

OK, Hannah, we'll finish up here now if we can. We talked about the effects of the Holocaust on your physical health. What about your emotional health?

Well, I still have nightmares.

Do you really?

Sometimes I still dream--

Terrible dreams?

Yeah, they are always terrible. And I don't think you ever forget because this got your through life.

Tell me something about chocolate pudding.

When I had typhoid fever, you know, you have very high temperature and dream. And you fantasize. And I remember till today, I was laying in the bunk. And I did survive being sick because it was towards the end of the-- before liberation. And I dreamed of food, chocolate pudding.

Can you imagine?

Because I was such a sweet tooth, you know, and I missed it through all those years. And somehow that dream I never forgot, you know. But luckily I survived because I think it was towards the end--

You mean because it was the hope, you knew it was toward the end?

Well, we were-- while I was just recuperating and I was young and I was working, and my girlfriend being my savior really that I did survive.

You had basic good health up until then.

Yes, basic good health. And being with this small group doing the work for the cable repair--

And then you did get some medical attention--

That's helped quite a bit too-- right, well, not really, no medication or anything. I don't know really how it was. But I know there was no really no medication. Somehow I think nature won out. And I was meant to live.

Wonderful. That's-- right, right. Fatal, you become a fatalist, I guess.

Right. Bashert.

Bashert. Have your Holocaust experiences affected your social relationships? Are most of--

I have a lot of friends. I always had a lot of friends. And I like people around me. And I have a lot of survivor friends, and especially the first years.

But we did stay in contact all these years. I mean I'm still closest with friends that went through the same I did. My closest friends are all survivors. But I do have American friends that I cherish just as much. But I have a-- there is a bond--

A same background--

--with people that went through the same and lost their parents or brothers and sisters or whatever. I was fortunate that my brother was here. But there is a very close relationship with those people.

You still see your brother?

My brother is here in Cleveland.

Oh, he's here in Cleveland.

Oh, yeah. We see each other almost every day.

And he's married and has a family?

He's married and has a family. And we are very close with my sister-in-law and because--

She is she a survivor as well.

She is was in Auschwitz and is a survivor and lost parents and brother and sister. And so we are very close.

Do you think that your Holocaust experiences affected the ways in which you relate to your family?

Yes, it did.

Made you--

Yes.

The bond stronger?

Very. Very. I have a wonderful relationship with my daughters and now the grandchild that-- both of my daughters grew up without any grandparents because my husband didn't have parents and I didn't have parents. So--

You lost them you mean, right?

Yeah. We lost all our family, grandparents. And so my kids always resented it. All children get spoiled from their grandparents. Why don't we have grandparents? So I always felt very close to my children. And now that I have my own grandchild, I mean I love them to pieces.

Right. Right.

And I'm very close with my children.

How lucky for her. Yeah.

All my relations are really-- I think because of what I went through, I feel very close to a lot of people because I want to catch up for what I missed.

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

Well, I always had hope. And I was a fighter.

It's wonderful.

And I never was given anything on a silver platter. Till today, I always worked from the time my children were in

elementary school. And I really never-- it never bothered me. And I always felt very lucky that I'm here, I survived, and have what I have. I really am satisfied. It's only sad that I did lose my first husband and married off two daughters after he was gone. But I was-- I did it on my own. And I love life really. I really-- I'm not bitter because of what happened.

Right. Do you think that survivors are different from other Jews?

I don't think so. I really don't think so.

It's attitude.

It's attitude because-- I don't have a chip on my shoulder. I mean why, after all these years-- I mean the minute I came to this country and started to make a life-- I mean I never forgot and I talk about it. But I'm not blaming anybody here. And I don't have a chip on my shoulder and say, look what I went through. I mean it just never occurred to me. It really didn't.

Do you think that there are reasons for your survival?

Luck.

Have you thought about that? Luck.

Luck. Just luck, I guess. And being young helped. Being young and healthy--

Right.

--helped.

Right. Were you able to aid in the survival of any others? Like your girlfriend helped you. But of course you needed help because--

I was sick.

--you were not well not.

Really, she really was my savior. And till today, we are-- everybody knows we are inseparable. We went through all those camps together. And we slept together. And we ate together and liberated together. And then we came to this country. So we're very close.

That's wonderful to have a friendship like that.

Right.

And fortunately, she's healthy and happy and married and with children--

Right.

--and grandchildren. So you see each other fairly often?

Fairly often.

At least yearly perhaps?

Oh, yeah, yearly. Used to be more often. Now we get a little older, we don't travel, you know, drive. But she's in Indianapolis.

