

New York Times bestseller

Do the KIND Thing

THINK
Boundlessly

WORK
Purposefully

LIVE
Passionately

Daniel Lubetzky 
Founder and CEO of **KIND**

DO THE



KIND[®]
THING

THINK BOUNDLESSLY
WORK PURPOSEFULLY
LIVE PASSIONATELY

Daniel Lubetzky



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DO THE



KIND[®]
THING

FOREWORD

Prior to picking up this book, had you heard KIND's motto—"Do the KIND Thing"—and wondered what it truly meant? At its core, it is about doing the kind thing for your body, your taste buds, and your world—by eating nutritionally rich foods without having to sacrifice taste, and by inspiring kindness to others. But for me, "Do the KIND Thing" is far more than that. It is about the way I think and do things, distilled into ten tenets that have helped KIND become a trusted and vibrant brand. It is a rallying cry to remind my team of the tools to build and cement our culture, and the values that we try to live by to make this world a little kinder. My hope is that, as you read this book, you will know what we mean when we say "Do the KIND Thing," and that it will help you think boundlessly, work purposefully, and live passionately.

CHAPTER 1

THINKING WITH AND

An Introduction to Avoiding False Compromises

It was May 1994. Mother's Day was a week away, and I sat anxiously by the phone. Across New York City, small ads in neighborhood newspapers proclaimed the launch of my new venture, through which Arabs and Israelis cooperated to make skincare products like Dead Sea bath salts, hand-treatment creams, and mud masks that I had assembled into gift baskets. These would make the perfect gift for moms, the ads explained, sending a thoughtful message of peace through business.

Cramped studio apartment/corporate headquarters; narrow black IKEA desk; second-hand chair: I had set up my "office" in anticipation of a flood of orders. My biggest worry was how to process and fulfill them all.

I had been starting businesses since elementary school, beginning with the magic shows I put on for neighborhood kids in my native Mexico City. But, at age twenty-five, I had just

thrown away the promise of a Wall Street legal career to start my own company, based on a new concept I thought could change the world: economic cooperation between conflict-torn peoples as a way to help them get to know one another, create an incentive to build a shared future, and achieve peace. Building bridges between people was my passion, and I wanted to use commerce to help nudge neighbors closer together.

I was convinced that it was possible to build a company that was “not-*only*-for-profit”—one that sold great products *and* also did its small part toward making a better world. I believed I did not have to choose one or the other; our company could achieve both goals at the same time. First, though, I would have to get customers to buy the goods.

A week earlier, a delivery truck driver had rung up to apartment 8A, on the corner of Eighty-Fourth Street and Second Avenue, to announce the arrival of my Dead Sea cosmetics shipment.

“Come on up,” I said over the building’s intercom.

“You don’t seem to understand,” he replied tersely. “Please come down.”

For my trial, I had asked my trading partners to produce a few hundred each of mineral-rich mud masks, hand-treatment creams with avocado oil, Dead Sea bath salts with various essential oils, and seven varieties of mud soaps. I had assumed it would all just fit in a corner of my tiny studio and would sell out quickly.

When I came down to the street, I saw that my order actually occupied an entire twenty-foot container truck. The driver and I hauled box after box up to a room already filled with samples of sundried tomato spreads made through cooperation among

Israeli, Egyptian, Turkish, and Palestinian trading partners, as well as packaging materials for the gift baskets. After stacking the boxes to the ceiling of my studio, I had to convince my landlord to rent me a windowless basement space next to the trash compactor to store the rest of the product. For the next two years, this crypt-like cubbyhole would become my new office.

The company had now officially taken over my life. When I lay on my futon bed, I stared up at a towering wall of boxes that threatened to fall on me any minute.

But it would all be worth it, I felt. The idea that Bedouins and Jews had partnered to make Dead Sea cosmetics would surely please any mom who cherished soft skin and peaceful cooperation. With such a fresh, novel concept, I thought, the challenge would be keeping up with all the incoming calls.

