of my commission to him. I would never have expected that such a prominent man would ask for a kickback. I refused, and in turn, he refused to pay me my commission. Realizing he had the advantage, I decided to give him 20% of the commission, but he turned me down, demanding more.

I had signatory power in the company so he had to collect the money from me. The next day he came for his money, but I decided to stick to my plan to give him only 20%. When he opened the envelope and found that I would not play his game, he threw the money in my face and threatened to kill me. I had one day to comply. I was just an innocent twenty-two year old oblivious to the culture of deceit and bribery

that prevailed at that time. I asked my brother-in-law for advice, and he told me that if someone is really mad, he would shoot you on the spot. Nonetheless, he counseled me not to concede mostly so that I would not be governed by a mindset of defeat. Dangerous advice, but it served me well my entire life in Ecuador.

Huertas did not return the next day or the day after that. After a few weeks, he came by my office talking about the weather as if nothing had happened. As he was getting ready to leave, I handed him an envelope. Without even looking inside, he simply put it in his pocket and walked away. This shameless hustler eventually became Under-Secretary of Commerce of Mexico.

You must stand your ground; it is the only way to survive.

Luck

Between 1952 and 1962 I served as a sales representative for more than one hundred manufacturers of complex machinery and raw materials. One of my biggest deals was closed in 1958 comprising a complete soluble coffee plant, the first in Ecuador, competing on the market with “Nescafé” which had to be imported. The project was called SICAFE. The SICAFE factory was by far the most complex and most ambitious project of my professional career. I sold the entire factory, from design and planning to the last nail. The project took four years to complete and involved all the key players from the Danish company as well as suppliers and salesmen. I even visited their coffee factories in Chile and Argentina so I could learn about the market. This sale was my big break in the business. Some would attribute this to good luck. I can’t say I don’t believe in luck. I do. But I believe more strongly in building relationships. Sicafe taught me this valuable lesson.

I had been representing a manufacturer of factories of instant coffee for many years but had been unable to sell a single factory. Then one day my lucky break came with a chance meeting at someone’s home. I happened to meet a prominent business man who was planning to set up a factory and was considering a partnership with Nescafe. I had done a great deal of research in the industry in order to sell the factory and believed that Sicafe could succeed on a standalone basis and did not need to partner with Nescafe. I shared my research and insights into this market and eventually Sicafe agreed with me and of course bought the factory from me.

Perhaps my greatest lucky break came with a multi-million dollar sale of soy bean oil to one of the largest producers of oil in the country, La Favorita. This was truly an example of how remaining true to oneself along with being ready to recognize and seize opportunities when luck strikes is a winning formula.

I was a young representative of the Danske sojakagefabrik company, the largest soy bean oil factory in Denmark, and my job was to sell as many tons of oil as I could from the tankers that would arrive from Europe. La Favorita had built a port facility to transfer of oil from the product tankers to land to sell to their clients which made the process more efficient and therefore provided greater speed and margins than the competition. The company would typically set a date for all suppliers of oil to bid, and the day came when my tanker arrived. Unfortunately for me, I arrived in the office of Mr. Vallarín, the general manager, and there were about eight people ahead of me. I thought I was lost, but much to my surprise, Vallarín's assistant called me before everyone else. When I went into Vallarín's office and saw that about a dozen empty bottles of beers, I knew I would be in for a surprise. It turns out that when the assistant saw me arrive, he told Vallarín "The Jew is here, so we can start". Vallarín later explained to me that his best friend was Jewish and he really liked Jews in general, so his assistant's comment made his blood boil. For this reason he called me and ignored everyone else. He then asked me if I thought that being Jewish was an advantage or an obstacle in business. After thinking about it, I told him that I thought it was an advantage simply because it made me different from all others. I truly believe that in business people are always looking for a point of difference, and I offered that difference on many levels.

Mr. Vallarín offered me a beer and then placed an order for my entire tanker, the largest order of soy bean oil ever made in the history of Ecuador.

Another amazing turn of events happened around 1995. I received a call from a string manufacturer asking for my help to sell their gauze products to a large customer, the Junta de Beneficiencia de Guayaquil. While I had never had any dealings with textiles products, I decided to pursue this opportunity confident that I knew I could make this happen.

The Junta owns and administers nine units in the region, including hospitals and clinics, helping the government in its mission to serve the poor. The Board of Directors of the Junta, which ultimately made all purchasing decisions, was composed of the power players in Guayaquil who typically joined the Junta after retiring. As such, it was a very closed circle and very difficult to access. I had many contacts in this group, yet for many years I was unsuccessful in selling the gauze. One day, they lost about \$30,000 in gauze when their storage facilities were burglarized. This misfortune turned out to be my "lucky break". When the stolen gauze was found in a nearby store, the police was unable to prove that the gauze was indeed the property of the hospital because the gauze did not have any distinctive identification. I used this opportunity to propose to the *Junta* a green colored gauze that I would manufacture exclusively

for them. Naturally I faced some resistance from the various levels of management, until I finally was able to get the necessary endorsement from Dr. Sarrazín, an extremely prominent and well-respected pediatrician who had been placed in charge of making the final recommendations to the Board. As coincidence would have it, Dr. Sarrazín had been our children's doctor and his recommendation to accept my proposal finally opened the door for me. What was astounding in this entire episode was the deep bureaucracy and resistance to change that prevailed in Ecuador in all types of organizations including those that were not even governmental.

This small coincidence may not seem like a major event, but I have come to learn that success is not always a result of sweeping or dramatic changes, but small things, small steps, instead. It is equally important to never let a small setback cast a shadow on the rest of your life. We must remain open to opportunities by remaining informed, making and keeping connections, and especially by having faith in our ability to overcome obstacles.

My entrepreneurial spirit was constantly faced with resistance, but my perseverance always provided the energy needed to continue on my path.

Creativity

My father bought an elastics factory in 1952. The factory was never a great money maker, but he managed to keep it going. Then, in 1966, I had to take over the business as Father's health was failing. I kept the name of the company and its legal structure for forty-six years, but I transformed it into a major distribution of industrial rope. The years that led up to that change, however, were not easy ones as I had made the biggest mistake possible: not knowing my strengths and weaknesses. When I was selling turnkey factories and raw materials, I was averaging about \$1 million in sales per month. Now I was at the head of a tiny factory with fifteen employees and an insignificant turnover, feeling like someone had put me in a straightjacket. I thought I was unhappy because the factory so small, so I invested \$60,000 of my own money to buy new equipment in an effort to expand. What was really making me unhappy was that I did not like running the day-to-day operations.

Figuring out a new way to expand took me a while, but eventually I realized there was an unmet need in the market to fill. Most companies I had worked with spent a great deal of their time in distribution and sales when their real competence was manufacturing. This realization made it clear to me that if I could take the sales function away from management, and do so in a responsible and trustworthy manner, they could focus on product development. I also understood that having exclusivity in the market made it

difficult to get good terms. So I decided to remain independent. This simple idea took decades to crystallize but created a winning foundation for my enterprise.

I started my business without any knowledge at all and I learned everything I could from my clients. In time, there was nobody in Ecuador who knew more about industrial rope. I am fanatical about details, and I had a good network of contacts who trusted me. My relentless focus on product knowledge combined with a deep understanding of my clients' needs became the drivers of innovation and diversification for my business. I am convinced that these are key success factors for every business.

