

I told my mother when I felt sick, only when there was no way anymore. It was, but also after the liberation, after the war. I know that probably because we were so cold in the war when I was 11 years old, I had difficulty to walk suddenly, because I don't know, probably rheuma or like you said, arthritis, or whatever you can have it when you're a child. But I never told her I pulled myself together, that she couldn't see that I could have something.

And so with everything, because I was afraid of her reactions, of her-- she kept going. She kept continuing being-- oh, it was so terrible, being sick. And I see that was during that situation, a dangerous situation, was big danger involved to have a sick person, in such a situation. That was understandable.

But after the war again, it didn't stop. So stop it, and say, you know? I couldn't. And she couldn't it's probably still in my system. Yes.

So to appear OK, nothing's going to be--

Do you remember crying when you were in hiding, when you had to run or escape?

I never, ever. I never cried. That's also a protection I think. Also later, I only cried when my dog died last year.

That's the only time in your life you've cried?

No, no. That's not true. I also cried when I separated from my husband and when my mother died I cried. But it's rare. It's difficult. I'm a master at pulling myself together. And also in Germany I suffered a lot from things, but I had to function. And I know I was in a train, and I studied. I came there. I just said so now I have to function, and put on a-- and I felt then that I could do it. And underneath there was something different going on.

I developed something that I mastered doing that. I'm happy when I am in a situation where I can be very honest and very authentic. And I try more and more and more to be that way. So not to appear so, OK when I'm not OK, I try one more and more. There were only few situations where I thought if I am not OK, I get fearful myself actually. It scares me, being helpless or not functioning well.

Exaggerated, I see that. I have to get away, I try to overcome that.

Did your parents cry during the war?

No, no. Neither did they. But after the war, I remember my mother cried because of dead people. And my father, no, I don't remember. He was just very still, and when we went on the street, he'd-- I said, why are you doing this? He said, no one should see how I really feel. So there was also a lot going on.

But my mother was a very tough person. Very tough and strong, and my father probably too. They already went through World War I, which was difficult. And then these situation, I always say, or it makes or it breaks, or you survive or you cannot. And if you survive, you are probably strong. Or you become stronger through it. And I see that with all the difficulties.

Sometimes you think you cannot survive it. But then suddenly you see there is, again, a way to survive it. And it makes you stronger. There is no doubt about it. I think. It's also other things are more destroyed. That's only it sounds like an advantage, but it's not only. But it's part of it. I'm sure it is.

What do you think are some of the sacrifices? You said there are not only advantages, that there are-- what I took to mean as sacrifices. What were the sacrifices? What do you pay?

Oh, yeah. I pay a lot. I mean, it sounded like only advantages when I said it makes you stronger, because I think that is one part. But the sacrifices or you pay with-- let me think about it. In my case, I think when I look back, I got haunted by these Holocaust experiences. When I came to this country, I had a total insomnia. I had suddenly the feeling I'm

living during the Holocaust here, where I could start a new life.

I have reactions. I have difficulties with trust, very, very, very much. I try. I can trust people, but it takes a long time. And it's a whole process. I think I immediately see where is the denial, where is going on, and this going on. And I suffer from it. Because I see already what kinds of results it could have.

And other people say, well, what do you mean? But these are only some of the things. I'm very often paralyzed by fear, a lot of fear of my life in general, of people. Even here, now.

Right now at this moment?

No. Not at this moment. But very much. Depression. I have terrible, terrible depression. Yeah, I'm sure there are things going on, which are-- my entire life was difficult. And I always thought it was because of Germany, where you really meet former Gestapo people, and you talk with them, and there are things going on, neo-Nazis and so on.

I always thought it's only this. And then when I came here, that it's actually really the first time in my life probably I allowed myself to think about the Holocaust suddenly. And I'm still busy with the Holocaust. Actually for perhaps the first time in my life really. And then I started to really to think and to talk a bit about it.

I would not survive again if I had the chance, and if I had the choice, I would not. And I still do hope that if I can conquer the things which are going on right now in my life, and overcome really disturbances I have because of that time, and harmful consequences, I have the hope I can write about it, talk about it, because such things can happen anywhere when people are not alert and not aware what's going on. And I see that all over, all over. I lived in so many countries in the world. And even people who went to difficulties are sometimes in denial, what their way was to survive.

I'm sure other people say you're so negative if you start talking about that. I think life is very nice and very bad. There's a polarity, and I think we have to integrate both parts, not only the bad things, and not only the good things. But I myself, I paid really. I think my life is actually destroyed, more or less. And I'm very honest. I achieved a lot with all my energy, and I have two college degrees, and almost the third one, and I really did very interesting things. But I also had breakdowns and difficulties all over.

Yeah. That's a very hard place I think. It's a very hard place.

What happened to you, can happen anywhere, if people aren't paying attention. When you look at this United States now, what similarities do you see to what you saw when you were a little girl?

No, I don't. I mean, this is for me, actually the freest what you say, society, I've ever been in, for me. I mean people complain here. But they don't know what's going on over there. I feel really safe here. That doesn't mean that-- I mean it was a very typical thing for Germany, because of their long history, authorities, and so on, and so on. A lot came together.

But I see, if I talk about denial, it makes me feel so-- yeah, I get fear. And I see that people in other situations where they are living in, or prejudice, I mean we all have some prejudice feelings. And it is I mean everyone has to work through it.

But it is so dangerous if some of these groups get the power, whatever it is, I try to express it very generally, get the power, and there are people who don't want to see it. Because it is unpleasant, it is uncomfortable. And other people have some advantages, because of it. And everything can happen again, against groups, against minorities, or whatever it is.

