Elimelech Nesher

Born: Soviet Union
Currently: Ariel University, Ariel, Israel

Growing up, I loved reading. The books I read were the lighthouse that led me to science. It was a strange mix of Mikhail Belyakov's A Dog's Heart, Kafka's A Country Doctor, Gerald Durrell's works – I think I read all of his books, and the semi-autobiographical stories of British veterinary surgeon James Alfred Wight. These books led me to science because behind the descriptions of diseases and their treatment, I felt the authors' admiration for the "scientific approach."

First, I pursued a degree in zoology, but I quickly realized that I wanted my scientific research to benefit people. During this time, I was also becoming more aware of feeling uneasy in my own country. Being a Jew in Soviet Ukraine, I always felt like a stranger – whether it was at University, or on the streets. I needed a change, both in my studies and my country. My wife and I moved to Israel and I began to study neuroscience. I was happy in my work and completed my PhD, but still I felt a pull to something new.

I finally found my niche in the field of cancer molecular biology, which meant another move, this time to Buffalo NY and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Now I'm back home in Israel, with my own cancer research lab - where I happily spend hours looking at the fluorescent microscope taking in the space-like beauty of a cell's nucleus.