The week passed. Mother's Day came and went. Not one customer bought a single gift basket. Zero consumer inquiries. Zero sales. Most of my savings were locked up in inventory I could not move. And the smell of essential oils was suffocating.

I felt depressed. Terrified. In addition to sensing my dream slip away, I had no idea how I was going to pay my rent.

I worried about what my parents would think. They were already concerned that I was wasting my law degree. I was the first member of my extended family to get a graduate degree. As a Jew whose father had survived the Holocaust and a son whose parents had sacrificed so much to provide me with an education, I felt a keen sense of guilt and obligation.

And yet, this was my passion. This was my mission. I had to pursue it. I couldn't quit. I was going to make this work.

At the end of the week, I threw some product samples into

my battered fake-leather briefcase, closed the apartment door carefully so the boxes wouldn't crash down, and hit the pavement. I was going to sell my stock if I had to go door-to-door across the entire island of Manhattan and convince every buyer personally.

THE “AND” PHILOSOPHY—KIND’S FIRST TENET

This book is the story of what I discovered when I devoted my life to creating businesses that build bridges between people, from PeaceWorks’ Dead Sea products to KIND, the snack foods company that evolved from those experiences. By 2014 KIND had sold over a billion KIND snack bars and KIND clusters in more than 100,000 stores. The KIND Movement, which advances our social mission by performing—and inspiring our community to perform—unexpected kind acts, has touched over a million people.

Like many start-up stories, mine has been rocky. The last two decades have been a series of ups and downs that alternately made me deliriously excited and desperately worried. Entrepreneurship isn't for the faint of heart, and it's impossible to tell how your story will turn out. All you have is your conviction, your ability to work hard, and your determination to never give up.

One thread that runs through this book is a revelation I uncovered along the journey—the power of thinking with AND. People often let circumstances force them into choosing between two seemingly incompatible options—like making a snack bar that either tastes good *or* is healthy for you. At KIND

we pride ourselves on creating new paths and models that avoid that kind of false compromise. Instead of “Or,” we say “AND.”

The AND philosophy has become so central to our thinking at KIND that internally we call it the KIND BrAND Philosophy. At its core, it is about challenging assumptions and thinking creatively. It is about not settling for less, being willing to take greater risks and, often, it requires investing more up front. It is not just a way to think positively, or a feel-good attitude. It is about learning to think critically, frequently pursuing what in the short term may seem a tougher path: to be both healthy *and* tasty, convenient *and* wholesome, economically sustainable *and* socially impactful.

Some of the best ideas seem the most obvious in retrospect. The challenge is uncovering these opportunities when you have become accustomed to the way things are. In an effort to be efficient, your brain has a tendency to accept prevailing ideas or concepts that may no longer be correct (or may never have been). These shortcuts, called heuristics by psychologists, enable us to process information and reach conclusions swiftly. But they also bias us in favor of quick solutions that may not maximize our long-term potential. Thinking with AND means that we consciously try to break away from these mental shortcuts. At KIND we take it slow, relentlessly questioning our first principles and then using repeated rounds of brainstorming to find new solutions that don't rely on these assumptions.

This behavior lies at the very heart of our creative process. When designing products at KIND, we never allow cost considerations or other practical constraints like manufacturing efficiencies to be filters at the outset. Of course costs are critical; we prize resourcefulness and the ability to do much with little.

But that analysis has to come after the open brainstorming. Otherwise we would never have conceived KIND bars with whole nuts and fruits, as they are harder and more expensive to manufacture than bars made from emulsions or pastes. The AND process helped us realize that this extra investment would be worth it. Every one of our top ten competitors makes their best-selling bars from homogenous pastes. This is a logical path because slab bars (as they are called in the industry as a result of their manufacture from slabs of mashed-up, emulsified ingredients) run smoothly through the manufacturing line and cost less to make. But they leave many consumers dissatisfied, as they rob foods of their integrity and soul.