And I think that we all-- did not or most of the people did not learn from their experiences. And then it goes-- it happens over and over. Like, OK. I didn't work through some of these Holocaust issues that I get my fear, and I know if someone rang the bell in my apartment, I start trembling today. And I thought, my God, you are in America. I know that. And my system reacts. And it makes me feel bad that I do that, but I cannot help it.

And there are very severe things which people did not overcome. I think about Germany. They didn't work through after the war, and now they started. They've really started. And there are a lot of young people who do that. But there are too many who are in denial. And in other countries, there are other things going on. And I'm really afraid about this planet. It's not easy to handle. And I think it is I see life as a learning process anyway.

And we can only do the things for ourselves, and I think we cannot change a whole society, or a people. I thought that 30 years ago. It's not possible. You can only do a little bit. But we can change. If everyone changes in this minute or do something, then immediately a lot is better in the next minute.

When you hear the doorbell now?

Yeah.

What goes through your mind?

I had that situation, now during the last weeks that I don't open the door, and I started trembling. And I even thought, well, how can I escape here. I observed myself. And I'm in this situation. I said, how can I escape here when it is the police? I said, but you haven't done something. But it doesn't matter. It's not necessary to do something.

And then I looked at my balcony, and saw it's very-- I was even willing to jump off the balcony, if necessary. So it went very far, and this happened different times. I said, what's going on?

What was at the door?

I didn't open it. I don't know.

You didn't open it?

No.

Do you not open the door?

No, we have-- I'm living in an apartment building, and there is a button where you can talk to the people. But I thought it could be the police. And then I have to just. I know it sounds crazy.

So when you hear that buzzer go off, you don't ask through the intercom who is it?

Yes. I ask people to call me before they visit, so that I don't get this shock. But my heart started racing, and so on. I get really fear, and especially the last--

How high up are you? I'm three-- yeah, it's you cannot jump.

Three stories?

I'm on the third floor.

Third floor, you can't jump.

Yes, yes. It's sick, I know.

It's not sick, no.

Are you having any kind of support other than your Tikvah group?

I went to a therapist twice a week. And we stopped, because she stopped me, when I wanted to talk about Holocaust issues, because she thought it is too difficult for me. And I said no. It was difficult. But now I want to talk. So I quit her. We tried to-- and now I got a new therapist over Tikvah through the Jewish Family Service. And he also stopped me. Because I got once a panic attack, and they are afraid of me.

But you see. I talk about it. And I said to them, I'm really-- I make progress. Please, don't do the same things they did in Germany. I could never talk about these issues. Please let me talk about it whenever I want to, because I have memories. I have experiences as if I were in the Holocaust sometimes. And I need to talk. No, no, no.

I'm very upset about it. I'm really upset. And when you called me yesterday, I said it is too short, I need to prepare myself. I never-- but I thought now, here are people who want to hear, to listen to me. So I cannot say no, because I complain about a therapist. I have not yet resolved that problem. But I said to the person at Tikvah, I said, you know, I don't know what it is. My life long, they stopped me, reproached me for bringing it up in Germany, or they immediately started talking that they were the victims.

And I had always to understand them. But no one listened to me, or wanted to listen, no one, even my best friends. I never talked about the Holocaust. But when I wanted to say something, they immediately said, how bad they had it. So there was not-- they couldn't hear it. It was clear.

And now I have these difficulties with the therapist here. But they think, I asked a woman at Tikvah. She said they are protective. I said, but it's not protective. It is harmful. I feel imprisoned. They imprisoned me. They're killing me, I said.

So at the moment, I'm not very happy with that. But I am happy that I can talk here a little bit. It gives me a good feeling that I can do that without having reactions or so.

You can come back and talk here. I'd like to bring you back to liberation, and then we'll go forward again.

Can you remember the last place you were hiding in at the time of your liberation?

Yes. I remember that, because it was a very strange moment. We were all very thin, and there was a long time period again, probably before that time, without food, or almost no food. I don't know. And I remember that my father wanted to go through the door. And I was so shocked that he did that. Yeah, obviously I didn't know about liberation or something. And God, my mother said, don't worry.

He can go. But he could not walk. He could not. So he was not used to walking. And I couldn't really walk. I was weak. But soon, I could walk. And I was so curious, and it was so wonderful. I mean there were months and weeks, I don't know how long, people were happy on the streets. And they were all over cabarets and theater, and it was just a paradise.

I was just walking around like in a dream. Yeah, it was a very, very wonderful feeling. I remember that. And also I mean, we got this food, this bread, white bread, and like a care package. And these people were friendly. They were really friendly. I don't know, Canadians or Americans, or both. And it was so-- this was such a wonderful feeling.

I had clothes. I got clothes. They were used clothes. But it was so different, everything. It was wonderful. I really I just went off as much as I could, and looked all around. People were so happy in Holland, because they all suffered from the Germans, from what was going on there.

Do you remember the exact physical place in which you were hiding?

Yes, yes.

Can you talk about that?

Yes. Oh, that was actually again the place where we went below the floor when there was something going on. But it wasn't-- it wasn't-- I mean they didn't have a heating during the war, and no lights, or what. It was always dark. There was not-- you could not cook things or so. That was very strange. But it was a real apartment.

And it was on the ground floor. And it was so strange feeling for me to open the door, that my father opened the door, and went out. I will never forget that. Because I was shocked. And also that you could go out without any inhibitions, and people happy on the streets. Not everyone was happy. But they were happy.

And when I talk about that, even that was the thing I never could mentioned in Germany, when I said the liberation. And so they talked about that they had lost the war. And they had the bombs. I said-- I soon learned that I cannot tell about how happy I was. And I said, for us it was really a very happy time. Actually, it should probably not for everyone in Germany was at that time, but some reacted very strangely. I'm sure that added up all these strange reactions.