Here are some examples: One of my clients, an electrical company that was bidding to install an electrical line between Quito and Ibarra, won a very difficult tender process in great part because of me. The rope I supplied was assorted in equal parts in three different colors, which, coupled with its light weight, made it a winner. The mountainous terrain in

Ecuador makes it very difficult to install lines over great distances and the task has to be done by teams of men on foot. It was essential that the men carry each of the three strands of rope in a continuous line without ever crossing them, and do this over hundreds of kilometers. The color system I devised proved to be a fail-safe system.

The banana market was an equally creative challenge for me. Ecuador is one of the world's largest producers of bananas, and I was determined to find a way to penetrate that market. I devised a way to replace the traditional and labor-intensive use of bamboo canes with my rope. We sold thousands of meters of rope and showcased my company as an innovative solution provider.

Another key milestone was obtaining 100% of the market for the thread used by the sugar industry for their sacks. I captured the market because I learned everything there was to know about my clients' industry. At the time, it was customary to buy by weight the thread that was used to tie sugar sacks. We were able to produce thread that was as light as competitor products, but much more resistant to breakage. The new thinner thread enabled me to capture 99% of the sugar market, but at first, I had to educate buyers that they needed to disregard the price of the thread per kilo and consider instead the price per closed sack in respect of price per kilo. I was the primary supplier for the largest sugar factory for fifteen years, but one day they switched to a competitor. Two months later, they discovered that their sacks were breaking more than usual, so they turned to me for help. After doing the research, I discovered that the new thread they were using was very rigid because it was made of 100% polyester. When workers dropped the sack on the floor, the stiffness of the polyester thread created pressure and the sack broke. By contrast, our thread

contained 30% cotton which provided the elongation necessary to absorb the pressure of the sugar on the seam of the sack when they were dropped. Although this elongation was minuscule, it was enough to avoid breakage. I called a meeting with management to explain the facts, and they immediately resumed buying from us and do so to this very day.

Even mistakes can be turned into opportunities if you are willing to do the work. One time, we had received several tons of rope that was very rigid as a result of an engineering error. Rope that does not bend is not easy to sell, so I really had to be very creative to find a solution. I discovered that in Oriente, the southeastern region of Ecuador that is mostly jungle, they have a tremendous amount of space for cattle to graze, so they tie cattle to a stake and let them circle freely. Lucky for me, they much preferred to tie the animals with rope that did not bend because it did not get caught in the animals' hooves. Not only did I manage to sell the reject inventory I had, but for many years, I had additional quantities manufactured to be sold in that region.

Determination

Churchill's famous Dunkirk speech changed the history of humanity. His words also saved my business.

I was the first to introduce polypropylene rope in Ecuador, and I also had the exclusive distribution for many years. Exclusivity is not a sustainable business strategy for many reasons, but one of the most negative aspects is that sales people get used to not working very hard. When the time came that I no longer had exclusivity in the market, my competitors began to engage in price wars to all-time lows. Some salespeople had become so complacent, they could not handle the pressure and they simply quit their jobs. So there I am, desperately trying to find a way to motivate my salespeople and hopefully help them to change their ways. It was then that I remembered Churchill's rhetoric of determination.

In May 1940, Nazi Germany began a massive attack against Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. A flotilla of 900 naval and civilian craft was sent across the English Channel under RAF protection and managed to rescue 338,226 people. After the British deliverance at Dunkirk, Churchill rallied Britain with his most memorable speech to the House of Commons:

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall

defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

My sales team was so motivated by these words they began to sell with a vengeance and never looked back.

Ethics

Looking back at my business career, I can see clearly that my adaptability coupled with strong principles have been the key success factor in my journey. I have learned that to survive in a world of relentless cruelty, you must be flexible and adaptable. I have also learned that to achieve your objectives, you must earn the trust of people around you by staying true to yourself even if your views do not conform to the social code and forces at work. Adapting to local business practices without losing your moral compass in any of your dealings requires a great deal of energy, but mostly it requires strength of character.

As an observant Jew, I would close the office on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, a costly choice, while others in the community did not close their businesses. This is a simple but telling example. Another example that shows how I was put to the test was the local practice of selling without invoices and therefore without sales tax. All of my competitors operated in this way, which meant that if I did not sell this way, I could not have competitive prices. If I followed their practice, I would have to keep two sets of books and be at the mercy of accountants, as well as live with many other consequences. Some of my own salespeople would go to clients and offer our products without sales tax, hoping that clients would choose the lower priced, illegal sales so they could keep the money. Naturally, these people did not last in my company, but the culture of deceit was so dominant, that it took me years to educate clients and employees to conduct business honestly. People think that by conceding you win, but if your opponent knows that you concede on one point, he knows you will concede on others, and then you have lost your edge. I always held my ground and convinced my clients to focus on the quality of my offering. I did not engage in price wars with my competitors. Years later, when the government started enforcing tax laws and things started to change, my company was one of the few that survived.

Still, we must recognize that there are times when fighting the system is simply not possible. I had to face one such situation, and what transpired caused me a great deal of grief. The corruption in Ecuador went so deep that once I was even forced to pay a bribe to a judge or die in jail. I was accused of killing a deaf-mute man who threw himself in front of my car although he was alive when I left him. Naturally I checked to see if the man needed assistance before I left, but he seemed all right, so I drove away. For years, I financed the refurbishment of an antique car for the judge in exchange for my freedom.

A lot of business philosophies exist that lead to varying degrees of success, but the foundation always has to be your ethics, which you should never compromise under any circumstances.

When I made the decision to retire, I did a thorough analysis of potential buyers for my business as it was important to me that the company would continue to thrive after I moved on.

I decided that the best way to provide continuity was to sell the company to my suppliers so they could retain leadership in the market. The business was sold successfully, and I was able to transition into retirement with my company still thriving.

I'm proud of the business I built, and even more proud of the lessons I learned along the way.



One of the first signs made in the early days of the company Cintas Textiles



Mergentheim, 1958



Helmut's German passport



Helmut honored by Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce for 50 years of uninterrupted membership and service



Board of Directors of the Ecuadorian-American Chamber of Commerce, Guayaquil, 1996



President of Rotary Club of Guayaquil and Helmut, 2001



Trips organized by Cintas Textiles for employees and their families, 1960's and 2000