The AND philosophy has its costs. Because we use whole ingredients like nuts and seeds, which are not always of a totally uniform size, we often end up with bars that are slightly larger than advertised, but we can't charge more for the somewhat greater bulk. Sometimes whole ingredients yield bars that are *under* weight, and we have to give those bars away free, as samples. By contrast, the traditional way of emulsifying ingredients into pastes can yield bars of uniform weight. Our way is more expensive, but many consumers find the quality is superior to that of an emulsion bar. It's often harder to pursue the way of AND. But, as our market share growth demonstrates, if you have a commitment to excellence—a commitment to avoid false compromises—you will win in the long term.

Questioning assumptions also forces us to be nimble and staves off complacency. We've learned that just because everything is going well for the business, we can't assume that the trajectory will continue upward. We continuously think critically about our strategy: Where will our next competitive

threat originate? How can we develop new products *and* protect our core lines?

The AND philosophy is a great tool for entrepreneurs, particularly for social entrepreneurs. A social entrepreneur is a person who tackles societal problems and seeks to effect social change through creative mechanisms. At its essence, the entrepreneurial mind spots opportunities to create value: Social entrepreneurs detect problems in society and try to find solutions to improve the world; business entrepreneurs discover gaps in the marketplace and try to fill them to achieve financial gain. A social entrepreneur with an appreciation for the power of market forces tries to advance both social and business objectives in unison. Thinking with AND can help you solve social problems *and* identify commercial gaps as it forces you to confront the underlying assumptions, and to uncover objectives that are in tension with one another. Once you have identified the conflicting objectives that you're trying to achieve and how they interact, you can start thinking about whether there are creative ways to accomplish both objectives at once.

ADDITIONAL KIND BUSINESS TENETS

There are, of course, other essential tenets that comprise my approach to life and business. The AND philosophy is the foundation for all we do at KIND. It is not just KIND's first and foremost tenet. It also undergirds nine other essential themes that run through what we do, and these themes correspond to the next nine chapters in this book:

2. Purpose

Purpose is why you get up in the morning, go to work, and give it your all. When your company has a real mission, it serves as a rallying point for your team members. They come to feel, as you do, that the efforts they put into advancing the shared enterprise serve a higher social goal. Chapter 2 explains KIND's integrated mission to advance our business while making the world a little kinder and how it informs everything we do and create, from our *not-only-for-profit* business model to our KIND Movement. Chapter 2 details the ancillary business benefits from having a purpose and the conditions necessary for those benefits to exist. Just as important, it dispels some myths about certain perceived advantages a business can gain from purpose and shares ways for companies and individuals to discover their purpose.

3. Grit

It's no secret that starting a new venture is hard work. The difference between those who keep going and those who give up is grit: the ability to persevere until the work is done. Grit can best be fueled by purpose: when you have a higher reason for doing what you do, it is harder for anything to stop you—but three additional anchors also underlie grit: conviction, self-evaluation, and sheer determination. Deep analysis and earnest introspection can forge a temper of tenacity. Grit, particularly when combined with the AND way of thinking, can move mountains. In Chapter 3, I share examples of creative perseverance that eventually paid off in a big way.

4. Truth and Discipline

Staying true to your brand is harder and more important than many realize. Every brand represents certain values and attributes. If you steer your brand in the wrong direction, or dilute its message, your customers may feel betrayed. The temptation to follow fads, try to please different constituencies or to expand too quickly without regard to your brand promise can kill your venture. But before you can uphold your brand promise, you need to truly understand what that promise is. What does your brand stand for? What is your unique value proposition? In Chapter 4, I contrast my early experience with PeaceWorks—in which I was so excited about the concept and desperate for it to take off that I made crucial errors—with KIND's more focused and disciplined strategy, an approach that has allowed us to grow in a sustainable way without trying to be everything to everyone.

