

“So I Trust, Too”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Two preeminent Rabbis of the Talmud, Hillel and Akiba entered adulthood knowing little of Judaism but began learning and grew to greatness. Another renowned Talmudic Rabbi, Resh Lakish, spent years as a bandit before recreating himself as a sage.

In the Torah, Esau grows up a wild, violent man. He swears to kill his brother. Yet when he finally meets him years later, Esau falls on Jacob's neck and weeps.

Theodore Herzl lived most of his life as an essayist and dilettante before radically changing his focus and becoming the remarkable, visionary founder of the Zionist movement.

Why do people surprise us? Even more interesting, why do we continually deny the capacity to be surprised? “I know people,” insists the cynic. Those who claim knowledge of others rarely see them positively. No one says “I know people — they have such reserves of kindness in them.” No, it is always “I know people, and they are no damn good.” Yes, we have within us the capacity for evil, but also reservoirs of strength and insight, the chance to pivot in a moment and make our lives anew.

John Masefield wrote:

*I have seen flowers come in stony places
And kind things done by men with ugly faces,
And the gold cup won by the worst horse at the races,
So I trust, too.*