OK.

I don't know if it's running, the tape. I can talk about the [INAUDIBLE].

What is that?

I said, you can cut it. I said, I don't know. No? You don't cut it? I certainly started, because I mean I got the first time in my life really-- I was always understanding and try to work for understanding between Jews and Germans in a very big organization. I did a lot of activities for understanding. I was always understanding. And here it's really the first time that I got in touch with my anger. I have never. I know that a therapist in Germany said, you must be angry. I said, no, I'm not angry at all.

I didn't know that I could be angry. And now, I have to pull myself together, because I said it's not on the tape, and I don't want-- I mean I have a lot of very negative experiences. That's why I finally left the country. I couldn't stay there anymore. Even I knew it is not easy to change and start again with a new language. I wanted to pay the price.

Are you angry at Germany because of what they did, or because of the denial?

Yeah, the denial. And they already were in denial. My father told me when he warned people, Jewish people, and they laughed at him. They said he has a paranoia. These are only a few of idiots. And when I see-- before he died, he said oh, Edith, you could go through this similar situation. I never knew what he meant. And now I see that. People, even here, they say, oh, these are only a few of idiots.

And I know when I once came back from Spain to Germany to take care of some things, because I already prepared myself to go here. That was a whole process. And I was in Cologne where I lived. And there was a demonstration with big signs and protected by the police. And written on the signs was [NON-ENGLISH], foreigners out, Jews into the gas chambers. And protected by the police, it was protected.

And I was shocked, and I wanted to go over the place, but we had to wait. And they had flags from the foreigners. They lived in the country, and Israel, and they burned the flags. And it was also a place where they burned in the '30s the books. So for me, that made me sick, such experiences. My friend said, oh, there are enough other people too. Sure, there are also other people. You can never generalize.

But during the '30s, there were also other people. And part of them don't want to be active then, or deny it, or have everyone has their own problems. So it is really I experienced these things as a big danger.

And it goes on and on and on. It goes on and on. And if you don't take it seriously, I think things can happen again. All kind of situations can happen again. And I asked German people, when that happened, I said, what do you think about that? And they said, oh, we have freedom of speech. So-- there are certainly people against these things. But in the meantime, they killed. My friends wrote me every day, they're killing foreigners on the street, or tech institution, where Jewish people are also, and no one helps. People are afraid to get involved.

And for me, it's very difficult. Or I have to do a lot, or I have to escape. It's the only thing I can do. And helping these people, sure, you could get attacked if you say something, or do, and I did that. I got attacked myself.

Even with the police there?

No, no I didn't say a word. I mean I didn't do it, because that was-- they were protected and they were with arms, and so no one would dare to do that. But I felt sick after that. That it is a call, a call, we you say call out, or call up?

Collaborator?

No. No. To say Jews into the gas chambers. I mean or foreigners out, who have been there for 40 years, their children were born there. But they even murdered people who looked Black. And now they murdered again a man who was a German, but he had Black hair, and they thought he's a foreigner. I mean such things happen. And it's daily life there, in the meantime.

I mean that's swastikas here, and swastikas there, games for children. How many computer games, how many Jews you can gas in a gas chamber, such things are going on.

Those are computer games in Germany?

Yeah. I don't know whether about you know about these things. But for me, that is terrifying. For other people, they say-- even my friends. And I showed the whole building the swastikas. And I showed it to them. I said, it makes me sick. And they sing Nazi songs here in the evening.

Don't be so sensitive. You are just too sensitive. You know? Yeah, I mean it's happy people. But on the other hand, I also think about the consequences, if you don't take it seriously. You know? And now, I try to do some volunteer work for the Holocaust center. I get a lot of articles about Germany. I've been here now for almost three years. So I'm also away from the information.

And I get all these articles. I had to stop it, because it was really more than depressing, unfortunately. Because I want to know what's going on. But it doesn't look very good. I think there is a big danger going on. I really see big danger. And they have now death lists, the Nazis. There are also old Nazis. They never talk about these things. Even they're very old and they are dying, but they were very active together, and gathered together with neo-Nazis, they train them.

They had lists where people were against them. And now they have death lists. So they kill them. And such things are going on there. And what I read, and these are really good newspapers, these articles. They train, I don't know whether it goes. But whatever, they train, the military trains people, the neo-Nazis, with arms, with weapons, the military. That's your military. It makes me feel very bad.

It makes me so-- I'm terrified of Germany. I'm really terrified.

Do you feel that you want to do something from here to stop this?

You can't stop it.

I know but do you--

It's too late.

Do you have that motivation?

Yes. I always had the feeling, being in Germany, or I do something about it, or I leave. And I wanted to leave. And I didn't want to be politically involved with my background. I didn't want to, for many reasons. But I did something for

understanding. I try to work it's called the [NON-ENGLISH], who did a lot of things and I'm trying to work in understanding between Jews and Germans.

And so I've tried to do things this way. And I try actually, I try to work myself, and not to be prejudiced, and not to have my past experience running my life and my fear of the Germans, I really tried to work through it. But finally I gave up. I couldn't make it. But I always tried to have understanding for their problems, for the Germans, and how they got involved in their system there, and all that. I really tried. Because otherwise you cannot live there. That was part of my work.

But finally, I gave up because I thought it is too late. There's too much denial, and too many things are going on. And it is not possible. It was again, I wanted to survive. And they accused me for things I've never done. They were really, it got personal. I got really personally--

Did you fear for your life?