5. Keeping It Simple

In Chapter 5 I explore the too often underappreciated virtue of keeping things simple and staying grounded in business and in life. The tenet of simplicity imbues every aspect of the KIND brand, products, culture, and operations. Our straightforward brand name, descriptive product names, promise of foods that are as close to nature as possible, and forthright marketing style are also reactions against the spin we are exposed to in modern society. Our candid work environment and down-to-earth culture are important contributors to our success. Closely related to simplicity is humility. A strong leader avoids becoming overconfident to the point of impaired judgment. Skepticism or even paranoia about a company's market power and about one's own judgment is healthy.

6. Originality

We get our best ideas at KIND through brainstorming, using a rigorous process we've developed over many years. This approach to creativity initially welcomes the widest possible range of ideas, including wacky ones that seem impossible or implausible, and only later filters them down. The goal is to find fresh ideas that fit within the AND philosophy of achieving several objectives at once. But it doesn't apply only to new ventures; it is just as critical to reinventing and refreshing existing businesses. Critical thinking and analysis underpin our marketing campaigns, our sales strategies, and our new product development. While innovation is vital for an enterprise to thrive, you have to balance authentic innovation and authentic branding to ensure you do not confuse your fans or cause harm to your brand. In Chapter 6, I show what can happen when you don't get that balance right, along with illustrating how innovation at KIND helped cement what our brand stands for. I also describe techniques for thinking boundlessly that can serve our daily lives.

7. Transparency and Authenticity

Transparency and authenticity may be the values consumers most associate with KIND, largely because of the literal transparency of the clear wrappers we introduced into the nutrition and healthy snack bar category. But transparency is about a lot more. It relates to the authenticity that KIND conveys across every aspect of our operations. This is something people can sense. Transparency and authenticity also mean acknowledging mistakes when necessary, and not feeling you need to "spin" every issue to appear invincible. Whether dealing with suppli-

ers or customers, transparency involves sharing information that transforms traditionally arm's-length relationships into a strategic trading partnership. When relating to our community and our consumers, transparency means being honest about our successes as well as our limitations. Internally, it means that we prize open and frank communication among our team members and share financial details of our business with them.

8. Empathy

Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of another—is a vital if underrated leadership skill, as it helps build a loyal culture. One of the things that team members in any company are most concerned about is whether they sense that managers truly care about them and their professional growth. I may be particularly attuned to this because building bridges represents the common thread in everything I do, not because I am an altruistic soul but out of enlightened self-interest. As the son of a Holocaust survivor, I vowed to do what I can to prevent what happened to my dad from happening to others. In Chapter 8, I delve into my dad's story, and its impact on me. I detail the evolution of the KIND Movement, and share examples of some of the other work I have done to foster peace in the Middle East. I'm also forthright about the tensions between my philanthropic duties and my responsibility to my family, especially during some difficult times in my life.

9. Trust

Because I started KIND as a one-man operation, in the beginning, I had to do everything and I gained a general understanding of every facet of our operations. As KIND grew through its

early stages, I relied on a core team of dedicated generalists to do several jobs at once. Once we became a larger organization, we needed specialists and my role shifted. I now provide a vision, and work to inspire and to coach the team. I need to nurture the culture at KIND, and part of that means knowing when to step back and let others lead. It's been crucial for me to trust and empower my team and to create space for them, but also to know when to intervene to preserve our brand and our values. In Chapter 9 I share the ways in which I have learned these hard lessons, as well as the advice I have received over the years from my advisory board.

10. Ownership

Ownership is, above all, an attitude. An ownership culture is entrepreneurial, resourceful, and resilient. It recognizes that we are part of something bigger than us—one big family—and have entered an implicit pact to be loyal to one another and think of our shared enterprise ahead of ourselves. As a first step, we align financial incentives: all of our full-time team members—from the president to the team members that clean the office—receive stock options entitling them to own a piece of KIND and have a direct economic stake in our business. But that is not enough. Ownership is about tapping the human spirit—about a sense of personal power and the responsibility that comes with it. That is why at KIND, and in this book, I avoid the word “employee” (which has acquired a connotation of subservience) to refer to my team members, who are empowered to become shareholders and think like co-owners.

