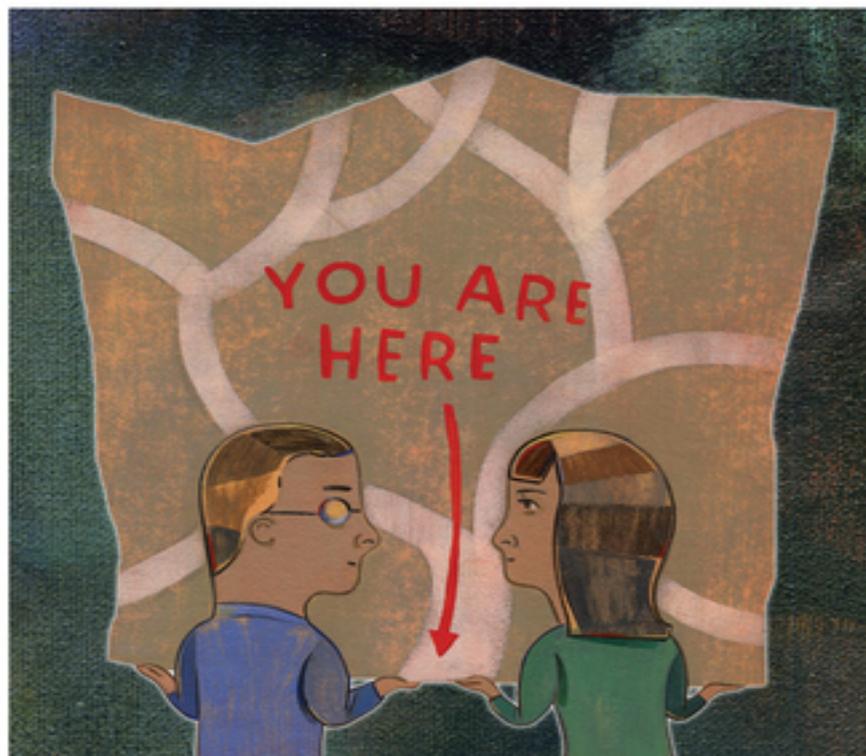


THE
QUEST
FOR
LEGITIMACY



HOW CHILDREN OF
PROMINENT FAMILIES DISCOVER
THEIR UNIQUE PLACE IN THE WORLD

Jamie Weiner

WILEY

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[CHAPTER 1: Toward the Light](#)

[FAMILY PROMINENCE](#)

[CHILD OF A GIANT](#)

[WHO AM I OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE?](#)

[WEIGHT OF ACHIEVEMENT](#)

[CASTING A NEW SHADOW](#)

[THE CONTEXT OF THE LAND OF GIANTS](#)

[ENDNOTES](#)

[CHAPTER 2: The Betwixt and Between](#)

[TOWARD THE LIGHT](#)

[RISHI'S HOPE](#)

[ENDNOTES](#)

[CHAPTER 3: Stuck](#)

[LACK OF AGENCY](#)

[WHEN FEAR OBVIATES TRUST](#)

[CAUGHT IN THE FIRE](#)

[POINT OF PAIN](#)

[HE'S A GOOD KID!](#)

ENDNOTE

CHAPTER 4: Breaking Points

BREAKING POINTS ARE UNIVERSAL

A PREDICTABLE SAGA

A NEW TYPE OF RITE OF PASSAGE

THE BIG RELEASE

BREAKING THAT LOOKS LIKE WAITING

FERDINAND'S STORY: A LITERAL BREAKING POINT

WALKING AMONG THE GIANTS

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 5: Make the Break: Take the Quest

TELL ME WHAT I WANT

LIFE IS A JOURNEY. WHAT'S THE QUEST?

PULLED IN TWO DIRECTIONS

ALWAYS ON THE QUEST

NO LONGER ECLIPSED

IT GETS WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER

HARD BUT GOOD

JUMP

CHAPTER 6: The Quest: The Inner Journey

WHICH WAY?