Yes, I had to. The police came into my house without a court case, with accusations, and these were errors. I mean, the first when such an error happened, also my friend said that can happen to anyone. But it kept continuing. And it became obviously anti-Semitic. I left with the name Heine, because that is the name of my former husband. And Levy, in all your documents, you have your name Levy in these countries. Here you mention it or not.

And I had terrible experiences there. It was very, very frightening. And even my lawyers couldn't help me. Two journalists helped me finally, to warn them that they want to bring it to television, and all the newspapers. I said, don't do it. I mean I am in the process of going to America. I want to immigrate. Don't make any first and I am the cause, whatever it is. I was afraid that could also cause problems.

But I think you can do everything when I'm not there anymore. But they went to the people who accused me, and warned them that they are going to do. And then, not my lawyers could help me, but these journalists to leave this country, at least without any debts that there is a warrant of errors, and so on. Terrible things happened to me. False accusations.

I'm sure I said Nazi to a person many years ago who was a Nazi, because of we say slanderous remarks for Jews, and so on and so on. And I said that he's a Nazi. And he went to court. He sued me. And the judge said this is you cannot say Nazi to someone. He didn't listen to me what he had. And this kept continuing also. I thought I'm not going to the details, because it's a long story. But I had to flee.

Did you feel that your work was to promote a connection between Jews and non-Jew? Was that the whole gist of your work? No. That was just what I did, besides my work. I try to do something, because I didn't want to go into politics or something. But this was an organization, a big-- I think they are also in other countries in Europe.

That's a more peaceful way to try to so do some work in understanding. But it ended actually that I think you can only work through your own issues, and give that to others as far as possible what you learned from it. Because you cannot change a society. I mean yeah, you can make people aware of their denial. With their own lives and with what's going on. But I think every little piece can help.

But you cannot-- I gave up to think that you can do a lot. You can just-- you can do probably a lot by what you have achieved yourself from bad experiences, and going to the background, and trying to understand these things, and trying to do something about this. I hope I can do that one day. Again, when I'm through with my own issues here, which are very--

I really gave up. And I started to hate that country more than ever before. I was just fearful there. But I have also to work through my hate, because it's also not so good. I mean, it feels better. It feels much healthier than being afraid. Yes. Actually, I got really a jump into to a new feeling, I don't know, how many weeks ago. I suddenly was so angry at Germans. I went to-- that was also between children of Holocaust survivors and Holocaust survivors and children of Nazis.

And that was very interesting for me. And it was the first time that I said openly in front of an audience, something what I really thought. Because they didn't listen to the Jewish people. They were the children of Nazis, who were whining how bad. I mean there are some who are really suffering from their parents. And so there is no doubt about it. But I think it should at least be even, and not the only one part. And I have the experiences that there's Germany in there.

And I was so angry suddenly. And felt wonderful. It felt really good. And I think to suppress anger over such a long time is very, very dangerous. It's good to get in touch with it. It's good. I felt alive again. Yeah. I'll give this statement here, but it doesn't matter.

When you were liberated, did you really feel free?

Free? I felt yes, it was a good feeling. People are happy, and slowly, slowly the food appeared, so real food, you know, that was for me, also a discovery to see some potatoes and apples. So it's been very slowly. But free? No. I certainly was not free, because of my fear. I felt free when I started talking started acting out. And that was when I was 10 or 11 years old. I was running away from everyone and everything.

But then I was surrounded by a lot of friends suddenly. And we're good friends, and we gathered every day together. And we started, we were the threat in Amsterdam. We started pestering people in a way. We were really a threat. We were not dangerous, but kind of. We wanted to threaten them. It was such a good feeling. It was so healing for me, gathering together every day with a group of people. This was like my family. And thinking about things, how we can do things to people. Relatively harmless, if I think what young people do today.

But it was so freeing, and so a wonderful time. I talked. First, I didn't talk at all. And then I didn't talk, you say, like an idiot. Yeah. I talked and talked. Yes. So that was a freeing feeling. And probably that was when I felt free certainly. Till I was 15, then my parents said they will go back to Germany. Now, that was a shock. Again, I was totally imprisoned again. I felt as if I was surrounded by lions here.

I was so afraid. And I didn't want to learn the language. One day, I saw I have to learn. I already talked a lot of languages. But German, I didn't want to learn. But I had to. Because I wanted to go to school, I wanted to do something with my life. And so it was not easy. Again, I was again imprisoned for a long time, because of my fear.

During the time in Amsterdam when you said you found freedom with this group of friends, what were some of the things you did to pester people?

Oh, yeah. We, for example, all the things needed courage. And we went I remember rang the bell, and we had to be very serious, not to laugh that they don't realize and say, does here a Mr. or Mrs. a very strange name, very terrible things, we said, as a name. But by looking serious people had reactions that they didn't know are we serious or not. So till we couldn't, so just going or ringing bells, and put things into their houses, or have a-- these are harmless things. But I don't know. There was such a range of things we did, or having a purse, an empty purse, and so-- and people grab it, and then they take it away.

And it went on. Or there was a tram in Amsterdam, and under to, and there was a little bit wood. And who has the courage to stay there for a long time, under there, so we all had to do that. And asking people very strange things, and yeah, it's oh, such, I don't know what you say in English.

Creative.

It was, yeah, we are very creative. And also in school, we were seven girls. We had a group. And coming too late. So first one person into the class, and after 10 minutes the next one, and after 10 minutes the next one, and after 10 minutes. So we were very creative. Harmless things, but also the people in the district where we lived in were a little bit frightened, because we did a lot. Every day we did something.

And I felt good. It was suddenly life. I felt alive suddenly. For me, it was a good time. And also one of these girlfriends,



I talked when I was in Germany, I visited her. And I said this for me terrible in Germany. I have to come back. And she said, it was so good that we went through this time. These were actually all-- there were three Jewish girls, and the others were all-- it was a bad time for all these children. I mean they were a little bit better when they didn't have to hide. But it was wartime.