TABLA COMPARATIVA DE VARIOS TIPOS DE MATERIALES USADOS PARA CABOS

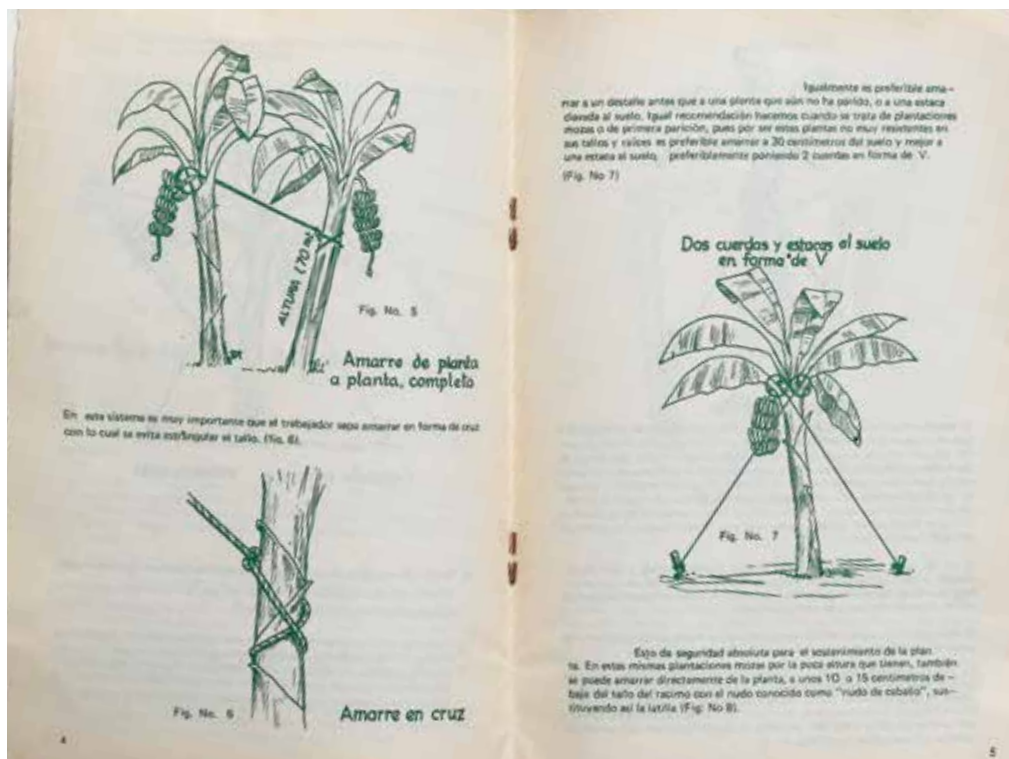
CARACTERISTICAS	FORTEX	POLIETILENE	POLIESTER	POLIAMIDA	ALGODON	MARILA
Tenacidad en seco Gramos / Den.	7,8 - 8,5	4,5 - 6	6 - 7	7 - 9	3,5	2,3 - 2,9
Tenacidad en húmedo Gramos / Den.	7,8 - 8,5	4,5 - 6	6 - 7	6,8 - 7,9	1,8 - 2,4	2,3 - 2,9
Elasticidad a la rotura en seco x %	18 - 23	25 - 35	8 - 14	15 - 25	3 - 10	2 - 3
Elasticidad a la rotura en húmedo x %	18 - 23	25 - 35	6 - 14	19 - 28	2,5 - 8	2,5 - 3,5
Absorción de humedad x %	0,1	0,15	0,40	4,8	8	13
Punto de fusión C°	165 - 170	110 - 140	270	200 - 255	—	—
Peso específico	0,91	0,95	1,38	1,14	1,50	1,50

La firma más grande del país especializada en: CABOS CORDELES PÍOLAS e HILOS

CINTAS TEXTILES S.A.

Helmut Wellisch
Gerente General

Gral. Gómez 419 y Chilo
Teléfonos 405-333-409-400
Fax 406844-400275
Guayaquil Ecuador



(1)

Panorama a Octubre 2004 para HW + EW
en el supuesto de que en Tarjeta Verde
se reciba a mediados o fines del 2005.

- 1º) Para aquella fecha, HW había cumplido 74 y EW 62 años de edad, datos primordiales para el correcto enfoque del futuro a proyectarse.
- 2º) Para lograr una proyección real, es necesario enfocarlo en segmentos de tiempo, por ej. 2-5-7-10-15 y 20 años asumiendo q' HW que es el de más edad, viva hasta 94-95 años y si vive más, la proyección se mantendría en todo caso válida. - Por supuesto los segmentos pueden variar a voluntad y los enunciados se tomaron al azar.
- 3º) Para hablar de proyección futura por varios años hay que anticipar la de una proyección optimista y la de una proyección pesimista; la optimista resume que los 2 cónyuges vivirán los próximos 20 años con una salud intrínsecamente buena y sin enfermedades

fatal o q' inhibe la vida diaria en 2 formas determinante y que no se requiere constante supervisión médica altamente especializada. - La proyección pesimista - en cambio - le da mucho más peso a una de estas posibilidades. - Para llegar a un consenso inteligente - por lo tanto - será necesario efectuar un análisis separado de estos dos enfoques.

Proyección optimista

Primariamente citaremos todos los aspectos importantes q' deben considerarse para la toma de una decisión de esta naturaleza:

- 1) Salud - 2) Política - 3) Religión y/o vida comunitaria y/o religiosa - 4) Cercanía a hijos y nietos - 5) Clima - 6) Ansiedades - 7) Viajes - 8) Ocupación satisfactoria - 9) ^{vida social} Impuestos - 10) Seguro - 11) Jubilación

Los aspectos antes nombrados no se los ha clasificado por orden de importancia sino q' han sido nombrados al azar y deberán reclassificarse y completarse con otros temas que se consideren relevantes y decisivos.

FAMILY LIFE AND TRAVEL

There is no remedy for love but to love more

Henry David Thoreau

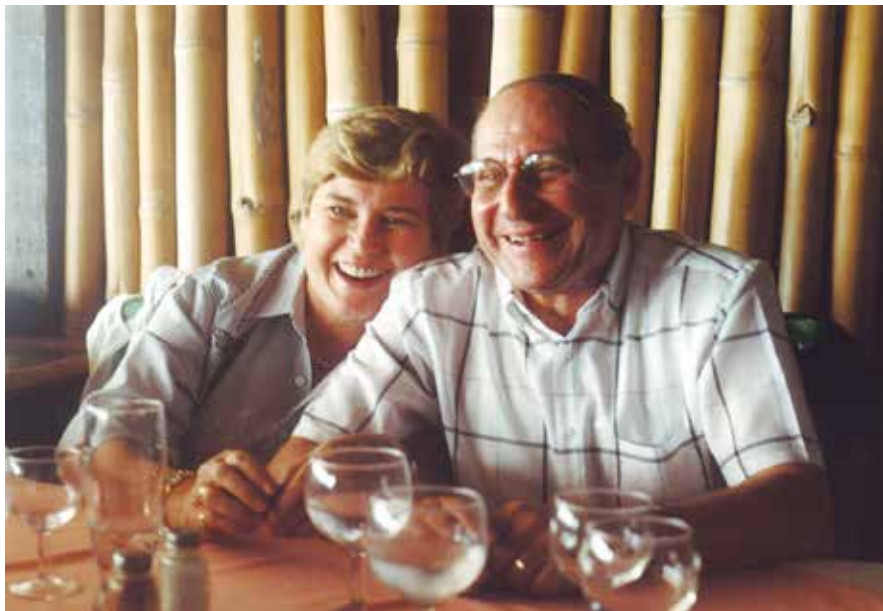
Everyone who knows Helmut agrees that he is a paragon of a family man. Reliable, honorable, generous, and protective, he has invested a lifetime in building close, harmonious relationships with his wife and his two sons, as well as with his sister Edith. Helmut's dedication to his extended family is no less solid, especially to his cousin Betty. While the childhood memories of his birthplace will never fade, it is Helmut's way of creating new memories with his cousins throughout the years that has forged a strong sense of family identity that few people have.

As a father, Helmut has made all the difference in his children's lives. He has been a pillar of strength, support, and discipline. Although he has always been strict with himself, Helmut understands that his children are human and that making mistakes is part of growing up. He has always allowed his children to be citizens of their day and age. Not surprisingly, they have been given the best possible education. Ricky attended the prestigious Humboldt German school and David the much-coveted InterAmerican Academy. Both received an Ivy League education that would make any parent proud. For Helmut, the joy of seeing his sons receive the highest academic recognition is one of the great accomplishments of his life.

When the male culture in Ecuador favored drinking and boasting about their philandering ways, Helmut chose to share life's adventure with Eva. Like most marriages, Helmut and Eva have weathered a lot of storms, but life's challenges have only made their bond stronger. Helmut has always been willing to accept Eva's influence in his own life and allow her to run the finances and the social life of their home. This is an admirable display of modern thinking, but not surprising for a man who always follows his conscience.

