

Very few people came back. I don't know the numbers.

Do you know how many were Jewish before the war?

A large population was Jewish. Again, I have a hard time with numbers. I think they said something about 15,000 Jews were there and 70 came back. But I'm quite hesitant to give you these numbers. These are the numbers that I recall. We had a very large Jewish community, but it was separated, the orthodox Jews and reformed Jews.

Were there many Schultz?

They were about three or four. They were members of the most modern reformed temple.

Do you recall whether any of your grandparents were religious Jews?

Yes, they were. My mother's father and my father's father were always telling my father that he should give us more Judaism and be more involved. I remember that conversation.

Did they speak to you, your grandfathers?

They spoke to me. I thought Magda was-- Magdalena she calls herself now-- she was the favorite. She was the favorite. My grandfather was hard of hearing and in his daily life the routine was for him, kind of a ritual, that he came to visit us. And when he came to visit us, he was hard of hearing and he had this black contraption that he put in his ear and we would have to talk into that. So one day he didn't realize that everyone can hear him because he spoke very loud and he thought he was whispering to my sister's ear and said, don't tell your parents that Ditzel is at my house now because she is cutting school. And everybody heard it. So when I came home, my father says, where were you today? And boy did I know, did I know. I tried to lie. I became pretty manipulative.

You know my father was very charming, and he would go to the coffee house to play cards. And when I needed money, I knew if I go to the coffee house when my father is in front of his friends he's always going to be a very gallant gentleman and I got the money from him all the time. And then I go to the kitchen in the morning and ask my mother for money, so, I kind of learned to become as most young children become charming manipulators. I think I was one of those.

How did you try to manipulate out of this situation?

Well you know I'm telling you that I did everything in my power. What I was going to tell you that when we were getting out of Auschwitz and as we were going from one city to another, children were spitting at us. And I said to myself, someday children I come home and I'm going to come back here and I will tell you that you don't have to hate me. And the wonderful part about that is that I take care of German families and a little girl comes in and sits on my lap and calls me Omma.

So I'm very invested in somehow opening up communications and to find out as to concentrating on what you and I can do together so we would unite each other rather than create an us and them and a separation. So I did cross-cultural seminars in Hungary with Carl Rogers many years ago and we brought the East and the West together then. And I see a lot of powerful hopefulness. I think what I have learned in Auschwitz never to give up hope, to find hope in hopelessness, kind of perhaps seeing myself as the merchant of hope.

Because I came so close to death and given a second chance in life, every moment is so precious. I'm very invested in life. I'm very invested in showing people there are other choices, that suicide is not a choice. And I think that education came from Auschwitz, not from the university and not from the medical school and not from my internship. That's the best education that I cherish.

What about from your family, your ability to manipulate? Is there now ability to compromise?

Yeah, and negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. Yes. I bring families together. I do work like writing up constitutions for the family, that there is no freedom without responsibility, not take-y, no washy. I get into the freedom part and acknowledging that freedom without responsibility is anarchy. So I get the families together. I don't believe in coming to my office and talking about your toxic parents. I don't find that good therapy. I want people to talk to each other.

Now that I'm talking to you, I'm very much invested in people not to talk about someone who is not there. Because I know the stuff of which the enemy is made of I am made up too. I go back to Nuremberg. I know where the trial was. And believe me, what I can think of is that I could have been the German child. I could have been told that today Germany and tomorrow the whole world. And I could have been brainwashed that Jews are cancer to society.

So I don't see the Germans, the Nazis as monsters. I see them as ordinary people who grew up in families who were, unfortunately, trained to blindly adhere to authority. The children who were not allowed to express their feelings. The children who had to do the way they were told. And no one ever negotiated with the child. When the rules were rigid and non-negotiable. These are the things I'm looking into. Hitler would have a real hard time maybe in Belgium or somewhere else, or in America.

But that was easy when you blindly adhered to authority simply because that way you don't have to take responsibility for your life. And as much as people want to have freedom, they really are not taking it into their hands. Children blame. So the victims. And they always will look for the victimizer, so I want to be sure that I do everything in my power that people would stop blaming and take their lives into their hands and play the adult game not with baby rules.

How do you see Hitler?

Well-- What I read about Hitler and the description of Alice Miller, who writes about the drama of the gifted child and thou shall not be aware and for your own good. And she writes about the German authoritarian family, including Hitler, and how Hitler was beaten so severely by his father all the time that he never could really get even with his father, so he had to take it out on someone else. I don't know how much I adhere to that explanation. I know there were many children who were beaten and they didn't grow up to be mass murderers.

