



*In loving memory of*  
**Rami Makhzoumi** 1977 - 2011



Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Rami Makhzoumi Chair for Corporate Governance at AUB was launched a year ago on this very specific date 31<sup>st</sup> October on Rami's birth day as a tribute to his legacy. It recently partnered with Hawkamah to develop resources in corporate governance – a subject that was always close to Rami's heart. Today some of you will have attended the inaugural Chairman's Forum and the subsequent lecture on corporate governance organized by the Chair and we hope to see many more such events in years to come.

Eighteen months have now gone by since our beloved son Rami passed away may his soul rest in peace, and today we are commemorating what would have been his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. This has of course been a very painful time for us, his friends and family, as we have had to learn to live without Rami's daily presence in our lives and instead we cherish his memory. Carrying on with his legacy and yet another step in our tribute I am very proud that today we have officially launched, "The CEO's Journey", celebrating his life & leadership.

Steven Sonsino and Jacqueline Moore interviewed over seventy of Rami's family, friends and colleagues to produce a detailed account of Rami's life and philosophy which will inform and inspire other young leaders, as well as being a precious record for us all to remember him by.

The book captures very well some of Rami's key attributes: his unique charm and charisma, his qualities as a leader, his energy and most of all, his vision; but most of all, Rami's unconditional attachment to his family he used to express constantly as a wonderful son, and a wonderful father and brother.

Rami believed in the importance of investing in people and many of the initiatives he created and supported were based upon this principle. Within FPI he created the "high-flyers" initiative, which every year identified a group of talented individuals from across the business and invested in their development as future leaders. Outside of the business, through the Young Arab Leaders organization in Dubai, of which he was a board member, he played a key part in a number of initiatives aimed at developing and inspiring the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs in the region. On a more personal level, Rami encouraged young friends and relatives to pursue their dreams.

In developing people, Rami sought to bring together groups with different backgrounds and experiences, he did this deliberately in the belief that each would gain something: an idea; a perspective; a value; from the other.

Rami had also firmly grasped the realities of the world and was particularly struck with the importance of change and, more crucially, adapting to a changing world. He was very conscious of the impact on a business of volatility in unstable economies and always promoted the value of strengthening one's ability to adapt from within to changes in the external world. For him, "Change is the constant force that is driving our industry into the future". This notion is surely now more relevant than ever, both in business and politics.



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The concept of personal responsibility was fundamental to who Rami was: he often said “leadership is a responsibility not a right”. With this realization he built his core principles of: listening; selfishness for selflessness and clarity of goals which guided many of his actions. Reading the book, there are many examples of his willingness to listen to opinions from all quarters before deciding on and then relentlessly pursuing a course of action. Perhaps the most impressive example of this was the Think Teams exercise, which Rami devised to review the entire corporate vision of FPI. Self-examination and vision of this nature typified Rami’s way of living, both in his work and personal life.

Above all, the one thing that comes across from reading the book is the sheer joy of being around Rami. Many of the stories told are not of particularly significant moments, but small moments, happy memories, times shared. This is how we will remember Rami. Not just the many awards with which he was honored or his major business achievements, but in the precious personal moments which matter most to each of us, many of which are shared in the book.

“Family is not just blood, in my mind, but what can become blood; those around you, those close to you, those who share your values, it’s the greater unit”. Rami once said; and all of you tonight have extended our family by accepting to share this meal in Rami’s memory.

May, Tamara, Camellia ,Rami’s children May, Yasmeena, Nour and I, would also like to thank those who have spared their time to give interviews during the preparation of the book. We are very grateful to you all.

Our thanks also to Jacqueline Moore and Steven Sonsino who have done a wonderful job of drawing together the various memories shared into a story which both captures Rami’s life and which, we hope, will serve as an inspiration to other young leaders. That is a legacy of which he would be proud.

Finally, our thanks to Saif Alwan and Zanjeer Salam and the team at FPI and Future Group who have worked so hard to turn the text into the wonderful book we have launched today.

Let us celebrate Rami’s life and watch a small video in tribute to his short journey in this world and pray that we carry on his dream...