Helmut even turned his business trips into glorious family adventures. He traveled to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, as well as Europe and the United States, in search of innovation. He had the travel bug deeply embedded in his soul since his first trip as a young bachelor took him for six months to Germany, Austria, France, England, Israel, Turkey, Holland, and the United States. At each stop, Helmut spent his days in awe of people, places, and things. While some people travel to faraway places to watch the kind of people they ignore at home, Helmut is fascinated by human idiosyncrasies around the corner and around the globe. His destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things and especially people.

Even in retirement Helmut cultivates his sense of wonder like never before. A youthful mind is a growing mind, which is dedicated to continual expansion and learning. A youthful mind thrives on new experiences and new knowledge. In this way, Helmut is younger than ever. It is perhaps his deep belief in the strength of family life that has allowed Helmut to push the boundaries of his world in search of the new, as if to confirm the enduring value of the known.



Isla Morada, 2010

Eva

Eva made me human. Her warm heart and mischievous nature captured my imagination the moment we met in Quito in 1965. We were engaged six months later. Eva has always added dimension and color to my measured approach, and after forty-seven years of marriage, I can honestly say I am still fascinated by the mysteries of her being. Married life requires a great deal of patience to get past the difficult moments, especially as health challenges transform us in later years, but I am still deeply in love with the woman who has had the most profound influence on my life.

Eva is extremely insightful and feels the world and people before she applies reason. In this special way, she has always taken me to the edge of my comfort zone, and that is where real personal growth can take place. She has an amazing ability to see right through people, as if she had x-ray vision. She has a 100% success rate, for example, in creating optimal seating arrangements at a dinner or a luncheon, pairing couples or individuals with the right companions to ensure a delightful experience for all. She also knows exactly what she wants. One of her special talents is her innate taste and her exquisite taste for decorating interiors. Without any formal training, she combines shapes, colors, and textures better than any professional I have ever met. She always chooses the very best, the top of the line in everything – a gift, or curse depending on how you look at it, she has inherited from her maternal grandfather. I discovered this quality when we went to buy a lamp for our living room when we were just newlyweds. We went to a lighting store that was running a sale on all items. The showroom was immense with hundreds of beautiful choices on display, all reduced by 50% – except for one. The one lamp beautifully displayed in the center of the room and selling at full price was the very best lamp and of course the one that Eva chose for our home.

A very strong character coupled with a very generous heart, Eva has always been very social, very liberal, and very generous. Her ability to take an interest in people from all walks of life, starting with the indigenous population in Guayaquil, for whom she donated hundreds of hours of her life to build schools, orphanages, and hospitals, is admirable. Naturally, her community work had a very positive impact on my business as a supplier to many of these organizations. But Eva's motivation has always been putting people first.

Starting with our wedding, our early years were full of light and adventure. When I was single, there were very few Jewish girls in Guayaquil, so I used to go to Lima where a very nice German rabbi would make introductions. When I invited him to our wedding, I did not expect to hear that he would be thrilled to officiate. I did not have the heart to tell the rabbi that he was only expected to come as a guest. I had already retained a cantor with a marvelous operatic voice to officiate, and given his fame, securing his services was a real achievement. Ultimately, the cantor had to step aside. Things in life haven't always happened as I planned them, even with my special talent for controlling every detail.

Our wedding was beautiful and Eva even more ravishing. We spent twelve days on our honeymoon visiting Chile and Argentina, ending in Bariloche, where we spent three glorious days at the Hotel Tres Reyes. The view of Nahuel Huapi Lake is amazing and still today the hotel remains one of the most luxurious in the city. Like most newlyweds, we had our share of odd events. The 7 am visit – the morning after our wedding night from a friend of my father-in-law who stopped by say hello was perhaps the most memorable; it was the first time in my life I wanted to kill someone.

Right after our honeymoon, we moved into an apartment in the center of Guayaquil. Our two children were born there. In the six years that we lived in the four story building, not a single girl was born to any of our neighbors. My theory is that the builders put something in the cement.

Our first New Year's celebration was particularly memorable. We went to sleep at about 6 am. It was dreadfully hot in Guayaquil, so I went to bed without my pajamas. An hour later, the phone rang, and somewhat alarmed that someone would call so early on New Year's Day, I rushed to the dining room where the phone was. Eva also woke up and followed me but unfortunately let the door shut behind her. We found ourselves locked out, me stark naked and Eva in her nightgown. This was not pretty sight. I went to the guest bathroom, got a small hand towel to cover myself, made my way into my car, and drove all the way to the other side of town to get a locksmith. I did not have my driver's license so I was lucky that I did not get stopped by the police. I was not so lucky with the locksmith. When I arrived at this house, he was not there and I had to wait outside for an hour. Stories like this one reveal some of the challenges that test newlyweds and prepare them for the bigger challenges that lie ahead.

In 1970, we rented an apartment in a more residential neighborhood which meant a longer drive for me to and from my factory. Although my initial analysis indicated that this would be an obstacle, I eventually came to appreciate how beneficial it was to have the travel time to disconnect from the office when returning home in the evening. I arrived home late most evenings, so Eva really gets all the credit for raising our two wonderful sons. Eva helped our boys develop a sense of autonomy and confidence, much like hers. They also learned from Eva how to be loving partners and parents. I gave most of my time and energy to my business, I just did not know how to be any other way. Nevertheless, I have tried to be a solid source of values and support for my children, and I believe I have succeeded.

Ricardo Leo

We always called our first son Ricky. From his teenage experience as a translator for the “Por Cristo” group of volunteer physicians led by the Archbishop of Boston who were on a mission to Ecuador, Ricky knew he would become a doctor. He is a born leader, endowed with a clear sense of right and wrong. In this way, I believe he is a lot like me. Always honest, fair, and selfless, Ricky has never buckled under the scrutiny of the world; he has always taken the high road and has always remained true to himself.

Take ice cream, for example. When Ricky was a young boy, we asked him to serve ice cream to our dinner guests one evening. When we saw the mountainous portions he had prepared, we asked him why he served so much ice cream when people could easily ask for a second serving if they wished. Ricky looked at me and explained in the most natural way that it did not seem fair to serve himself what he thought was appropriate for him and leave others with a smaller portion. For the same reason, Ricky would buy his dog Pinky an ice cream cone every time he went to the store. One year, Ricky ran for president of the student body in his high school, and he worked really hard to win over the majority. Two days before the election, someone drew a swastika on the board. Ricky knew very well who was responsible and that the boy would be expelled from school if found out. Yet, when Ricky was called into the principal’s office, he did not reveal the identity of the culprit. Even in the more difficult times, Ricky has always surprised us with the strength of his moral compass.

Ricky graduated from Brown University with honors in 1989 with a major in biology and a minor in psychology, and went on to medical school at George Washington University, graduating in 1993. He became chief of residents at Mount Auburn Hospital in Boston in 1997, one of the youngest doctors to hold this position in this prestigious institution. Ricky is a devoted father to three beautiful children, a consummate professional in his field, and a much-admired leader in the Jewish community.

In 2002, we attended Ricky’s wedding to Dr. Cary Friedman, a prominent Boston psychiatrist. It was truly a transformational experience to see Ricky finally join his life partner after a very difficult trajectory in matters of the heart. Ricky has always had great clarity about his identity, so I do not think he has lived a conflicted life. Yet, his formative relationships were filled with obstacles, and of course, he faced the gut-wrenching decision that every young man must face in considering their family. Ricky came out to us during a trip to Switzerland. My world was rocked, and Eva was heartbroken. My cousin Betty, who had to face a similar situation in her family, was a pillar of strength in helping our family through the process. In some ways, I surprised everyone around us who expected my rigid ways to destroy my relationship with Ricky. There was never a doubt in my mind that I would accept my son and embrace his choices with the entirety of my being. Losing Ricky was never an option.

