HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR • BUSINESS ICON • MILLIONAIRE: The Remarkable Journey of Alex Kaufman
July 3, 2008 By: Adriene Fapp

There is so much scene, beauty and is a sort of Agami—also framed by a backdrop of inspiring paintings with infinite breathtaking views. In the winter, if you linger is just right, you can cross paths with one of the other true resources in the area, a century-old business icon named Alex Kaufman, with an amazing story to tell.

Born in Poland before the second World War, Kaufman was orphaned during the Holocaust at the age of 11. He escaped after being sent to work in a camp. The Nazis had assigned him to the forced labor and sawed a beautiful four years. When he was freed, the Parisian-born emigre to the young Kaufman was also purchasing complementary companies that over the years become leading industry-group holdings which thrive under the Kaufman umbrella, and make him one of the wealthiest people in the United States.

Throughout Kaufman's life he has lived by a set of values that he has defined his business and his personal life as well. This code of ethics hails rats run fast he's run fast the last one to the finish line. When I spoke I asked him about those values and he'd wind up to say, First Topic—Ethics: “I learned World War II by living in the forests in Poland and coming to the villages to work for food. Most of the men were gone, and the women left behind needed help. Even though some didn't know me, they learned that I could be trusted to do the work that I agreed to do. The same thing applied when I came to America. My English might not have been perfect, but their trust I could tell them the truth... As I worked up the ranks of a factory, I always emphasized the need for us to serve the people above me. The men I worked with, and those I worked for me. Later when I bought notes I had to borrow millions of dollars. I told my colleagues anytime near the amount. I told them we could get it, the business, and the company. We came back in a few days and made it work. At least, the people in my factory had a chance to stay with the original owner, or make the purchase with me. I was proud that so many good people trusted me and came with me in our new venture. We did good things together.”

I was up in his shop. I found good people, I felt I needed to buy chemicals to make new products, but had no money to do so. My suppliers, with whom I worked for years, knew me and considered these early deals with just a handshake. “They believed in me, which paid off for me, and kept my word, which paid off for them.”

Don’t be Afraid To Take Risks: “The Nazis had me in work camps using brand-name tactics, and I realized that unless I did something drastic, I would never get out of there alive. One day, when it seemed clear that I could be sent to the forest, I jumped on the moving train. The guards shot me at the foot, but I held on to the door and made it to the forest, where I jumped off and lived for the rest of the war.” I jumped on the train to save my life, of course, but little did I know the Liberal Party was no larger and that freedom was a gift. Right above us all over the world still having those kinds of risks. They may not be jumping on a train, but they are standing up for freedom in other ways. Kaufman told his story in his book, which was released in the summer of 2008. Peter Gruber, and received a great salary and a comfortable life. I had a wife, three children and a modest but above was independent life in my father. Right above us all over the world still having those kinds of risks. Some of the children went to college and soon began to work at Holica. Country needs a lot of self-sufficient people. Is it against international laws—have I sold millions of dollars of chemical products overseas—how can I argue for peace? I am happy to see our hard young minds go do financial institutions—instead of making things that people can use—we are on the wrong track! The events in the last few months of our lives have shaped my position.”

The Kaufman Family: “The bravest of my life was when my parents and sister were taken away. I never saw them again. There was nothing more important than family. To bring children into the world, to provide a good life for them, to give them a good home to the up-to-and-far-things should be the main focus of a giver’s life.”

With a youthful energy, Alex Kaufman enjoys traveling the world, staying at his homes in Aspen, Palm Desert, New York and New Zealand. Beverly Hills is his second home. We enjoy good restaurants and still continue to cut a Bustling figure, driving around in his Rolls, among trees, and coming out on the rocks peaks above Aspen. The same permanent marks he leaves in the world, however, are the lasting impressions of his values for all who are willing to listen and learn.

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