


**THE PEOPLE**

# Want to succeed in the business world? Learn how to be a mensch, author says

**BY CAROLYN ROBBINS**

Special to The Republican

Author and medical technology engineer Todd Zive was just 4 years old in 1980 when his father was murdered by an armed robber in the Easthampton pharmacy he owned, leaving his mother Eydie alone to raise three young sons.

As the family coped with the trauma that followed, Zive never forgot the lessons his father, Leslie Zive, taught him about how to be successful in life: “Be a ‘mensch,’” he was told.

“My father embodied the meaning of what it means to be a mensch,” a Yiddish word describing a person of character, integrity, generosity and who respects others, he said. “He was my first role model.”

Even though he was just a tyke, Zive has vivid memories of his dad’s store, which featured a soda fountain with red vinyl stools that stretched the length of the store. “Behind it were all the ingredients needed to serve up soda and ice cream and — my personal favorite — milkshakes,” he said.

“Thanks to the soda fountain, dad’s pharmacy was not only a place where people went to pick up their medications but also a gathering spot where locals came to have coffee and toast for breakfast, and egg, tuna and grilled cheese sandwiches for lunch,” he said.

His dad also taught him all kinds of lessons there: “Greeting customers and being kind, cleaning up after myself when my chocolate milkshake dripped down the side of the tall glass, counting change and straightening the displays,” he said.

“These were the my earliest lessons on being a mensch, centered on how to respect people and take care of the world around me,” he said.

It is those lessons that form



the core of Zive’s new book: “The Mensch Method, Achieving Success through Character in Life and Business.”

In the book, Zive lists 11 key traits that define a mensch, along with a series of exercises for readers on how to conquer adversity, build resilience, identify positive influences in life and in business, cultivate vulnerability and extend yourself to help others.

“Being a mensch is not only a compliment, it is a call to action,” Zive said. “In business, where success is measured by profits and outcomes, being a mensch sets you apart as a leader who values people, relationships and growth.”

Recently, Zive read a journal entry his mother sent to him in 1986. In it, she drew from the mensch mindset, writing: “We cannot question what happened: We can only say: ‘Now that this has happened, what are we going to do about it?’ And this is precisely what she did. Mom modeled resilience for us boys in how she lived her life and led our family.”

In his chapter titled “A Mensch Shows Up,” he recalls how his uncle Paul helped his family



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TODD ZIVE, AUTHOR, ‘THE MENSCH METHOD’

cope with the upheaval of their father’s death. In the days following the murder, Zive said his uncle stepped in and hired a pharmacist to fill prescriptions for patients in need.

“He also played basketball games with me and my brothers in the driveway at his house and took us to Boston Celtics games,” he said.

In a chapter titled “A Mensch Believes in Themselves,” Zive urges readers to overcome self-doubt by trusting who you are as a person, trusting in your own competence and abilities, and trusting in those who have chosen to support you.

Zive agrees that the workplace of 2025 feels more cutthroat than ever, with many companies hyper-focused on the bottom line.

“Efficiency and results matter, but when everything becomes transactional, when people are treated as numbers instead of human beings, it takes a toll. Burnout rises, trust erodes, turnover increases and workplace culture suffers,” he said.

“The Mensch Method” is rooted in what Zive calls “servant leadership.”

True leadership “is about lifting others up and rising

together rather than climbing alone or diminishing others along the way. It is about achieving success through integrity, resilience and meaningful relationships, contrasting sharply with leadership models that prioritize power and status over influence and character,” he said.

“The Mensch Method’ builds strong teams, fosters trust and creates culture where people feel valued and

engaged,” he said. “When people feel valued, they show up motivated, committed and ready to do their best work.”

Zive’s book has garnered high praise from reviewers.

Derek Herrera, founder and CEO of Bright Uro, calls it “a powerful reminder that success is measured by the legacy we leave and the lives we touch.”

Another writes that Zive’s overarching message is that success is not just about what you achieve but how you achieve it.

Zive, who grew up in Northampton and Longmeadow, now resides in Irvine, California, with his wife and two children.

He worked in the med-tech industry for more than 25 years before founding ZGL Group in 2022 and holds a master’s and a bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering, along with certifications in corporate governance, executive coaching and venture capital.

His book is available on Amazon and at Barnes and Noble. He is also recording an audiobook.