David Max

David is a brilliant businessman. He is visionary as well as pragmatic and his determination is exemplary. I like to think he takes mostly after me, but much like his mother Eva, he also has a huge heart. Thechutzpah and creativity he has displayed since an early age, however, are unique to David.

When David was a little boy, Eva took him on a plane from Guayaquil to Quito to visit his grandparents. As the airplane made a turn before its final landing and Quito seemed to fall behind them, David stood in his seat and started screaming, "Mr. Pilot, you went too far, and I want to see my grandparents!" I should have known right there and then that this boy had a mind of his own and would be unstoppable. I will never forget the time when David was in high school and decided to raise his hand during his English class to ask the teacher, "Can I make an observation?" The teacher replied, "Yes," to which David simply followed by sitting and simply "observing." He was immediately removed from the classroom.

David received his B.A. at Brown University and his M.B.A. from Harvard University. He began his professional career working at the prestigious consulting firm Cap Gemini. He was a force of nature even then, but it was during his tenure at AOL that he really found the recognition he deserved. After a few years in a middle management position, he thought the company should seize the opportunity to engage the growing Hispanic population in the United States and create programming in Spanish. This was a very novel idea in 2003, which made getting the necessary support from top management extremely difficult.

After several months, David managed to get a meeting with thirty very senior executives who gathered to listen to him make his case. David started his presentation speaking in Spanish, and after ten long minutes, he paused. He proceeded to ask his audience if anyone understood what he had said, to which only two people replied. David went on to explain that he used the dramatic introduction to illustrate in a very personal way what 55 million Hispanics feel like when they connect to AOL and do not understand a single word. Chutzpa.

Following the presentation, David obtained the necessary management support to launch the division. He served as general manager of AOL Latino, and after two years, built the business to 644,000 subscribers and about \$150 million in revenues.

Today, David is at the helm of his own company, Latinum, and is a recognized leader in the national conversation about the U.S. Hispanic market. I could not be more proud of his pioneering efforts and all his accomplishments, both professional and personal. David married his high school sweetheart, Jessika Sorrosa, who has become a pillar of Jewish life in our family. Jessika was born in Costa Rica, is a Jew by choice, and has embraced our tradition with fervor and dedication. After receiving her M.A. in communications at American University, she obtained a second Master's degree in Jewish studies.

Building our Dream House

When Ricky was two years old, he threw a toy car from the fourth floor balcony and broke the windshield of the car parked below. I took this as a sign that it was time to move. We decided to build a house in a new residential area that promised to be the most desirable part of the city. The odyssey that ensued in the following years until we finally were able to settle down was beyond my wildest imagination.

We bought a lot from the manager of the Dutch bank. Two months after we took over the property, we went to see the construction site and the mosquitoes inhabiting the area feasted with Eva. As a result, Eva was adamant that she was not going to live there, and in spite of my best efforts, Eva won. We sold the lot and two years later, we bought a new one in another section of town from a man who seemed very honorable, but of course, I should have known better. One morning, just before we were due to sign the deed transfer, the seller called from the tax collectors office, and informed me that I was required to pay six months of property taxes. Surprisingly, he offered to pay my share up front as he was already at the office and thought he would save me the trouble. I thought it was odd that someone I did not know would offer such kindness, but after checking with my lawyer, I agreed. A few hours later, my lawyer called to tell me he had made a mistake, and the seller was trying to pull a fast one. The law required the seller to pay the entire year's taxes in order to make the transfer. When we were finally together ready to close the deal, I told him that the law was on my side, but he refused to accept and made a scandalous scene. I was so disgusted that I finally paid him off. As I was walking away, the shameless hustler offered to sell me more land. This was just the beginning of our adventure in home ownership.

Now that we had the property, we had to start building the house. We selected a young architect with a great reputation and met with him to discuss our ideas. He stayed several hours sketching as Eva shared her vision for the house, and the next day he sent us a drawing. Unfortunately the drawing did not have actual design specifications, and after Eva gave her approval, we never saw the architect again – another hustler, but at least we had a general plan now. This time around, we decided to go for an older, more experienced engineer to take over the job. Things were going fairly well until they got to the point of pouring cement on the structural columns to build the second floor of the house, and the master planner stopped everything because the work had been done incorrectly. After several days of arguing, the engineer agreed to redo the job, but he was concerned about his own reputation if people saw that the work had to come down, so he first built a wall in front of the project. The irony was that until that point, all the construction was easily visible so nobody paid much attention. Now with a wall covering the site, people drilled holes in the wall and stood in line to see what was going on.

If these shenanigans were not enough, the engineer managed to create even more trouble for me. He sold me some steel beams that were left over from a job he had done nearby. Two months later, I receive a call from the owner of the beams asking me for his money. I showed him the receipts for the payments I had made to the engineer but he did not want to hear any of it. Two years later, when we were already living in the house, the man came by and punched me in the face knocking me to the ground. And adding insult to injury, his security guard, who had worked for us in the past, pointed a shotgun at my head. I had no choice but to pay again.

Enter the third engineer. He also turned out to be thief. One day Eva came home to supervise work being done in the dining room and found the room pitch black. The windows were supposed to be floor to ceiling glass, but the workers reversed the design and built a solid cement wall with only a thin section for the glass on the upper part of the wall. We had to break down everything and start all over again. To make matters worse, the workers were stealing my ration of cement, which was a rare commodity in Ecuador in those days, so they could do their own illegal constructions.

By now, our dream home had become the joke of the town. One week when we were showing the house to some friends we discovered that we had Indians squatting in one of the kid's room. All we could do at this point was laugh. We did, of course, finish the house and we were very pleased. On the day of our final walkthrough, though, I did notice that the powder room seemed a bit small. I even bumped my head on the towel rack as I got up from the toilet. The engineer's reaction was astonishing. He simply picked up the toilet and moved it to the proper place. The fact that he had forgotten to connect the toilet did not bother him in the least.

A Glass Half Full

Eva always made sure we had a very busy social calendar, and we entertained at home on a regular basis. One particular evening is quite memorable. In order to save time and be with our guests when they arrived, Eva had left a tray with twelve glasses ready for our housekeeper to fill with wine. Eva asked her to pour half with red wine and half with white wine, and then come out to serve the guests. After everyone arrived, we waited and waited, and when there was no sign of our housekeeper, Eva finally went into the kitchen. She almost had a heart attack. Our housekeeper had filled all the glasses half way with white wine and was about to pour the red wine on top.

Precision in everything you do and everything you say is paramount.

There's No Free Lunch

Some years ago, Eva and I were looking for an investment banker to handle our finances. I was approached by a Swiss bank in New York who offered to organize a presentation for me, so I took the red-eye from San Diego where Eva and I were spending a few days with family. I arrived promptly at 9 a.m. for the meeting. Naturally I was exhausted from my trip, so at noon, I asked if I could take a break and have some lunch. The bankers, of course, agreed and insisted on ordering lunch, stating it would be just a simple meal in the office. Within a few minutes, a butler arrived, impeccably dressed, pushing an elegant cart brimming with Champagne, caviar, hors d'oeuvres – a lunch I am sure, cost no less than \$300 for four people. To my way of thinking, it was clear that the same lack of restraint that they used to buy lunch would guide their investment of my money. This episode made my decision very easy: It was clear these were not the bankers for me.