So it was probably very freeing to do such. Not probably, it was for me. Yeah.

Were there other children in hiding, the Jewish children.

No, no. Yeah, I don't really remember. There was one Jewish girl. We never talked about that. Again, we did not talk about it. I know that was also a Jewish family. And I don't know. We never said a word about it.

It's a pity. Also in the Jewish school, they had a chance to talk about it, and we didn't. I think it was too hurtful for everyone, for victims and the others at the same time. That's why it stayed.

So I don't even know whether they were in hiding or in camps. I wanted to ask you another question about liberation. Since your childhood, you didn't really have a child, it was stolen from you. So at liberation, you were seven. Did you feel that you were finally allowed to be a child, to relieve yourself of the responsibility of surviving?

You know I wished I had. And I wish someone had come and talked with me about it, and helped me, and made me aware. I cannot say I was retarded, because I learned easily. But when I saw the little children playing football, I always wanted to play. And I was very long, and tall, not long, tall. And my mother said that it is terrible. You are not such a little child. You cannot do that. She felt ashamed.

And even today, I still have these feelings. I always had to duck because I play with the dog, and go and run, and I had my lawyer here in the beginning where I tried to get some help to immigrate here, I played tag with him. He said he hadn't done that since he was seven years old. I tried to get people-- I feel really like the child, still. And it was very strong after the war, and they didn't allow me to do that. Or I also I was too fearful, and it was partly within myself and partly when I did something, my mother said I should behave better because I look so old. I looked very old when I was a little child. Later, it changed.

That was also a handicap. But also my fear and my running away, there weren't so many chances left. Still, still, still, even after the liberation, I'm still imprisoned, and not being a child. I could not be-- I wasn't a child. And that's probably because I've never lost this feeling, that I really could do even today when I see children playing on the streets. I could just go, and say, oh, let's do that.

Or a friend of mine from Holland, he is much younger than I am. And we worked in Israel together in a kibbutz. And he sometimes visited me. He's much younger, I think 15 or 16 years younger. And we always played tag, when we met in Holland or wherever I lived in Spain, in Germany. And now I said, let's play tag. And he felt too old. Now, he doesn't do it anymore. He's already 40. I was so sad, because it was always part of our meetings. I was so-- I could not to ask him why. Because his face was, Edith. But he always did that before.

And so there are things probably which I really missed, and could still do today. So playing like a child, and I went with one woman from Tikvah, Eva is her name, to the Japanese garden. And we climbed over the bridge. So gosh, it was so good. I never forget these little things. I can't enjoy that so much. Someone is able to do that, because most of the adults feel that's not-- they cannot do that. I feel sorry, but also my husband, he did it in the beginning, and later he didn't do that anymore.

So I always try to find someone. And I always end up with a dog, because yeah, there's a lot more understanding this way. That we played hide and seek, and so with my dog, and running, and wonderful for me. This is probably why--

For all your childhood inside, without looking at the sky, you never went outside except when you were going from one place to another.

Yes. Yes, and mostly not, because it was too dangerous. There was a time where I went out for not long, and always there was something going on. So I was not-- I was even today indoors, being indoors, if I don't have fresh air, it can make me-- I need to be outside, and it's very difficult.

What were the times you remember being outside when you were in hiding? That was-- it must have been very rare.

No, actually. I cannot remember a single situation.

Would you look out the wall, or look out the hole?

Yes. Yes, there were places where there were windows, and there were places, there was a hole where we could look out. But what you saw was not very pleasant.

What did you see?

I remember the people standing on the streets, falling down, and they had such yellow-- I don't know what it was. But it was always the same thing. And later, I heard probably they were starving because they didn't have to eat anything, and starving people, and then all the dead people. How they-- also neighbors, all over were dead, and they brought them on wooden cars, just I don't know where.

Most of the things, I only remember all these bad things. I don't know. Probably there was nothing nice going on. There was nothing. And also, all these starving or dying people, and the Gestapo doing things. No, it was not-- it's not all real life. I don't remember anything. I mean there was something. But it was only a short time, or there was something with my neighbor children there who disappeared shortly. There was something, and with this little boy. But I know.

No, but it was not that you could go on the streets and play. They did not--

You couldn't even go into this backyard, into this yard.

No, it was also dangerous. It was also dangerous. I know there once was a star in the backyard, you know the stars. And no one had the courage to go there and take it out. I don't know. I remember that situation. Finally, I did it. Yeah. Because I was only a child. That's why.

You mean a star had fallen off of someone? You mean a star from the clothes?

No, no. It was in the yard.

It was in the yard.

Yes, and I know that there were still when the neighbors who were later transported to the camps, they were thinking, oh, can take that, and no one dared to go and take it.

I mean, if somebody had seen it they would have known Jews were hiding.

Yes.

And you saw it through the window or through the hole.

Yes, through the windows. And I think we were together. Or I remember the neighbors were there too, and very hard, what can we do and so on. I don't know why I took it then. I wanted to end the situation probably.

So you ran out?

Yes.

And I grabbed it, and came back.

Grabbed it, yes. Yes. I couldn't stand the tension. I wanted to end. I think so. Yeah, something like that happened, yeah.

OK, what was it, a star?

Yes, a star. they had to wear-- it was, in Dutch, [NON-ENGLISH], so Jew was written on it, a yellow star. And it was a sign for other people, there are Jews. So it was very dangerous.