I can tell you that I'm hoping to create a family within every individual that they would be able to be more self-reliant. That they would not depend on a benevolent dictator or a malevolent dictator like Hitler. That people would grow up and not depend on someone else to make them happy. I'm very strong in self-responsibility. I hold people's hand for a while, but then I'm moving on to some practicalities as to how can you stand and be grounded in this world rather than telling me that, I can't live without someone.

So I am pretty strong in advocating that dependency breeds depression. But I believe in healthy dependency. I believe in interdependency. I believe in me being me and you being you and then together we are very strong. I believe in that interdependence and I think in the 90s that's where I stand. So I don't have to be like you. I tried it for a long, long time. I like to enhance each other with our differences so we can live together in harmony rather than kicking into submission. I believe that's the beginning of the end of democracy. I cherish democracy. But Thomas Jefferson said all men are created equal. That doesn't mean we are the same. I'm not the same as you are. I'm not the same as my child is.

I insist on the generation gap. I don't like their music. But I don't lie to them that I do. I don't have to like it. And I think at this time in my life I am now liberated that I can be me and connect with the part in me and grieve over the little girl that didn't have a childhood, grieving over not what happened but what didn't happen, what could have happened.

So I created a whole theory on grief. And I borrowed from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the shock, the denial, the anger. But then I'm moving beyond the anger. People ask me, are you angry? I say I moved beyond the anger. When I move beyond the anger, then things get worse because then you really feel the pain. I had the pain, I had to hurt, and then finally I accepted the reality. And that's the work I do that leads to restructuring your own life and giving birth to the real you.

So that's where I stand today for myself. You ask me maybe am I angry, am I crying for justice? I believe in justice. I

also believe to go on and free myself and not allow the Nazis to take residence in my body. So forgiveness doesn't mean to me that I forgive you for what you did to me. It means that I'm forgiving myself finally and I don't carry the pain. That I release and let go. I don't forget the past. I don't live in Auschwitz. If I would hate today, I would still be a prisoner. I have no time to hate.

But you see that took me 40-some years to tell you that, so don't think it happened overnight. And I'm not covering up the garlic with chocolate. Many people do that, just bygone is bygone. No. I did that too. I ran away altogether. Remember I told you I wanted to become the first-class Yankee Doodle dandy. But I wasn't free until I was able to face that part of my life that I ran away from that actually was the richest part of my roots, my past, and finally making peace.

So when I went back to Auschwitz, I remember when I came out I saw a soldier. And all of a sudden I thought I was back in a camp and I was facing the Nazi. But you know the realization that I had a blue American passport in my pocket, that became like Popeye, that I am what I am. For me, that was the final liberation 40 years later. And I was able to return.

And your roots as you define them today are--

I'm me. I'm me. Anything I do today is who I am. Anything I am has to do with not just what happened to me but who I was then. And to know that it's not about me and I don't have to carry the guilt anymore. That what happened to me, that, yes, I was a victim. And today I'm a survivor. I was able to, many years later, to wonder about-- when I already was getting my doctorate-- I began to wonder what can I give to the world that I survived? What are some of the gifts that my parents gave me that I can hand it to my children and grandchildren?

I remember when my granddaughter was in a very special class. She is a very gifted child, but somehow the teacher used to call her, my caboose. And I was very hurt why the teacher is calling her caboose? She was like 152 IQ child put into this among the geniuses and I could see that my little grandchild was kind of becoming the name that the teacher gave her. And not that I told my granddaughter about my Auschwitz experience, I just told her that she can prevail, that she can survive, that all problems are temporary and she can survive the teacher. That she mustn't drop out and to stay in. So the strength that I received in Auschwitz helps me to look at the situation and stay and go through it rather than fight or to flee what I've done. That's what I did. I fought the past and I ran away from the past. I did that.

You mentioned the gifts that your parents gave to you. What would they be?

The gifts were the perseverance to concentrate on life. The way my mother was really telling me that life is hard, that life is not easy, that suffering is feeling. And without feelings that not to really try to avoid the pain and anesthetize the pain. The gifts my mother and father gave me that I have the richness within me to withstand, to be able to go through that shadow of the valley and not to get stuck in there. To go beyond. I cherish my experience with my parents now. And I can see how my mother and father were able to make a life for us and for themselves, even though they came from difficult backgrounds.

So in some sense I guess we're all victors or victims. I have no room for blaming. I think only children blame and adults need to look at the situation and make some decisions. The more choices we have, the more choices I was able to create, the less likely I felt like a victim. I developed a very spiritual connectedness with God. I remember talking to God September 29, 1944. And I was very angry at God because I saw a child being put on a tree and a Nazi was aiming at the eye and the limb. And a woman who was pregnant that they tied her legs. I mean terrible atrocities that I was witnessing.