WALKING THE PATH

BURSTS OF LEGITIMACY

PHASE 1: SELF-AWARENESS

PHASE 2: TUG-OF-WAR

PHASE 3: EXPLORATION

PHASE 4: OWNERSHIP

ENDNOTE

CHAPTER 7: Exploration

AMADEO: AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

WILHELM: GIVEN LICENSE TO TAKE THE QUEST

EXPLORATION: DIFFERENT STORIES BUT A
COMMON PATH

CHAPTER 8: Women on the Quest

PATRIARCHY: A BARRIER TO FEELING
LEGITIMATE

VERONICA: UNIQUE CHALLENGES THAT
ACCOMPANY BELIEVING THAT THE WORLD IS
YOUR OYSTER

A STRONG MATRIARCHAL MODEL IN THE
BACKGROUND: GRANDMOTHER'S ROLE

A WORLD IN FLUX: A GLOBAL BREAKING POINT

CHAPTER 9: Giants: Mere Mortals

THE WHY BEHIND THE HERO STORY

WHEN YOUR PARENTS HAVEN'T TAKEN THE
QUEST - BUT YOU HAVE

THE TWO BRIDGES BACK

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 10: Rising: A Mindset

ACKNOWLEDGE THE QUEST

GET UNCOMFORTABLE WITH DISCOMFORT

YOUR QUEST

UNFINISHED...ARE YOU GOING TO EMBRACE
THE QUEST?

Moving forward on the Quest

CHAPTER 1: TOWARD THE LIGHT

CHAPTER 2: THE BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

[CHAPTER 3: STUCK](#)

[CHAPTER 4: BREAKING POINTS](#)

[CHAPTER 5: MAKE THE BREAK: TAKE THE QUEST](#)

[CHAPTER 6: THE QUEST: THE INNER JOURNEY](#)

[CHAPTER 7: EXPLORATION](#)

[CHAPTER 8: WOMEN ON THE QUEST](#)

[CHAPTER 9: GIANTS: MERE MORTALS](#)

[CHAPTER 10: RISING: A MINDSET](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Index](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

The Quest for Legitimacy

**How Children of Prominent Families
Discover Their Unique Place in the
World**

Jamie Weiner

WILEY

Copyright © 2022 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 750-4470, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permission>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:

ISBN 9781119868279 (Hardback)

ISBN 9781119868293 (ePDF)

ISBN 9781119868286 (ePub)

Cover Design: Wiley

Cover Image: Courtesy of Amanda Duffy

Foreword

I am literally and figuratively a “junior” in the land of a giant, James Elliott Hughes. During nearly 30 of my father's 50-year practice of law, he was the head of one of the world's great international law firms; the chairman of the boards of two colleges, an independent secondary school, and a primary school; and a member of many public, private, and charitable boards.

Me? I am simply James Elliott Hughes Jr. Think John Davidson Rockefeller and his son, who was always known as “Junior.” Think being called “Mr. Hughes Junior” in his father's law firm and by his father's circle. As I reached adulthood, it often made me think of the great king Edward I, followed by Edward II (junior) – deposed and killed because of incompetence. Ouch!

I doubt that Jamie realized when he asked me to write this foreword that he was hitting me in the gut. He likely didn't know that I had lived my life in the shadow of this giant whose constant question was, “Have you considered?” and the emotions that the question churned up when I had to acknowledge that I hadn't!

My father had a rigorous Victorian standard, which he always met and I frequently didn't. I hasten to say that I loved my father and he loved me. But I often struggled with how to meet his standard. Before me was a model of intellectual respect and rigor, and even more – how to be a man. I once asked for his definition of a man. He said, “Someone who takes absolute responsibility for his actions!” Quaking, I asked with hope: “Anything else?” “NO!” he responded. Wow. No excuses, no room for error.

And no wonder that I felt the shadow of such an imposing giant.

So I am one of the people Jamie is writing to and describing in his wonderful gift to people like me and to our families. We live in the land of giants - some who might remind their offspring of Oxymandias, others who overwhelm us with an embarrassment of generosity, supplying everything. Often, the constant question is, "Why aren't you like me?"

Jamie explores the roles of individuating (think Maslow, Erikson, Johnson - think Parsifal and Psyche - think Telemachus and Odysseus - King Philip II and Alexander - Henry III and his daughter Elizabeth), differentiating (think Bowen, Hillman, Hollis), and integrating (think Jung) all in the face of giants. Yes, consciously or unconsciously, we walk in the footsteps of these giants astride the planet.

History and literature are full of our stories. What is perhaps amazing in this time of awareness of the unconscious, and of the many efforts to enable conscious parenting and the gifts of modern psychology and social anthropology, is that when it comes to facing our giants, NOTHING has changed.