I didn't know. I mean, I knew a lot without talking at that time. I think that many little children get a lot. Adults don't know that. So, I was not astonished about anything after the war. But no, there was not a normal life, playing, and being outside. I think that is probably that I never can stay very long inside. In Spain I always lived outside. That was a good part being in Spain. When I was in Israel, I was very [INAUDIBLE] to work there, I tried to work outside in the kibbutz. So it's just a very a longing or air. And it might also-- I never thought about it. But now like you ask me, that could also be a result, that longing for fresh air.

Now, I know when my mother told me that all these children were end up in gas chambers, and so that I started thinking, how it is. And now that I have to be so glad and so lucky that I survived, that I'm not-- that I not ended there. I had suddenly, I started to imagine how that is dying in a gas chamber. And I suddenly could not breathe anymore.

I'm happy that I didn't develop asthma. But I still have it sometimes. That I have difficulty breathing, and I have to go out, wherever I am. That's I know I developed it when I was a child, thinking about gas chambers. Yeah.

When did you first hear about gas chambers?

Very soon after the war. My mother told me, unfortunately. She didn't know better. She didn't like-- I already said it-- that I was so serious. And actually I felt weak for many years. I was not really fit. And I probably depressed her, so I don't know. Sad. She wanted me to be happy and to feel happy. And she thought telling me that all the other children who didn't come back end up in gas chambers, and for experiments, and she said you are lucky that you are here. So be happy.

And it had only the impact that I started thinking about gas chambers, and how to die there, and how that I was so lucky, and that has these impacts that I got breathing problems. When I woke up at nighttime and, [GASPS] needed to go out. I got in a lot of trouble. Because that was immediately after the war, very soon. I was 6 and 1/2 when the war ended. So it was shortly after that.

Right at the end of the war, when you were liberated, and you walked through that door outside for the first time, what was your first reaction? What did you want to do? I was also scared. I was scared.

I think I walked back very soon. But later, when I felt a little bit stronger, I wanted to go on and see what's going outside. And I discovered really the world again.

I had a time in Germany when I suddenly couldn't leave my house. I had the same feelings. I just, I have never thought about these feelings I had just that you asked me how do you feel, and what did you want to do. And I couldn't leave my house. I worked in schools. I couldn't go there anymore. And it took me a long time. And I went to therapy. And I had a long time, and a very good relationship with this therapist, a woman. And I started suddenly talking about the Holocaust.

And she suddenly, I got a really a good relationship. We worked through other issues. But it was good. That's when I started talking about this. She fell out of her role, and said we had the bombs in Dresden, and that was-- she didn't let me continue, or doing things about it. I couldn't talk about it.

And I'm sure there was a connection with my painful time that I couldn't go on the streets anymore. It was terrible. I

could overcome it after a long time. A very long time.

Did you continue seeing her?

I continued seeing her for a while. But then I stopped. And I tried to find another therapist, because I had the feeling I should work through these other issues already at that time. And I was very frustrated when I learned that I couldn't that, I could not talk. And I know he was later, my husband, at that time my friend. He said, why are you going through such frustrations? Why are you not.

Immediately when you go to, then you get along or not. And then it comes to these topics, and they have strange reactions. Ask them immediately. That was his advice. And I did that immediately, say you are and so on. And you want also to talk about it. And I got a list of therapists. I don't know how many, a lot. And I called them one after the other. And they all said no, they are not familiar with the topic. No one had time. It was impossible. You can believe it or not. It was an experience, I can tell you.

And I really, that was a time I wanted to. There was really I felt a need. I need to work through this. Not only for other issues, and this woman with whom I got along very well, and worked a lot of time, I think everything is important. What my mother did with her toothbrush, and so. But why is this not important?

She said, yeah. I'm very interested in Hitler. I'm already reading a book. So God.

Was she Jewish?

No.

Were any of these therapists Jewish?

Yes. Yes, I was looking for a Jewish one. It was difficult to find. I lived in Cologne. There was one in Frankfurt. But that was hours away, though that was not possible. I find a Jewish one in Cologne one day. It was a long search. And he planned with me to do a therapy, and he died before we started. Yeah, that bad luck. No really.

And it's strange. It's a whole story itself the more I look at it. And it's really strange. Yeah.

Were your friends in Germany Jewish?

Yes. I have-- I also have other friends. I have Jewish friends, and non-Jewish friends in Germany, a lot of friends over the years. And my Jewish friends, I know most of them, yeah, most of them were camp survivors. One was hidden in Germany. But most of them are camp survivors. And the strange thing is that their children left Germany. They couldn't stand it. And their parents are still there.

And I know one of my best friends, a couple, she was in a camp, and she suffered from Germany. And we sometimes talk. I said, Rachel is her name. I said, I need to leave. I can't. Now, she said, I can't either. But her husband who also was a camp survivor, he wanted to stay in Germany. And he said he was 16 when he was in a camp, and he saw the young boys who were trained to throw stones at Jews. And they didn't like to do that. But how they finally enjoyed it. And he said, you can train everyone to do such things.

And his theory was that all over the world, people, sure they are the same more or less. They have just different histories and there are differences too I think which play a role. And he was a photographer. And he didn't want to leave. His children left, and she wanted to leave. And later, when I visited her, she never mentioned it again. I said, how do you feel now? I'm leaving now. I will get my immigration. I already got a letter, and she was so happy for me. That I could leave. But she didn't want to leave her husband.

And so she suffered. He did not. And there were people I know who left. There was one woman. I lost this book. I would love to read it, because I was not able to read things which were connected with the Holocaust. That was also one

of my unfortunately now I started. She wrote a book. She was a teacher, and born after the war. And her parents were Holocaust survivors. And she wrote a book in German. This is Not My Country.