★ ★ ★

As I discuss these nine other tenets throughout the book, I share examples of how the AND philosophy has helped KIND leverage the expected output from each of these tenets across all disciplines and departments, from new product development to marketing, from human resources to financial planning, from strategic planning to our social mission. Relatedly, my many failures taught me more about myself and business than my successes. Because I can directly attribute many of KIND's achievements to the lessons that I drew from my earlier mistakes, I share them quite prominently in these pages.

THE KIND WAY

For decades, people have accepted the dogma that you work hard for your money, and then find meaning or fulfillment outside your work, if ever. Increasingly, we are learning that you can find a way to achieve financial success *and* advance a social goal that you care about, that you can work for a company *and* contribute toward making this world a little better, that you can find remuneration *and* purpose in your work.

Thinking boundlessly often means challenging conventional wisdom in the corporate world. At KIND, AND is not just a top-level strategy. It's a guiding principle for every team member to use every day: What assumptions can I challenge? Which seemingly mutually exclusive options may actually be mutually achievable? Why can't we try to meet more than one goal with the same product or strategy? Are our assumptions and ways of doing things still valid? Do the supposed constraints still exist?

Thinking with AND transcends the workplace. You can

challenge the assumptions that threaten your personal fulfillment. You don't have to accept the way things are. All you need to do is ask: Why does it have to be that way? When your default thinking is "AND" instead of "or," you start to break down the roadblocks that prevent you from getting more out of life.

Twenty years ago, as I sold my first products door-to-door, I learned what it takes to see problems as opportunities and to unleash the power of creative thinking, introspection, and self-evaluation. I learned that dreaming can help you visualize and forge a path to success, and that imagination has the power to set you apart from your competitors, as long as you act on it.

Some people dub me an optimist, but I think that misses the point. I consider myself an actionist: a person that does not accept things as they are and commits to change them (hopefully for the better). Making a difference requires not just ideas, but also the determination and mindset to execute them. For me, this comes from my family history (a story of hope and perseverance against the odds), which burned inside of me and propelled me to do this with my life. I was raised to believe that we have an obligation to be kind to one another as humans, and to build bridges.

When trying to connect with others, I've found that there's one unique advantage to being in the snack food business. When I travel, whether for business or with my family, I always take three cases of KIND bars with me to give away—particularly to people whom I observe showing kindness toward others. Nine out of ten people who eat a KIND bar end up as customers who will repurchase and recommend it to others, so this isn't an entirely selfless act, but there's an AND to it, too. My larger hope

is that they also become part of our Movement: that they not only buy our products and share them with their friends, but also join us in Doing the KIND Thing, even to strangers. So much has gone into each snack: vision, passion, purpose, logistics, the hard work of my team, and the ingredients themselves, which you can see yourself through the transparent wrapper. It's a lot to hold in your hand, and I love sharing it with you.

CHAPTER 2



PURPOSE

A Fuel for Your Passion

When you're training for a triathlon or a marathon, you run, bike, and swim wherever you happen to be. In the summer of 2002, I happened to be in Colombo, Sri Lanka, exploring a new business venture. I was training for the New York City Marathon, and I started my eighteen-mile run in the capital. By the time I completed the distance—gasping, sweating, endorphins pumping—I found myself on the remote outskirts of the city, along a quiet lake, surrounded by Sinhalese kids and friendly fishermen curious about my appearance. I was famished. I had a bit of money with me to get back to town. What I did not have were healthful portable snacks to refuel. It was a long trip back to the hotel.

The search for healthy snacks had formed the backdrop to my life since law school. I had started my first food company in 1994 after I sampled a delicious sundried tomato spread in

vatives and sorbitol, an artificial sweetener. As soon as we advised our customers of this change, they stopped carrying the product. We were devastated because our scarce profits from PeaceWorks had helped fund investment into this new space, and all of a sudden, from one day to the next, our entire investment was lost. We were on the verge of going out of business, and seven team members were relying on me for their salaries.