Some years ago, Susan Massenzio, Keith Whitaker, and I wrote a book called *The Voice of the Rising Generation - Family Wealth and Wisdom*. We sought to bring to life the issue of why it is so hard for rising generation members of families with significant financial and intellectual resources to make the journey to successful adulthood. We posited that the giants Jamie imagines, when their lives are done, leave behind them energy so strong that it is like a black hole, centripetally pulling all the members of the rising generations of their families into its vortex - a structure of continuing energy so strong that it disenables any possibility of their successfully individuating, differentiating, and integrating toward becoming and then

being who they are meant to be. It's the stunted growth of "Junior's" journey to self and the freedom of self it enables, a process that interrupts and disallows the normal cycle of the rites of passage through the various stages of one's life that the vast majority of humans pass through successfully as they fully and consciously become themselves, whom they were meant to be (think Erikson, Maslow, van Gennepe, Hollis, Zalman-Schachter).

Jamie offers great stories of HOW others surmounted the issue of living in the land of a giant and not only survived but thrived! Each discovers who he or she is, often with the help of a guide, as Athena was for Telemachus, Aristotle for Alexander, Lord Burghley for Elizabeth, Thomas More for Henry III, and Lord Melbourne was for Victoria.

Yes, there is a great hope in history and literature for "juniors" to have wonderful, fully individuated lives, and Jamie offers you stories and superb advice to imagine how.

James Elliott Hughes, Jr.

Author of *Family Wealth; Keeping It in the Family; Family: The Compact Among Generations*; and co-author of *The Cycle of the Gift; The Voice of the Rising Generation; Family Trusts*; and *Complete Family Wealth*, second edition.

Preface

Envision being an adventurer, going deep under the surface to explore the unique world of children born into prominent families and discovering that each of them was hungry to share their experience. (I began that adventure five years ago.) Zoom, at that point a relatively new technology, opened global boundaries. Suddenly, Indonesia was as close as Costa Rica. This gave me and my team of researchers access to rising gen who were eager to answer the question, “What is it like growing up in the land of giants?”

It seemed like the obvious question to ask, so we expected one of the participants in the research to say, “Oh, I get asked about my experiences growing up all the time.” But most rising gen aren't asked about their experiences. With a plethora of programs geared to “prepare” the next generation for their inheritance or a place in a business enterprise, it was like we found a void sitting at the heart of understanding what matters for this crucial cohort.

Russ Haworth, who speaks with a British accent, was my co-adventurer. Uncertain that I could press the record button on my own, Russ seemed like a suitable candidate, since he had started one of the most popular podcasts in the space, “The Family Business Podcast” Russ was in the middle of his own transition from being a family wealth advisor to a family business consultant. We shared two things that made us an ideal team for the project. Curiosity was our driving force. Without this trait, we'd approach each conversation with prejudice, a lens that would color how we understood what we heard.

It may sound strange, but the other characteristic we had in common was that we aren't focused on how family businesses can accumulate and sustain their wealth. Since both of us advise business-owning families and have helped guide decisions that led to a better performance for our clients, one would think that wealth is a primary motivator. Perhaps both of us are far too aware of what happens when individuals or families solely focus on preserving the goose that laid the golden egg. This one-dimensional perspective has led to most every reference we've found to the rising gen, next gen, or children of prominent families talking about the preservation of wealth and the development of a business as a source of continued wealth. That was what made our conversations so refreshing. We heard first-hand the struggles of rising gen for whom this is typically the focus. Instead, we learned they are more interested in asking, "What does it take to find my place in the land of giants?"

Like many adventurers, we didn't know what to expect on our journey. In fact, each conversation felt like we'd entered a new land. Discussing, reading the transcripts, and digging a little deeper each time was part of being on a path to discovery.

WRITING THIS BOOK HAS BEEN FILLED WITH *AH-HA!* MOMENTS.



All of us have blind spots, and I'm no exception.

During the interviews, as well as during many animated conversations with Russ afterward, I continued to see the project as solely focused on children of prominent families and their lives. It was about them, the rising gen. Then one day, I made the connection: *Ah-ha! I was a child of a*

prominent family. My father was a rabbi. I'd married Carolyn, who was a member of a business-owning family. Her father founded a national business. Had we ever asked ourselves, or had we ever been asked, what it was like growing up in the land of giants?