Many years later, while I was still searching for the right investment manager, someone recommended the firm Sanford Bernstein. Eva and I went to New York to meet them. They had prepared a very thorough presentation, and we were very impressed. When they finished, it was getting close to lunchtime, so they offered to buy us lunch in their office. Much to my surprise, they asked if we would mind going downstairs to their company cafeteria. When we arrived, we saw a simple cafeteria where the menu options for our main course was either a tuna or a chicken salad sandwich. I chuckled to myself thinking about the butler at the Swiss firm and the contrast between the two firms. After lunch, we went to the office of the managing director. In his library, I saw the biography of Winston Churchill, one of my greatest inspirations, and I mentioned that we shared a similar admiration. The gentleman did not hesitate for a single moment and immediately offered me the book as a gift.

To this day, we still bank with Sanford Bernstein.

The Natural Order

Eva and I have taken many wonderful trips over the years, but during our visit to Alaska, Eva and I enjoyed a few daredevil experiences that amazed even me.

We traveled eighty miles by train on a wooden track high above a body of water. The track was so narrow that when you looked out the window you could not see anything but the sea beneath you, just like in the movie *Bridge Over the River Kwai*. One of the most interesting parts of our journey was taking a helicopter that landed on a five thousand meter deep glacier. We stopped by a waterfall and observed a six-hundred-pound polar bear fishing for salmon – an amazing sight. The salmon jumped up against the current and the bear simply bit off the head of the fish. After investigating a bit, we learned that the salmon's head has phosphorous that helps keep the bear warm in the winter. The bear enjoys his part, and then birds flock to the fish to eat the remains. It is often said that we are all interconnected. But seeing this amazing ecosystem is something everyone should experience first hand.

Another amazing experience was discovering the wonders of Australia. An island, a country, and a continent, Australia is big and diverse with its vast deserts, coral reefs, tall forests, snow-cloaked mountains, multicultural melting-pot cities, and the Greater Blue Mountains Area. This area consists of tens of thousands square kilometers of mostly forested landscape on a sandstone plateau and was listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2000.

We took a tour from Sydney to the Blue Mountains and from the very first moment, we were not disappointed. The vistas were simply magnificent. The tour guide explained that there is a blue halo that hovers over the mountain tops from which the mountains derive their name. As I had not seen any halo during our visit, the guide suggested I take pictures, assuring me that I would indeed see a blue halo. Much to my complete surprise when I printed the pictures, a blue halo was indeed visible above the mountains. I asked everyone around me where the blue comes from, and no one could give me a satisfactory explanation. Then, as coincidence would have it, (although I do not believe in mere coincidences), just before we were about to check out of our hotel, I opened the picture book that had been in our room all along, and found the scientific explanation of the blue halo. When atmospheric temperatures rise, the essential oil of various Eucalyptus species that exist on the mountains evaporates and disperses in the air. As this process happens, the visible blue spectrum of sunlight propagates more than other colors and the reflected landscape from the mountains seems bluish even if it is not immediately visible to the human eye.

The beauty and essence of the natural world never ceases to amaze me. Just as every human being is unique, so is every flower and every mountain. I invite you to share my passion for nature.

Joie de Vivre

We met at the boarding house where I lived as a bachelor in Guayaquil. Jean Nejin was easy to spot: chocolate skin, almond eyes, and six feet tall. As I discovered years later, his overwhelming joie de vivre is a lot like Eva's and one of the qualities I most admire. Eva and I have spent several vacations with Jean, and each time we are uplifted by his love of life.

Jean was raised alone by his father in Vietnam, a handsome man of African descent. Jean's mother was a strikingly beautiful Vietnamese woman who unfortunately died when Jean was just 11 years old. As a young man, Jean moved back to Paris to attend the prominent Ecole supérieure d'économie, and before graduation, he was required to work overseas for two years. Jean found a company in Ecuador that was looking for salespeople and, without any knowledge of Spanish or anything else in Latin America, he landed the job and found himself in Guayaquil. Due to the difficulty of a Black salesperson thriving in the very conservative culture, Jean lost his job after one year. Since Jean never let anything cloud his optimism, he decided to turn this setback into an opportunity to travel and discover Latin America. Eventually, Jean ended up back in Guadeloupe, an army officer with a desk job, and finally settled in Martinique. We had many wonderful times with Jean in Ecuador, in Mexico, in Peru, and in Martinique.

Martinique is a beautiful island with luscious vegetation. I once asked Jean what they produce on the island, and he said "Babies, everything else is imported from France." One particular New Year's Eve in Martinique remains one of my favorite memories. Jean took us to a party at a house of unimaginable opulence which was located next to unthinkable poverty. There were several bands playing. They were roasting entire cows on a grill. Champagne was flowing like water. Everyone except for us was Black, and the only colors visible in the night were the straw skirts that people were wearing. I have never seen another gathering quite like this one.

It turned out that the host of the party was the president of the Communist party of Martinique. He also had a chain of optical stores and a virtual monopoly on all the islands. Eva and I laughed all the way home. We enjoyed our time with Jean and mostly each other. Being able to travel to a world so different from ours and fully immerse ourselves in that world is a testament to the strength of our bond.

The Adventures of a Retiree in Miami

In 2004, Eva and I had to face the impending decision to move to the United States in the event that our Green Cards would be granted in 2005. The decision process was as methodical as any other in my life, but the gut-wrenching emotion that accompanied the process was unlike anything we had ever faced before.

When the decision was made and we arrived in Miami on March 30, 2008, we were instantly transformed from leading actors to observers of life's theater. In spite of the uncertainty and anxiety that the retirement phase of life creates in most people, for me the transition has been relatively positive. It has been great deal more problematic for Eva, who after five years, is still adapting to the impact of this dramatic change.

One of the key factors in our decision to leave Guayaquil was the incessant crime, holdups, and overall sense of danger we lived with our entire lives and which became intolerable with the rise of "express kidnappings", named for the ransom that families are likely to pay to get their loved ones back. We had already bought our apartment in Miami, and it was fully furnished, so the only major task was purchasing a car for me and one for Eva. Like many experiences in Miami, where you think you are dealing with a modern urban culture only to be surprised by the deep provincial element that dominates all interactions, the simple act of buying a car turned out to be a major undertaking.

I let Eva make her own selection so I would not have to bear the blame in case anything went wrong. I picked a Lexus, but the salesperson was the worst of any I had ever come across. He began listing the benefits of the Lexus explaining how I could easily open the trunk from the inside if I was ever abducted and locked in the trunk. Imagine my face when I heard this story at a time when I was trying to get away from just that type of possibility. I basically sold myself the car. At the end of our negotiations, I was going to give him a check for the full amount, but our clever salesperson determined that, since I was new in the United States, it was important for me to establish credit. So I agreed to pay half up front and the remainder in monthly installments, plus interest of course. Six months later, I sent him a check for the outstanding balance and ended the story. Eva bought an Acura TL, and very shortly afterward, she, of course, changed her mind. She drives my Lexus every chance she gets.

Shopping for clothes is always a challenging adventure for couples and even after so many years together, Eva and I still have our moments of agreeable disagreement. I needed black shoes so Eva and I went shopping together. While I was waiting to

try on a pair, I noticed another pair of shoes, a very nice pair of beige shoes. When I asked Eva her opinion, she was adamantly opposed because she was convinced that I would never wear them. I bought them anyway and baptized them "The 10th of August Shoes". It was not the 10th of August, but on that day in 1822, the Ecuadorian people rebelled against the Spanish rulers living in their country, so the day became known as the first cry of independence. That is exactly how I felt buying my shoes. Eva had lived in the United States as a young girl and she had learned the value and the burden of independence, including having to take care of all chores without any household help. She reminded me that our life in America now meant that we would have to do everything ourselves, especially cleaning my new beige shoes. So among our new purchases in the United States. I ordered from Amazon.com a brand new ironing kit and an electric shoe shine device.