But you know I was able to change hatred to pity. And I was able to look at the guards and say to myself that you are more in prison than I was. And I felt some inner peace and some connectedness, that inner resource I never thought I had. So I think in Auschwitz we were able to develop traits we never thought was possible. And yes, I saw people running into the barbed wires and gotten electrocuted. I saw that.

And when I came back this year consulting, I met one of the girls whose father did the same thing. And she tells me

how proud she is of her father that he ran into the barbed wires because he took responsibility for the decision of his life. So this is one way of looking at things. That's why I'm saying I can only speak for the 16-year-old girl who never considered that as an option. I clung to life. No matter what, my option was not running into the barbed wires and maybe I was a coward.

And I'm here today. And I have three children and four grandchildren. And that's the best revenge to Hitler that I lead a very productive life. After two girls God gave me a son who was born with cerebral palsy. Believe me, my schooling in Auschwitz helped me a great deal to help my son with special needs, taking my son for occupational therapy, speech therapy. I took him to Johns Hopkins for a second opinion, and the man said, your son is going to be, mother, what you make of him. And he may do everything what everybody else does but it's going to take him longer to get there. And I dropped out of school and I went home and I took that little son and he graduated as a top 10 student from the University of Texas, even though five doctors told me he may not even make it to high school.

See, I don't give up. I don't give in. If I can't get in the front door, believe me I'm going to try the side window. And if that doesn't work, I'm going to look for the chimney. I'm always looking for practical solutions to be moving and not to sit and waiting for somebody come to rescue me. That's what I tell parents today. Don't spoil your children. Don't do the child what the child can do for themselves. Don't kiss the boo-boo so fast. Don't medicate the pain so fast.

And my two girls felt that somehow I spent so much time with John that they didn't get the attention, so my big daughter became the little mother to my middle child. And the two of them had this dynamic duo of how they're going to not like John. So you know people think of me, maybe I want them to think of me as this ordinary woman who had the same problems with the jealousy with the sibling rivalry with the same thing. There is nothing exceptional here.

I tried very hard to fit in and be what I'm not. And I feel very good now that I can finally show you the real me rather than the mask that I put on and the chameleon that I have become. That getting the doctorate was really just so I would think that I deserved to survive. And now I don't have to perform in order to be loved. And that's what I tell parents, to love your child for what the child is, not what the child does. Because each of us are God's special, very special, unique, one-of-a-kind little treasures. And it's OK for me to be me. That's all I can give you.

It's been an incredible time that you shared with us, and we're about finished.

Thank you for taking your time out and volunteering and giving. And now it's us together that are going to do something together. It takes you to ask me and takes me to give you what I know. And I really respect you and honor you for what you're doing.

You are the one [INAUDIBLE].

I was just going to ask you one thing. You were talking about your father earlier and I think you had a very special relationship with your father. Were there any things that he taught you in terms of to feel good for yourself?

My negative image of myself was helped tremendously when my father looked at me and told me that I have something to be proud of. I have a posture. I have my femininity in a best sense of the world. That I'm going to be the best-dressed girl. And somehow it gave me a shine that I didn't have to look down anymore and become a non-person. I could come out of the woodwork. That I could say, c'est moi, that's me. So I think my father was kind of like Mr. Higgins, like, by God she's got it! And I trusted my father and I believed in my father. And when I dressed today, I knew he would be saying, gee, wow, I gave you that oomph, that little extra.

So he gave me an image of myself from the outside. My mother gave me a tremendous strength from the inside. And the two together, the external but mostly the internal, the two together is what I carry with me. The strength that I can make it in spite of or because of and never give up and never to give in. Both my father had that, my father who was a prisoner himself and look what he did. He kind of came from the ashes to fly like a Phoenix. That's what I was given, that gift. And I carry the torch and I give it to the children and grandchildren.

It's so wonderful to cry from joy, you know, that I am here. And I am here and I live in the present. And that my

children can look at me, and children who I speak to in a classroom, they look at me and they say, someday I want to be like you. And I feel so honored that I can be a model to them. That no matter what happens to you, stay with it. The sunshine is there, and out of darkness comes light, and out of prison comes freedom. But I was not free, you see, until I didn't deny what happened to me.

So I highly encourage for you to find the other survivors, encourage the families to tell their stories, and see how the families could get together, that the children and grandchildren would not have to carry the pain of their parents and the grief that were unexpressed. So I'm very much invested in uniting the families, especially Holocaust survivors' children and grandchildren, so they can finally feel that what happened to them is not something to be ashamed of or run away from.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.