It was a frightening moment for me. I pleaded with the conglomerate to make a natural version of the product, but they declined. I lay awake at night thinking through all my options—none were readily apparent. I resolved to learn from the experience and to create a premium line of whole nut and fruit bars myself. This was the dawn of KIND Healthy Snacks. But the darkness before the dawn was indeed a dark time, as well as lonely and scary.

Yet, at the same time, it was energizing because it was so purposeful and liberating. We would never again be at the mercy of someone else's decision about what should go into our products. We would never again let anyone add artificial ingredients or make sugar or empty carbs a primary ingredient, or add fillers to lower costs while lowering the quality of our snacks. We would obsess about using nutritionally rich ingredients that can nourish your body and your soul. We would craft KIND Fruit & Nut bars to fulfill the goals I had set for myself: something healthful, delicious, *and* socially impactful, something easy to carry on the go that was at the same time wholesome and real.

We worked hard to define and refine the purpose of our product. First we established a commitment to fight the diabetes and obesity epidemic befalling society by introducing nutritionally rich products with a low glycemic index. A low

glycemic index means that the product you eat, because it is nutritionally rich and dense, gets digested slowly. Its nutrients and energy, including its sugar, get absorbed gradually and gently into your body. In contrast, a product with a high glycemic index tends to be characterized by refined sugars and lack of nutrient-dense ingredients—the classic example is candy, but white bread and even fruit juices without the pulp and peel can also be high on the glycemic index. As soon as you eat these foods, the sugar levels in your blood immediately spike. Products with a high glycemic index not only give you sugar highs swiftly followed by tanking sugar levels that may make you tired or hungry again, they also mess up your body balance, because your pancreas must create insulin to try to offset these crazy spikes. This can eventually create insulin resistance, which leads to diabetes and can lead directly to fatty liver disease. Complications of diabetes can include kidney disease, heart disease, stroke, and dementia. The challenge to society is serious. Healthful eating of truly nutritious foods—no fads, and no empty calories—was established as a guiding principle for KIND. And, besides being healthful, the products had to be delicious.

But I didn't just want to make great food. Having learned from my PeaceWorks experience, I wanted to find a way to do some good in the area that most mattered to me: building bridges between people.

Initially, I thought about having the bars manufactured, as the other PeaceWorks foods were, by cooperative ventures in conflict-torn regions, but there was no obvious place where this could be accomplished. The production expertise was in Australia, a peaceful land whose only transcendental “conflict” was

its painful treatment of Aboriginals by its Western settlers. (Well, a venture involving Aboriginals in the manufacturing actually crossed my mind! But it did not feel authentic. It felt forced and contrived, so I did not pursue that path.)

Initially we addressed this disconnect by donating 5 percent of profits from the KIND division to peace-related nonprofits. If we didn't turn a profit on a particular year, we would make a meaningful donation regardless, out of our gross revenues. This was a temporary fix, but it was important to us to integrate the *purpose* into the DNA of the company.

As we brainstormed about our brand name and mission, we rallied around a concept that could affirm our three anchors of health, taste, and social responsibility: being KIND to your body, KIND to your taste buds, and KIND to your world. Focusing on kindness stemmed from my belief, which I inherited from my parents, that kindness to others can build trust, and ultimately, bridges between people.

My father, who survived the Dachau concentration camp during the Holocaust, told me of a time when a Nazi guard took risks by throwing him a rotten potato that provided him the sustenance he needed to go on. Although that soldier could have gotten in trouble for helping a Jewish prisoner, he acted with compassion in the darkest of moments. My dad always credited the guard's action with helping him stay alive.

The question the brand asked was, In our modern society, where we have all these barriers between one another and are so desensitized to the suffering of others, could we find a way to build those human bonds between people and inspire them? Just as I tried to connect neighbors in conflict regions with PeaceWorks, could we use the power of kindness to get ordi-

nary people to recognize their shared humanity and obligation toward one another? Could this be a step toward preventing what happened to my father from happening again to other human beings?