She had to leave the country. She got so attacked. And also other Jews got attacked, because she wrote this book about her experiences with teachers. I don't know. I only know about the book. And I don't find it anymore. But such things happened that people had to leave, cannot stand it. Others are in denial or can make it in a way. I don't know how.

You left Germany in 1992?

I came here in '92. In May. May 28, 92; 92, almost three years.

And what sort of work did you do after this?

Yes, I wanted to start a new life here. And I had a very nice job in a health center. And one of my professions is I am an educator, physical teacher for physical education. And so and dance, and all kinds of physical things, and music. So I have different professions. One was this. And I got a job here. And I thought it's wonderful that everything went so well.

And then unfortunately, I had friends here already. One was my lawyer, and I had a total insomnia attack suddenly. My friend said, go to therapy. I said, no, no, no no. I have to start a new life, no therapy. And no Holocaust, and so on, and so on. And they backed away, because I was so nervous. And I couldn't make it. I had to stop. So I actually, people tell me I should go back, because I didn't make it really, and I spent all my money to live here.

I did some work, a job here, and volunteer work. But I'm not yet. But now I want to write a book. And I want to do things, other things. I have other plans. I think it was probably good that it didn't work out now. I always try to find a good thing in the bad things. And I see that it could be a good thing, even though it was a tough time so far.

These other countries that you lived in were after Germany.

Yes.

After you left, so you were in Germany after the war until? Until when?

I stayed. They forced me to get this-- I didn't want to get the citizenship. My parents got it back. They took it away from, so I was born as what do you say, without a nationality. And I got the German nationality. But I went from Germany back to Holland. And tried to start a life there again. But I felt not familiar in Holland anymore, even Germany was more familiar to me.

So I went back to Germany. I even also have friends in Holland. So it was easier for my work, and also my old mother was there, and friends, so I went back and back. Then after my separation from my husband, I went to Israel. And I had a really good time there. I worked in a kibbutz, and had a job also for physical education, Wingate Institute. And I started working for the [NON-ENGLISH] about women in Israel. So that was a real good time. And I felt really good in Israel.

But I didn't talk about the Holocaust with no one. It was also-- I don't know. I had chances and missed it. But I was still married, and I thought we will get together again. So I went to Germany one day to write, and also he wanted it. But finally, it didn't work out. And I lived in Switzerland earlier with my-- for husband together.

Before Israel?

Yes. Yes. Yes, I lived in Switzerland and I thought about settling down there. But so not so.

Well, they're in denial too.

Sure. I'm not free.

When did you live in Israel?

That was between 1980 or something, 1981, only 1 and 1/2 years.

What was your occupation during all of these years?

I had my professions.

Your degree was in teaching?

Oh yes, I had one degree in teaching for physical education and music, and I also taught German language. I left, because it's difficult just to learn it. And finally it was my most perfect language, because I studied in it. And one of my degrees was in theater, literature, and speech. And that was part of the University in Essen, a very famous school [NON-ENGLISH].

And then after-- and I worked also for my husband. He was an editor on radio, and a writer. And he wrote. That was we had a good time together, because everything that happened, I told him. And he wrote almost always stories. It was nice, and also chansons And I sang the chansons on radio. So we had a lot going on. I did a lot. I did so many things.

And also gave exercises, I relaxed a whole nation. I did-- I need it myself really now and cannot relax. But I relaxed the whole nation in Germany. It was called a program [NON-ENGLISH] Relax with Edith. A gymnastic, I don't know, with these exercises. So I did exercises. And then when people relaxed, I sang the chansons. So these were special programs. But it's long ago.

After our separation, we did so much work together. That was also part of our marriage, and it was really exciting. But after our marriage, he could not work anymore. I could not work anymore. And then because we were such a team, also we become a composer, and so on, we worked together. And so everything has fallen apart, yeah, has fallen apart suddenly.

And I was always interested in studying psychology and alternative medicine. I started studying again, and worked at the same time. So I did not finish that. I thought in the beginning I could work a little bit here and finish, and make a degree. I would love to work with people. I had already workshops. I worked with people, and groups, and did some counseling, and I really loved it. And I would like to do that here. I would like to do it, to be able day to do that.

About liberation, could you walk outside and go down the street? You said you were afraid. But did you eventually walk down the street?

Yes. Yes.

You said you wanted to see everything.

Yes.

What did you see?

What I enjoyed so much were the performances, all over the performances. People sang and had-- you call it cabaret in Europe. Cabaret.

What do you say here?

Shows.

Shows or theater.

Yes, it is a certain style, where it's satirical, and you take-- it's also what I did at times, satirical things. You take the real issues which are going on. But with music and in a satirical, so joking. That was going on, a lot of musical performances, theater. And I don't remember the details anymore. But there were so many things going on, which were just fun, and people were happy, that was so new for me. I was just again speechless that that could be life too. So, so happy, and there were so many real happy things going, or if you say happy things, there's a word. Joyful. Joyful.

So I went from one thing to the other. And people in the streets were happy. I was just-- it was more a discovery of life, and/or I was going to say, well, life is it's not the right word. Yes, it was not all these terrible things, and bad things, and being violent, and noisy, and this was total different. So I could not get enough. I went every day on the streets from the morning till evening.

But did that take time? I mean I assume right after liberation, do you remember the time period?

No. I only remember that my father couldn't walk, and I couldn't walk. I don't know how long it took till I could walk. Probably I was so curious, I don't know. I don't know the details.

Do you remember anything more about liberation, the soldiers?

Yes.

And you said you thought they were American.

I think most of them were Canadians. I'm not quite sure. I think there were, I heard English. For me, Americans and Canadians were anyway at that time the same. That's why I don't know it anymore. And they spoke English, and they were friendly, and they had chewing gum, and they had food, and they were really nice. They were so nice.