Part of the adventure of living in Miami is experiencing the Miami police and their uncanny ability to hide along the roads and still always find you just in time to give you a ticket. I was not spared this joy as new resident. One day, Eva called me when I was on my way home to tell me that I needed to turn around and head north to Aventura where friends from Guayaquil were waiting for us. I always listen to my wife, so I made an illegal U-turn and earned my first Miami ticket. Live and learn.

Filling my days is not a problem and my typical week is quite busy. I work out with my Argentinian trainer from 7 to 8 a.m., three times per week. I play tennis with my teacher, a Brazilian pro, three times per week. I take several courses on Jewish spirituality, psychology, and various other topics at Temple Beth Torah two times per week, and of course, I attend Shabbat services on Saturdays and Sundays. I attend various cultural events at least once a week, typically, film, theater, concert or lectures of various types, as well as various civic and philanthropic events. I'm also an avid reader of newspapers, periodicals, and books, so I really have very little time left to be bored.

In the course of my life, I have known the beauty of the world, of family and friends, and of Judaism, which I treasure. I have also known the tragedy of loss in a world turned upside down by bigotry and injustice. Still, life is a wonderful adventure, and I beseech you to live it fully.



Eva and Helmut in front of the Aron Kodesh, the Torah Ark, Quito, 1966

Betty Deller Wappenstein, Helmut, Mexico City, 1960s



Eva and Helmut under the chuppah, Quito, 1966



Herta Steiner, Eva, Quito, 1966



Eva, Helmut, Herta and Herman Steiner, Edith Wellisch, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Elizabeth Gruenbaum, Erna Better, Quito, 1966



Eva, Pedro Steiner, Quito, 1966

Jean Nejin, Helmut, Playas, 1950s



Jean Nejin, Eva, Helmut, Marisse Nejin, Ecuador, 2006



Helmut, Eva, Marisse and Jean Nejin, Martinique, 1970s



Eva and Helmut on a helicopter trip in Alaska, 2001



Jaime Kusnier, Ernesto Paladines, Helmut, Efren Arauz, Suzie Kusnier, Olga de Paladines, Eva, Maria del Carmen Arauz, Guayaquil, 2008





Ovidio Wappenstein, Eva, Helmut, Betty Deller Wappenstein, Frida Klein Deller, Alberto Deller, Quito, 1966



Herman Steiner, Eva, Helmut, Herta and Pedro Steiner, Quito, 1966



Herta Steiner, Alejandro Better, Eva, Helmut, Ernst Wellisch. Herman Steiner, Pedro Steiner, Edith Wellisch, Elizabeth Gruenbaum, Erna Better, Elsie Deller Wellisch, Alberto Deller. Helen Deller Klein, Michel Deller, Jeanny Koppel, Quito, 1966

Alejandro Better, Eva, Helmut, Erna Better, Quito, 1966

**Eva receiving certificate
from former President
of Ecuador, Galo Plaza
Lasso, 1961**



**Betty Deller Wappenstein,
Eva, Frida Klein Deller,
Quito, 1966**



Herta and Herman Steiner, 1970

**Helmut, Eva, Pedro
Steiner, Quito, 1966**



Eva, Elizabeth Gruenbaum, Helmut, Quito, 1966



Ricky, Guayaquil, 1967



Ricky, Guayaquil, 1970



Ricky receives medal for placing first in a swimming competition



Ricky receives honor as best student from the Benemérita Sociedad Filantrópica del Guayas, 1982

**Elsie Deller Wellisch,
Ricky, Herta Steiner,
Elizabeth Gruenbaum,
Ricky's Bar Mitzvah,
1980**



**Ricky and Cary
Friedman wedding,
Cambridge, 2002**



**Samantha, Maggie,
Jeremy Friedman Wellisch**



David, Guayaquil, 1973



Elsie Deller Wellisch, David, Herta Steiner at Ricky's Bar Mitzvah, Guayaquil, 1980

David's Bar Mitzvah, Guayaquil, 1983



David and Jessika at their graduation from Brown University, 1991



Eva and David, Maine, 1996



Lina Linkimer Sorrosa, Ing. Luis Sorrosa, Jessika Sorrosa Wellisch, David, Eva, Helmut, Guayaquil, 1993



David and Jessika, Guayaquil, 1993



Jessika, David, Helmut, Eva, Talya, Alex, Yael, Washington, DC



Ricky, Eva, David, Guayaquil, 1974

Ricky, David, Pinky, Guayaquil, 1975



Eva, Helmut, David, Ricky and Pinky, Guayaquil, 1975



Ricky, Eva, Helmut, David, at Ricky's Bar Mitzvah, Guayaquil, 1980



**David, Helmut, Ricky,
Boston, 1990**



**Ricky, Eva, Helmut,
David, San Diego,
1980s**



Ricky, Elsie Deller Wellisch, David, San Diego, 1980s

David, Ricky, 1980s



Helmut's favorite painting, Jaime Villa

Querida Mami,

- To the woman that gave me life,
- To the woman that gave me her sense of humor and interpersonal skills,
- To the woman that played a leadership role in my school when growing up,
- To the woman that had more friends that she knew what to do with,
- To the woman that showed me kindness and humility,
- To the woman that showed me how to be lighthearted yet ambitious,
- To the woman that drove me to all my activities when I was young,
- To the woman that was so involved in my life,
- To the woman that all my friends wanted as their mom,
- To the woman that never missed a parents' weekend,
- To the woman that never missed a grandparents' day,
- To the woman that played a key role in the success of her husband and kids,
- To the woman that was always ready to help,
- To the woman that always showed a kind spirit,
- To the woman that has had a difficult couple of years,
- To the woman that I know has the capacity to fight back and love,
- To the woman that has 20+ incredible profound years ahead of her,
- To the woman that I am proud and thankful to call Mom.

Happy 70th birthday Mami!!

It was great spending time together this weekend.

Te quiero mucho,

David

FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN

No importa que el tiempo pase inclemente sin detenerse, dejando en cada ritmo de vida su huella, mientras se conserve joven el espíritu y no se pierda la alegría de vivir, el encanto por las cosas, el deseo de la lucha, la voluntad inquebrantable y la rectitud en los actos.

Huellas de la vida, included in Helmut's 75th birthday celebration book, 2006

As I write these words, my grandchildren are between fourteen and six years of age, which means they have their entire life ahead of them. The best way I can summarize what life is really about is by saying it is an ongoing search, and this search consists of finding passion for an occupation, a cause, or something that moves you deeply. Why passion? If you do not have passion you will not find fulfillment in work and in life. The search can be easy, or it can take years, or even an entire lifetime. I truly believe that an individual who does not find passion in his or her work will not succeed and will remain mediocre, or worse, average.

Of course the crucial part is discovering this passion when the path is not apparent from an early age. I believe the answer is to expose yourself to many diverse experiences, and eventually you will know when you have found something that moves you. Sometimes we think we have found our way only to discover that we were wrong. But the search must not stop, it is not a straight line, there are many ups and downs as well as detours and interruptions. Our search is influenced by many factors, for example, our DNA, our parents, our family, and our friends as well as our education and especially reading because reading offers the perspective of others. But the key for me is perseverance.