Earlier in my married life, when Carolyn's parents passed 35 days from each other, Carolyn and I founded Inheriting Wisdom, a specialized consulting firm that helped families with everything that goes on behind the money. It was a game changer for both of us. At the time, we were both psychologists. At first, our concern was about our family. But the company soon became a vehicle for helping other families. Along the way, we wrote *The Legacy Conversation: The Missing Gem in Wealth Planning*.

When I trained as a psychologist, research focused on identifying traits across a sampling of subjects. Unlike the early founders of the field, Freud, Jung, Adler, and others who focused their discoveries on experiences with individual subjects, research psychologists seemed after different answers. When Francesco (Frank) Barbera and Joelle Hawa from the University of Adelaide joined us to form a research/practitioner team, research came to take on a different meaning. Reading each of the transcripts, patterns emerged. Recognizing the uniqueness of each conversation, we now had the tools to discover a path that made its way through all the stories of those we had interviewed. Our discoveries weren't derived from magic or a collection of intuitions; we were using science—data—to confirm patterns.

Then came writing this book, *The Quest for Legitimacy: How Children of Prominent Families Discover Their Unique Place in the World*. It felt like we had discovered a new continent. Ironically, those who grew up in prominent families were the natives. For us, the final *ah-ha!* was

talking about the book with others who weren't from high-net-worth families, but who identified with feelings of smallness in the presence of their predecessors. We heard quotes like, “We grew up middle-class, but when we lost my grandmother just before her hundredth birthday, we lost a giant.” Children from executives in the entertainment industry, lawyers, doctors, politicians, and religious leaders—they could all identify with what it meant to struggle to find one's unique, legitimate place in the world.

If that was not enough, when participants in the research started to share that they were becoming giants in their own right, we knew how important it was for all rising gen to read this book—so they too can realize legitimacy is on the horizon.

Enjoy your quest!

Jamie

Acknowledgments

The contributors to this book come from a lifetime of rising. Woven into the fabric of the book are moments from the Jewish Community and the Village of Skokie. A stained-glass window with images of the burning bush from the book of Exodus sits in the lobby of Temple Judea. The first story of this book is set in the sanctuary where my father led his congregation for over 25 years. Even more important to me is Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute, reform Jewish Camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. From the age of three, this was my special place to discover myself.

A special place in my heart goes to the memory of the Hut, a restaurant in Evanston, Illinois, next door to Northwestern University. This was my original stomping grounds outside the bubble. This was a place where a diverse group of patrons shared conversations that opened my eyes to a larger world. As my world spread out, I experimented with my place in theater. Most important of all, for the inquisitiveness to do everything from drive a cab to work at Cook County Jail. All these experiences led to reaching out globally for this project.

After my wife's (Carolyn) parents died within 35 days, my world shifted. Her father was a founder of a frozen food business. Our shared challenge from that point forward was to create Inheriting Wisdom, with the mission of helping business and wealth-owning families with all the *stuff* that goes on behind the money. A new world opened for us. Family Firm Institute (FFI), Purposeful Planning Institute (PPI), Family Wealth Alliance (FWA), and a host of other groups provided us with colleagues, groups of peers. One day, an idea emerged. Let's ask those who have grown up in prominent families about their experiences.

Drew Disbrow Marnell took on a more of a significant role than I think she realized. She organized the project. The need for someone to push the record button on interviews led to a conversation with Judy Green and Brigett Owens from FFI, who made loads of introductions, but one was special.

Russ Haworth of Family Business Partnership, in the UK, entered my world as the Land of Giants' qualitative research project was in its infancy. The journey we have been on together for the better part of five years has changed both of our lives. Russ was there as we interviewed the 22 participants in the study. The treasure we hoped to uncover was a way to change lives. We learned, presented, and grew together. As the words were put on the page for this book, Russ was there. Most of all, he is a dear friend, a Zoom buddy.

It is amazing who you can meet on an elevator. Francesco (Frank) Barbera stepped off the elevator and suggested that we write journal articles together. I did not think that I would leave an FFI conference with a research team. His introduction to Joelle Hawa brought a level of depth. At the time both were at the University of Adelaide in Australia. Applying the tools to interpret qualitative data, a pattern emerged. Seen through my eyes, it is presented in this book.

