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A Legacy for Humanity

I spotted businessman Fernando Goldsztein from a distance at the FIERGS Event Center in Porto Alegre with just under ten minutes to go before 10 a.m. It was the Brain Congress, and Fernando was making his way toward Rádio Gaúcha's glass studio, where he was scheduled to join Timeline with PG and me.

I am deeply inspired by the movement Fernando is leading. If you are not familiar with his work, I strongly encourage you to learn more about it.

Fernando's son, Frederico, was diagnosed with a very serious brain tumor at the age of nine. Medulloblastoma is the most common malignant brain tumor in children, although it can also occur in adults. One of those adults was my dear friend Daniel Scola. Another was my cousin Luísa. In Luísa's case, our family experienced the pain and grief of losing her when the tumor tragically returned for a second time and there was nothing more that could be done.

Fernando's son, like Luísa, received the devastating news that every cancer patient and family fears: recurrence. In practical terms, the tumor had returned. With medulloblastoma, recurrence is even more alarming. The chances of a cure become very low, even with aggressive treatment. It is common for parents to hear from doctors that the available therapies are no longer effective and that the journey may be nearing its end.

Fernando refused to give up. As a successful entrepreneur, he set out to find a cure for his son. He traveled the world searching for new treatment options. When he realized that many of the treatment protocols still in use today date back to the 1980s, he decided to pursue something much bigger. He invested millions from his own personal fortune (GQ magazine reports the figure at R\$17 million) so that physicians and scientists around the world could dedicate themselves to research and the testing of new therapies. He also brought other business leaders into the effort. The network expanded, and by the end of last year, the testing phase had begun. I am always moved when he says, without the slightest hesitation:

"Kelly, I don't say 'if a cure is discovered.' We are going to discover the cure."

The Medulloblastoma Initiative represents far more than a father's fight—extraordinary as that would already be. It also shows what can happen when someone chooses to use their resources to build a global research network, financially support science, and unite efforts around a common goal. It is a privilege to witness this revolution. Especially because this legacy—born in our own Rio Grande do Sul—will ultimately belong to all of humanity. —