I cannot stress enough how essential perseverance is in life, in fact it is one of my core values. Perseverance allows you to reach your goals, it is one of the secrets of a happy marriage, and it ultimately allows you to live a fulfilling life. There are many examples of how perseverance can transform your life and even those of others, but one of my favorites is Thomas Edison. Edison invented the electric light bulb after having failed more than one thousand times. During an interview, he explained that he did not consider these experiments failures, rather, thousands of ways that won't work. In other words, he focused on the path he took to reach his goal rather than on the setbacks along the way.

I also want to reiterate the importance of reading for your personal growth. Reading is the portal to a wealth of information and experiences that enrich our lives and make life so interesting. Reading will provide you new horizons, make you more interesting to your friends, and basically transform your life.

I also wish to remind you of the Serenity Prayer, which you may have heard but it is worth citing here:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

I have always been a big fan of quotes and aphorisms, but the Serenity Prayer is one of my very favorites, and I have it up on my office wall for many years now. I hope that at some point in your life, it will move you as much as it has me. In conclusion, I wish you a great deal of luck in all your endeavors, for without luck things are still possible but it is all so much more difficult.



Guayaquil, 2006

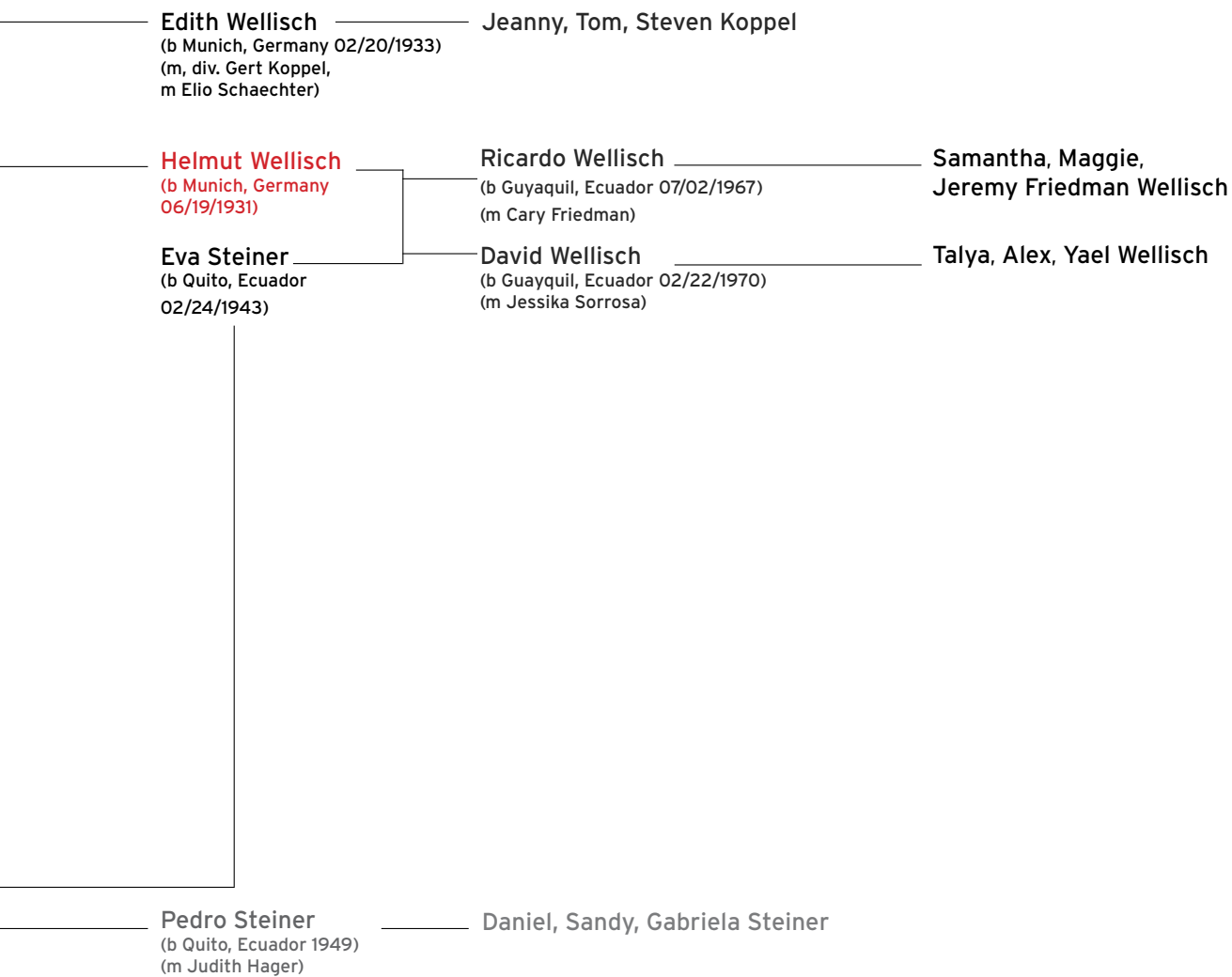
Mensaje a mis nietos

A la hora de escribir estas líneas, la mayor de
Nuestras nietas tiene 14 años de edad y los menores,
6 años, es decir tienen entre sí toda su vida. -
La mejor descripción que tengo para la vida, es
que es una búsqueda (the search). - La búsqueda
es en encontrar la pasión que un individuo
tiene la capacidad de sentir por alguna cosa,
ocupación o tema. - Porque digo esto ??
Porque si Uds no tienen o no descubren esta
pasión no trabajarán a pleno, no vivirán a pleno.
Esta búsqueda a veces es fácil y a veces toma
muchos años y algunas veces toda la vida.
Creo sinceramente que un individuo cualquiera
que no sienta pasión por su trabajo u ocupación
no descollará y permanecerá para siempre
como un individuo mediocre o tipo promedio.
Ahora viene la parte crucial: ¿cómo hacer
para encontrar esta pasión si no es evidente y
evidente ?? La respuesta es exponerse a la
mayor cantidad posible de experiencias diversas
y tarde o temprano algo hará que Uds sepan que
han encontrado la pasión que les hace sentirse
diferentes; lamentablemente muchas veces esta inspiración
es mal interpretada y después de descubrir esto,
la búsqueda debe continuar. - Esta búsqueda no
es una línea recta sino más bien accidentada,



Washington, D.C. 2011

	Gertrude (Trudi) (m Max Rizzi)	Manfred (Fred), Rudolph (Rolf), Peter Rizzi
	Else (m Fritz Solinger)	Ronald Solinger
Max Wellisch (b Strasbourg, France d Auschwitz 1940)	Ernst Wellisch _____ (b Pirmasens, Germany 06/20/1903 d San Diego, CA 03/29/1970)	
Mathilde Marx (b Strasbourg, France d Auschwitz 1940)		
Abraham Deller (b Fischach, Germany 1860 d Fischach, Germany 1935)	Elsie Deller _____ (b Fischach, Germany 09/08/1904 d 07/06/1998 San Diego, CA)	
Sofie Hofmann (b Ansbach, Germany 1869 d Quito, Ecuador 1950)	Paula (m Arthur Falk)	Ina, Walter Falk
	Hugo (m Friedl Maier)	Betty Deller Wappenstein, Alberto Deller
	Herta (m Albert Stern)	Ruth and Heinz (Henry) Stern, Menni Stern Sharon
	Cilly (m Isaak Gerstle, then Leon Grinspan)	
	Herman Steiner _____	
	Herta Gruenbaum _____	





Miami, 2013