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN FOR KIND

I've been starting businesses since I was eight years old, but the first one I started with a social mission, and the first one in the healthy food arena—the precursor to KIND—launched in 1994. This was the first formal test, for me, of the idea that social objectives and profit-making could go hand in hand, a model I call *not-only-for-profit*.

When I finished law school in 1993, I went to New York to study for the bar. I spent that summer working at the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell (S&C), which had offered me a job, while I prepared to take the exam. I then spent the fall at consulting firm, McKinsey & Company's Mexico City office, where I also had a job offer. With both firms' blessing and understanding, my plan was to try law and consulting and decide between those two career paths.

A big breakthrough in Middle East peacemaking occurred while I was in Mexico. On September 13, 1993, President Clinton hosted Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in the White House Rose Garden to celebrate the Oslo agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. As I sat in Mexico City with some friends, watching this surreal ceremony, my career direction became quite clear. I had been writing about economic cooperation between Arabs and Israelis for years, when it seemed a distant

After a few days of craving, it dawned on me that maybe this could be my vehicle for turning theory into practice. Instead of consulting others on how to launch businesses that fostered economic cooperation, I should create one myself.

I went back to the store, hounded the manager, and got the name of the distributor that supplied him the sundried tomato product. I called the distributor, and in my broken Hebrew, tried to explain that I was a crazy Mexican Jewish lawyer who wanted to use this sundried tomato spread to prove a joint-venture model for bringing peace to the Middle East. The distributor was perplexed, to say the least. But he agreed to give me the number of the manufacturer who had just gone bankrupt, Yoel Benesh.

When I called him, Benesh invited me to meet with him at his factory. It took me a few hours of long walks and bus rides from Tel Aviv to an industrial zone in Even Yehuda, near Netanya. I arrived at an empty building with virtually no equipment. Yoel's workers had been making everything by hand. They would manually mix the product in big kitchen vats, fill the jars, seal them, and immerse them in a gigantic pool of hot water to pasteurize them. They then would dry them and apply the labels one by one.

Yoel explained that he had been sourcing their glass jars from Portugal, their tomatoes from Italy, and other inputs from across the world. He had tried to penetrate the U.S. market, but it was too costly. He could not compete with Italian and Greek brands.

I'm sure Yoel wondered what a lawyer with no experience in the food business would be able to contribute, but he had nothing to lose. And when I told Yoel about my ideas, he sincerely and passionately connected with my philosophy. His father had

will be more inclined to a lasting peace when economic links exist between them. Setting up ventures owned and staffed by people from groups in conflict gives them a reason not to fight, and, eventually, a reason not to hate one another. When people work together or trade with one another, three distinct benefits emerge. At a personal level they discover their shared humanity and shatter cultural stereotypes. At a business level, they gain a vested interest in preserving and cementing their relationship because they are benefiting one another economically. And at a regional level, success gives people a stake in the system.

I get a lot of questions, then as well as now, about this business model. Usually people are polite, but the gist of their questions is this: How can you be so naïve as to think peace in the Middle East will come as a result of selling little jars of sundried tomato spread? My answer: It won't, but it will be a start. None of this was ever intended to be a substitute for the necessary geopolitical solution: ending the occupation and achieving a Palestinian state that recognizes the right of Israelis to have a Jewish and democratic state at peace with it. My little effort was always meant to build cooperation and collaboration, to give long-warring cultures peaceful and fruitful experiences with one another. I simply wanted to build small bridges that could perhaps serve as foundations for larger ones in the future.

What became my core passion and expertise was the idea of business with a social bottom line along with the business bottom line—built right into the DNA of the company. What excited me most about this model was and is that the social and business missions are not only in harmony, but also reinforce and advance one another.

The more sundried tomato spread I sold, the more Yoel could scale up his venture and increase the impact of the coop-

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