That's not too far. And I'm sure you speak on the telephone.

Oh, yes, all the time. And--

What thoughts do you have when you remember what you went through? Do you have any particular thoughts? Or you don't really like to remember what you went through?

You mean now?

Now.

My thoughts--

Yeah. I mean is it-- is there anything in particular that you think about when you think what I went through. Of course, you said you're not bitter.

No.

And--

I mean if I were bitter, I would be depressed all the time.

Well, that's true.

It doesn't really-- I'm not-- at this point, you know, it's almost 40 years. So I don't really feel bitter at this point, no. I just wanted to get on with life.

Right. What made you decide to share your experiences with us?

Well, my children always wanted me to do it because I gave them bits and pieces but I never really gave them the whole story. And it was hard for me. It would be hard for me to do on my own, to sit down and talk into a recorder, tape recorder. So when I was approached-- my daughter became a member of the--

Council.

--Council of Jewish Women. And so she said to me, Mom, why don't you do it? And maybe we can really hear the story once and for all. So I did volunteer.

Really, how wonderful.

Do it for my kids and whoever is interested, you know, because it should be known what happened. And each story is unique and different, you know.

Do you think, Hannah, that survivors have a message that others need to understand?

Well, the message is that what's going on all over the world, it can happen again. It can, you know. Look around you. Maybe not here, but in all these countries where people are, you know, not free and oppressed and all. There are concentration camps.

And you have to be interested. And I think people have to care, not just--

About your fellow man.

Care about people, people like my-- mine is just a little story, like a pebble. But why wasn't I given papers to come here as a young girl? And I had no teenage years that were of any like here, no college, no all these wonderful things and that were planned for your children.

And of course, I made up on my own daughter. So they both went to college. And they both have educations. And they're both married nice husbands. And so it-- I think I want it more now than maybe others because of-- and I know that most survivors children, they all want a lot for them because they didn't-- they suffered through and didn't have it, you know. So I have no, you know, other feelings about that.

In your opinion, what would be an appropriate way to commemorate the memories of those who lost their lives during the Holocaust years?

Well, an appropriate way? I make a Jahrzeit for my mother just by myself.

You never forget.

I never forget. I don't know the dates. I made it on her birthday. And I do go to temple and do remember. And I don't need any monuments or whatever. I do remember. And I do, you know, know, and same with my uncle and many of my friends that didn't return. One of my mother's brothers from Holland, he went to Holland to survive, and he was taken from Holland with his wife and didn't survive. But there's really nothing else I can add to that.

Do you think there would be, in your opinion, an appropriate way for those of us who did not go through the Holocaust to relate to survivors?

I mean very--

You said to me, well, people didn't ask me about my experiences. And perhaps-- and I thought that perhaps they felt it might have been an intrusion. But you wouldn't have considered it that.

No, I would not have considered it.

Do you still-- is it too late-- do you still think that if we meet people who are survivors we should ask them about--

I think it is right that they have started this project and do interview different people that went through different things because it should be recorded. It should be known for future generations because some people say it didn't happen. You know there are.

That's true.

So I think it's no intrusion. And I think that the American people are, in so far any other country, should know in history what really did happen.

Do you think that the non-Jewish people are as interested as the Jews?

I think--

Even the American Jews or Jews other parts of the world who were not Holocaust victims and survivors, that those who are not of the Jewish religion have the same feeling at all?

I think so. The young people, they do teach it now in some high schools.

Yes, it's true.

And it's part of a history. I think they're writing books on it. And it's part of history being taught. How interested--

whether they learn it like history we learned and forget it or it really sticks with them, that it happened in our century, I don't know. But it should definitely be taught because it is a thing that happened.

That's right.

It is a thing that happened.

Hannah, it's been really, really wonderful. Do you have any personal message that you would like to tell us?

It's been an experience. This I must say. I feel really drained a little bit.

I can't believe that.

Because I have never really recalled this whole thing in one stretch, you know. And if I left out anything, I'm sure I did, because I do not remember all of it--

Well, I think you've given us a beautiful story, a sad story. It's something that's worth recording.

I hope it was-- it'll you know--

Contribute--

Contribute to something, my story contributed, some people will learn from it.

I'm sure that we will. I know I have. I want to thank you again so much for your--

My please. It wasn't really a pleasure, but I'm glad--

I'm sure it wasn't a pleasure. But it's certainly-- I'm sure gratifying to you. And I hope, as you say, that you'll be able to have a copy of this tape for your children to hear too. Thank you again so much, Hannah.

Thanks.