

Welcome back with Eva Luedecke. Eva; to what extent do you feel that your experiences during the Holocaust affected your present health?

I guess, the strain-- also, my life might have influenced the state of my health. It might have even started when I was four years old and lost my father. I don't know, all through life.

So it's sort of hard for you to tell if it really affected.

It's hard. It's hard to say.

Do you feel it's affected your emotional state?

Yes, at times, at times.

Do you think very often about the Holocaust?

Many times, yes. And I make myself read about it and watch movies also because I think that I should never forget. And nobody should ever forget.

Who do you talk with about the Holocaust? Are there some people that are easy to talk to?

Well, I-- most of my friends know about my background. But I have been asked in our temple and in other temples-- well, only in one other temple, to talk about my life to children so that they understand what was going on.

Do you find them receptive to your talks?

Some of them are terribly bored. There are just a few who ask questions. But it is so far away from them, it's so-- I understand that they're not interested-- not very interested.

Do you find you ever dream about your experiences?

No, I don't. I really don't.

Does it affect-- the experiences you've had, does that affect any way how you relate to your family members, like your daughter or relatives?

No, it really doesn't. It's-- you see, my daughter has lived through, more or less, part of it anyhow. It was the same thing. And she actually, as I was told the other day, has a very good memory of Shanghai.

And she remembers, even-- she was-- she just visited her relatives on the West Coast. And they were amazed how much she remembers and how attached she was to some of the people in Shanghai. She considered-- considers it her home, in a way. And my family members in Israel, whom I visit, they don't ask too much about it. They have had their own problems.

When you think back to the Orient, how do you feel about it?

I love it. I love it. I love the Chinese. They are wonderful people. They are-- I still have Chinese friends and have visited them. And they used to live here closer to Cleveland. And we visited them regularly. And they're just lovely people. I love them.

What are your feelings towards the Japanese?

Right after the war, I hated them. And I wouldn't have bought anything Japanese, which, of course, now, you can't stay

away from it. But they mistreated, really mistreated us during the ghetto times. They beat up the people who applied for a permit to leave the ghetto and go-- for their work. So I didn't really have very much sympathy for them.

But over the years, I guess, you should forgive. But I find it very hard to forgive, extremely hard. And I was told that I should do that because there are some good Japanese and some good Germans.

Are your feelings towards the Germans any different than your feelings towards the Japanese?

No, I don't. As a matter of fact, it-- when I hear somebody talk German, it sort of-- I cringe. I don't know. It's a strange feeling. I just-- having been born in Germany years ago, I don't feel like it-- I don't-- it doesn't mean anything to me. It means much more to have lived in Shanghai.

When I-- for instance, I go on a vacation, and very often, it has happened that-- when I talk to some people and say, back home, I say, back in Shanghai. Now, I don't say Cleveland, I don't say Berlin, I say back in Shanghai. And people would say-- yeah.

Have you wanted to return there to visit?

Yes, I had wanted to. I really wanted to go. But I think that's out now. It's too strenuous.

Do you like to travel? It seems that with all your travels, you might be tired of it. But I'm not sure how you feel about it.

No, I'm not tired of it. I travel. I have traveled a lot, basically all over the world, except I haven't been back to the Orient. But I travel every year a few times. But going back to China is just a little bit too strenuous.

To what extent do you feel that the Holocaust experiences affected your outlook on life?

Well, it's a very hard question. I-- first of all, I think that when people here tell me that they have lived through the Depression and all, and how bad it was, and everything, I'm very mean. And I said, so big deal.

That has-- I think this has affected me, really, that I've had a life which was-- went up and down. We came to Shanghai with nothing. And we worked our way up. And we came to Germany-- well, there was no problem.

But we came to United States. And I started-- I mean, we both had jobs. That was no problem. But we had a very good life in Shanghai the last few years. So we-- it started slowly. And now, I'm very comfortable.

And it has affected me that I think I become-- I sometimes look back and say, my gosh, what a horrible life have you led? And sometimes, I think, well, look at the good side of it. If that is--

Your English is wonderful. Where did you learn it?

Well, I went to school in-- obviously, I went to school in Germany. And I learned-- I had seven years of French-- of-- no, of-- seven years of English, and 10 years of French, and three years of Latin. And then in Shanghai, we lived basically in an English community and made it a point to really speak English, more or less, which was a British English, the Queen's English.

And I-- also, my mother was a very ambitious woman. And she insisted, while I was going to school, that I had private lessons in English and French, which I absolutely detested because what for? And she was a very bright woman. She said, one of these days, you will be very grateful to me. I could never thank her enough because she wasn't there to be thanked for. But it helped. And I think I have a little bit of a knack for languages.

I think so too.

Do you think that survivors are different from other Jews?

Some are, and some aren't. My brother-in-law, for instance, who is a survivor of Auschwitz, is definitely a different-- he lost his wife and his-- first wife and child there. And he can't talk about it. He can't go to a temple. He can't go to a Hanukkah or Purim party because he always thinks of his little boy. And he is-- I think he's never getting over it, even though it's now, what, 40 years or so.

Otherwise, I don't really know too many. I think it was different in Shanghai. And I don't know too many. I think we are very adaptable. I am, and my husband was. So wherever we lived, we adapted very fast. So it's very hard for me to say whether we are different or not. I think some people brood more about it and cannot ever get it out of their mind.

Do you feel you're stronger from it? You seem like a very strong person.

I don't know. I don't know whether I'm stronger for it or whether--

In spite of it.

--in spite of it. I really can't say who is-- to me, who is it. It certainly wasn't easy to leave the country where you were born. It's just extremely hard, I think.

And people tell me, why didn't you go earlier? Why didn't you go sooner? I said, well, it's not very easy. And especially when you are young and have no money and no-- not-- nothing-- well, no-- well, I had an education. But you're scared. You're terribly scared.

Well, you go to China or you go to-- we were actually so scared to come to United States to compete with these Americans that we-- the visa lasts the four months-- yeah, four months. And we postponed it until about five minutes before four months were over because we were scared. We thought, I would have to be a maid. And my husband would be a chauffeur for somebody. And that was it.

Happily, it worked out better than that.

It worked out much better, yes.

Thank you very much, Eva, for being with us--

My pleasure.

--and telling your story, which was fascinating.

Thank you very much. It was very nice being here.