What I learned from dad, I'm passing on to my community.

FROM AN early age, I was fortunate enough to learn what makes a successful business and businessperson from my father, Gerald Ronson, who has remained my mentor ever since.

Not everyone is in a position to have a family member who can act as a mentor, but I am convinced that everyone has a huge amount to gain from finding a mentor. And importantly, it is not all one way. For the mentor there is the highly rewarding opportunity to help another individual to achieve their full potential. The mentor will get a better understanding of what the mentee is looking to achieve and the hurdles they are coming across or are perceived to exist. They may even be able to help.

A successful mentor needs to do more than sit across a table and preach – it is the act of experiencing the mentor in action and benefiting from watching them navigate business meetings and negotiations that really makes all the difference.

Mentoring involves spending some constructive time with the mentor. Understanding what they want to do, what they want to achieve and see if the skills that the mentor has can help support the endeavours of the person concerned.

A mentor is defined in the dictionary as a wise and trusted counsellor or an individual or teacher or senior sponsor or supporter. To me a mentor is someone who will encourage, support and sponsor their mentee in their chosen career. People from any walks of life can benefit from mentoring as when you start out you start afresh, with little knowledge of the big wide world and what it has to offer. I run an internship programme for students from different backgrounds to try and give them some work experience and understanding of an industry they have interest in. We take students from all over the country, train them up for an internship place and it doesn’t matter what their background is. Everybody deserves a chance.

A mentor provides a sounding block for some body, someone who you can use to listen to your ideas and who is not in your personal network. It is the mentor and someone who comes with some commercial experience. A leadership position whether you are male or female, needs to be earned and the right person needs to be put in that role. A mentor can provide confidence for the individual to take on that role or to aspire to that position. If the mentor is a high achieving female operating at a senior level within an organisation, it will provide encouragement for the mentee and what can be achieved with hard work and perseverance.

A successful mentor does not have to be an expert in your field. The ingredients of success are similar across many professions – attention to detail, focus and dedication to becoming the best. I realised early on that very few things in life are handed to you on a plate, you have to earn them. A mentor can help a mentee by setting clear goals and identifying the path to achieving those.

In the Jewish community, it is critical for women to be involved in key roles. I have been fortunate enough to operate at a senior level both in my career and at the Jewish charities with whom I work. I am delighted to support the Commission on Women in Jewish Leadership mentoring pilot. I hope to help women feel confident to take on leadership positions and encourage their children to fulfil their dreams.

The programme is there for women who want to achieve and take on these roles. It has to start at grass root level, with individuals who cannot expect, but have to earn their position and respect within the community and for the role they wish to take on. I have been brought up to work hard, take my roles seriously and be involved in the community. Mentees have to have a passion and desire as well to achieve these positions. The mentors are there to help them and guide them in the right direction.

Lisa Ronson
Commercial Director, Heron International

Shoah denial is being replaced by an illusive and delusive evil

WHEN SOMETHING factual is denied, evidence can be mounted successfully. That’s precisely what happened in London when Lord Justice Gray ruled in favour of Professor Deborah Lipstadt, an American scholar specialising in Holocaust denial, when she was sued by British denier David Irving in 2000. In one fell swoop, denial was purged from the mainstream and relegated to far-right fringes.

But around the same time, an incredibly sophisticated plan to attack the historic narrative was quietly underway. It was hatched with state budgets by a number of governments and elites in East European states that were in the process of winning admission into the European Union and NATO. That would ‘change’ Holocaust history so important to them?

First, ultranationalists don’t have staining on their history (all nations have them, in fact), and in the Balkans, participation in the actual killing (not just ‘collaboration’) led to these three states – Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia – having the highest percentage of annihilation (around the 95 percent mark) of their Jewish population.

Second, these nations suffered enormously from Soviet occupation when the war ended, and faced a good reason to cry a crocodile tear or two about the uniquely evil genocide of the Jews with Soviet crimes against Lithuania, which, though great in magnitude, cannot be regarded as equivalent to either their intention or result.” For some reason, the UK government won’t release the full text. Earlier this year, London human rights activist Monica Lowenberg played a key role in the counter demonstration against the Waffen SS march in Riga. She also mounted a petition against it that garnered thousands of signatures.

Lord Janner, who had worked closely with the Wiesenthal Center’s Dr Efraim Zuroff on the prosecution of Nazis, was at the heart of efforts to mobilise British support for the first counterattack in the European Parliament. That new effort is the Seventy Years Declaration, published in January. On the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee ‘Final Solution’ conference. The signatories (MPs, MEPs and Lords) include: 15 Britons – seven Labour, four Conservative, three Liberal Democrat and a crossbencher.

Yet again, a nefarious branch of anti-Semitism cloaks itself in bogus history. Between the lines of it all is the calculus of the Christ-killer reinvented as the eternal Communist-like enemy of the “pure” nation states of (Eastern) Europe. The new battle for the history of the Holocaust, and the implications for human rights for generations to come, is just getting underway.

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