Always believing that Route 66 was a highway that took travelers across our country, I was blessed to discover that it was home to two amazing writing coaches. Melissa Parks and David Goetz encouraged me to find the fortitude to write the *Quest for Legitimacy: How Children of Prominent Families Discover Their Unique Place in the World*. Knowing that I wanted to pen the content in the book while realizing what I needed on the journey makes their gift

especially rich. Their experience as authors helped turn me into a writer.

The Roadtrippers group of writers they formed have been fellow travelers. What a gift.

Special thanks goes to the team at Wiley who have helped bring this book alive. Cheryl Ferguson's copyediting caught the essence of this book while cleaning up the impediments that got in the way.

The illustrations of Amanda Duffy from *Rat Under Paper* brought to life the themes in the book and made reading even more delightful.

Far too many to mention have been the thought leaders that I have met. James Hughes stands out for all his contributions to my thinking. Lea Boyce, Veronica Yepez Reyna, Stacey Allred, Ian McDermott for taking the time to read the manuscript and provide valuable feedback. At the risk of leaving out many, I want to thank Jim Grubman for identifying the goal for rising gen to be able to walk in the Land of Giants, to Dennis Jaffe for illustrating the power of qualitative research, and Kristen Keffeler for making the power of positive psychology come alive.

To my life partner, Carolyn Friend-Weiner, who has inspired me on my quest: Together we have built a life of purpose. After you made me promise not to complicate your life, you introduced me to Jack (JJ), Cortney, and Ivy, my three stepchildren. They became a welcome addition, as they pushed me to understand what having a legitimate role in someone else's life means. Then they went on to figuring out their purpose in life and blessed me with nine grandchildren - Mason, Talia, and Dylan, Everly, Rowan, Simone, Teddy, Hannah, as well as Lincoln - who are connecting me to another generation. Amazingly, they made great choices in who they married. Melissa, Mark,

and Jon brought your unique gifts to the family. For the opportunity to be part of your quests as it unfolds, I am grateful.

Saving the giants, the heroes of this book, for last, those whose stories inspired the research and the content of this book deserve my gratitude. You gave more than time; you gave a gift that made a difference in my life. Now we will offer the stories to others, so that we can make a difference for other children raised in prominent families.

Introduction

This book, filled with stories, illustrates how children of prominent families discover their unique place in the world. Often the term *rising gen* or *next gen* is used when talking about a section of society. The word *rising* used as a descriptor, an adjective, heralds advancing, ascending, or mounting. This sounds desirable. Placed in front of the word, generation, the emphasis on rising shifts. Suddenly the focus on potential turns to concerns about you suffering from affluenza, a rare disease leading to a life of overindulgence. Fears about your generation take center stage. For you, the children of prominent families, you might find as you grow up that your elders' concerns and yours don't click.



▲ Advancing, ascending, or mounting is the purpose of taking the quest.

They genuinely believe that you, the rising gen, need to be protected against suddenly feeling “entitled.” Hired to come to the rescue, an army of attorneys, wealth advisors, and consultants are enlisted to prevent the damage you will wreak. After all, you will be the ones who will take over their kingdoms. They want to assure that you don't kill the goose that laid the golden egg. At some point growing up, you discover that you are different from those around you.

Armed with the mantra that you need to be prepared, a simple question has been overlooked. This book asks, “*What is it like for you to grow up in the land of giants?*” When asked, the rising gen intuitively know the term *giants* refers to the unusual achievements of your parents and ancestors. In some cases, generations going back hundreds of years have created a history of achievements. At birth, you are unaware of being different. Your awareness evolves over time.

The stories shared in this book were told with the hopes of making a difference for you, the reader. This book is not about you – it talks to you directly. Reading it, you will find yourself sitting face to face with others who have grown up as children of prominent families. As you turn the pages, this book will take you on a quest.

Books written about the rising gen focus their attention on passing down wealth between generations. Or they focus on whether you will have a role in the businesses of your family. Often, family businesses are the primary source of wealth for families. For some, diversification has turned them into enterprises. Since they are the engines that drive our civilization, they exert considerable influence. Fear that you will kill the goose that laid the golden egg is captured by this expression: “From shirtsleeve to shirtsleeve in three

generations." You, as a child born into one of these prominent families, become aware of being different long before you understand your parents' or elders' cause for concern.

In using the term *giants*, the hope was to capture the larger-than-life contributions left by a relatively small segment from around the globe. For an even smaller group of families who have preserved wealth long past three generations, the associated fortune includes a long history of accomplishments. In preparing for this book, conversations with children who grew up in prominent families from around the globe sparked an awareness that their stories resonated with my personal story. My parents did not possess great wealth - at least they were not financially wealthy. My father's empire was a synagogue, a Jewish summer camp, as well as his influence in a larger community. The moments that made him a hero for me were directly linked to my father's role in the village of Skokie, Illinois.

My father took a central role in preparations for welcoming the first Black family as they moved into the community. Later, he took an instrumental role when the Nazi party prepared to march through a town filled with concentration camp survivors from World War II, the Holocaust. Being protected from these events because of my age, I did not experience them directly. At the time, I wouldn't have been able to define the word *prominence*. I did understand that fighting against hatred made my father a hero. I didn't need to see the award my father received for his role in fighting against racial hatred to know that my father was respected.

When a procession of several thousand cars escorted by Illinois State Troopers carried my father's casket to the cemetery, I was 30 years old. At that point, I understood the

meaning of the word *prominence*. In silence, I felt regrets. Had I been a disappointment? As the research project that inspired this book and the formation of the ideas behind this book evolved, a breaking moment happened for me. The struggles to live up to the achievements of renowned elders are far more universal than the traditional writing about the rising gen suggests.

Prominence means something to groups of professionals, leaders in public corporations, clergy, as well as those in government. One could be prominent in a small community or on a global stage. As a child of a prominent family, reading about breaking moments, sudden disruptive experiences, should feel familiar. As should the periods of feeling betwixt and between that follow. Feeling less isolated, you recognize the potential that rising implies. Advancing, ascending, or mounting is the purpose of taking the quest. While connecting on the path of others, their quest, the hope is that you will find yourself, your quest.

ADVANCING, ASCENDING, OR MOUNTING IS THE
PURPOSE OF TAKING THE QUEST.

For those who are rising, preparing is essential. Children of prominent families where the transfer of wealth is important need to avail themselves of the knowledge required. The global army of advisors struggling to figure out why the next generation chose other advisors overlooks the struggles of the rising gen from their perspective. Changing the paradigm to considering a much larger world, including those raised by prominent parents or families, moves the focus on financial wealth out of center stage.

Ironically, many of the stories of giants tell tales of rising. Literally coming from poverty, escaping threat or persecution, or struggling to overcome adverse

experiences in their families, they are driven to live a different life, a quest. Heroes emerge from every crevice of the globe. They live unique lives as they rise. Hoping that their next gen will not sink backward, they have their own set of fears. Their children are raised in prominent families who will have children who also want to find their unique place in the world.

Reading this book makes it clear. The challenge is personal, allowing multiple generations to enter conversations about their struggles. In the process, giants will become mere mortals. You will walk in their land. Shoulder to shoulder, you will become comfortable walking with them. As you integrate what you learned growing up with what you learn from the outside world, you thrive, taking ownership of your life.

Fair warning, the quest is uncomfortable. Raised surrounded by opportunity, the bar has been set high for you. Some of you will grow up with amazingly supportive elders. Unfortunately, others will experience scaring moments. Even when parents encourage you not to feel pressure, the internal expectations remain. Travelers on the quest learn from events that alter their way on the path, breaking moments. Periods of discomfort, feeling betwixt and between, follow. Drawing from the stories of others, identifying the four stages, and of course my story, this book welcomes you to take the quest.

CHAPTER 1

Toward the Light

The rabbi appeared from behind the Ark of the Covenant (Aron Ha-brit). At that precise moment, the congregation fell silent in response to the sound of a small voice.

“Is that G-d?”

The mother tried to contain an anxious laugh as she quieted her son. For a four-year-old, his response made sense. It's not every day that you see a man enter a room in black robes with an embroidered white scarf (tallis) around his neck in G-d's house.

When I recall this moment from a Sabbath morning at the synagogue, I suppress the urge to blurt out: “No, that is my father!”

The boy didn't get the fuss; he probably never had seen a rabbi. If you didn't know that my father's office was immediately behind the Ark, his appearance was dramatic. The simple architectural design of the sanctuary highlighted the Ark. It was centerstage. My father, the rabbi, held a role of prominence in many people's eyes. At his funeral, with several thousand in attendance, state troopers led the procession through our city. Most days he was just my father; I'd seen his rabbinical gowns so many times. They were my idea of normal. Except when my father's status was called out, I didn't pay much attention to his prominence in our community – and even region.

FAMILY PROMINENCE