And I remember some cars, where they're sitting on, and came down, and I don't know too many details, just such images suddenly where these friendly people. And so the whole situation was suddenly different. Some people singing on the streets.

But there were also a lot of people that we are not only weak, but in a bad shape, so between, but they were also kind of happy.

Do you remember your parents trying to then look for relatives that remained in Germany?

Yes. Only, I don't know what they did. Because they never wanted to tell me. Or I don't know. They didn't take me seriously, or ever the reasons were. But I know that one day my mother started crying, was crying, and crying, and crying. Or depressed more than before even. And my mother, that they're all dead, my relatives are. So they probably were waiting or thinking they'd get some messages. And got these bad messages from somebody what's going on like that. And it made them really worse than they already were. I saw that. It was not good. They were suddenly totally locked up in themselves. I think it was a shock for them.

How did you find, or how did she find you? Your aunt who you said was crippled, she was in the camp.

Yes. She was in a camp.

Do you have any memory of when she appeared in the house?

No. We lived in Holland. And she was in Germany. And obviously, she was so far lucky that her husband, was-- I don't know how he survived. I don't know. But that she could go to him, and the first, when we first met was when my parents and I-- I was 12 years old. When we went to the place where my father's parent's house was, and the people were so strange there. That they started praying when they saw me. I was alone going through there.

And we went also to Muenster was the city where this aunt-- I don't know when she came back. And I got to know her the first time. But I did not yet speak and understand German. That might also be a reason that I probably she told things. But I didn't speak German. And I didn't want to. So I never learned it. We didn't have German in school. I think it was a choice, or we didn't have it, I think.

We had French and Hebrew. My first language was Hebrew, and then French and Latin. And my fourth language was German, because I was forced to learn German, be there in the country to be able to go on.

Do remember what this aunt looked like. And did she look sad or did she look happy?

She looked stressed. I think because she could only go the stairs, it was on the second floor I think, or first, I don't remember. So she had to go stairs. There was no elevator. And she could only go backwards or some way. And they told me that's because of how she lived in the camp, and she had to do a very hard work there. And it was too hard. She was a very small tender person. And very smart, I remember later when I spoke German, I met her again. But we never said-- she never said a word the camp. So I only know from my mother or from my parents that they said she went from so bad times that she is so-- also her hands were-- I don't know what it was. She was [INAUDIBLE] say it was crippled.

How old was she?

I have no idea. It was my father's she was a little bit older than my father.

Your father's sister?

Yes. Yes. She was very-- she died then soon. So I hadn't had many meetings with her. She died. And her son died, and so I think during the last days of the war. So I think she was very serious, at least.

And I played with her husband. He had what is it?

A flute.

A flute, and I played piano. It was nice. Yes.

Do you have any other memories of relatives coming back?

No. Because they didn't come back. Only my uncle in Shanghai who came very late from Shanghai back to Germany, so I got to know him-- I don't know. He was 60 or 70. I don't know. He came very late. He was in a concentration camp before that. He was in Auschwitz. And his son was in Auschwitz. He was with his son. And his son, it was also a real difficult thing. His son was also not only crippled. They had beaten him there, and he was blind. And he was totally disturbed.

It was a really total-- can say a total, what do you say in English? Not only disabled, it was more. And my uncle always talked about the Holocaust. He was the opposite. And I got really nausea when I listened to that. I was so afraid. But it was difficult for me. Probably all the people get that too, when you talk about the Holocaust. How he was in Auschwitz, and he wrote poems. I still have them in my books. It's here. People prayed and that nothing helped, and he made music. He composed music, and wrote a lot. And with his son that was-- he always talked about that and I just listened because it was very late, and we weren't outside.

Had he witnessed his son being beaten?

His son, I mean I don't know how he witnessed it. But he witnessed his son every day, because his son was alive. Sure, he had witnessed people beaten.

But that was-- I felt a lot of patience with him. Even he made me sick with his stories. He really made me sick. And I never talk about him. Yeah, he talked about it He didn't talk about anything else. Never, ever. And I came to him and



visited him Friday evening and all this, had the ceremony. So he was still Jewish, and also religious. He was more religious than my parents. At least he stayed with it.

But when he saw me, and he loved me, he liked me very much. But he wanted me to go to Israel. And he said you had such a good time there. You were never better than when you came back from Israel. And it's true. I felt wonderful there. But it was-- he was a Zionist, so he thought. Yes, I said, no I will go to America. I'm planning that. But he only talked about the Holocaust. And it was-- yes, I have this experience. But it was also difficult for me to listen. But I did listen. But I listened, yeah. It's probably also difficult for other people to listen. Yeah.

It's probably the same compassion I had when I was a child, because I think that it is really terrible what people can do. Whenever they get the chance or some advantages. The Nazi propaganda in Germany. They even showed the movies they had made in the '30s. Have you ever seen such a movie? They show it. And they say, this is to see what they did. But people go there.

I saw one of these movies. That was enough for me. So the propaganda, so which that's my experience. I think 12 years, or longer actually, but 12 years, they were so bombarded with these propaganda all over. That even people who are OK, I got to know a lot of people who really want to not be prejudiced. And so suddenly when you scratched a little bit further, they said, yes, but the Jews are always the people have the money in the world. So it is difficult. If you have lived in such a country such a long time and there are some who are very strong in state, but also these people are I don't know why I started to talk about that again.

Is your uncle still alive?

No. He died at 94. Recently. So I stayed in Germany also because my mother was still alive, and this uncle came to Germany, and I helped him with things. And they both died. But my mother was 88, and he was 94. So that's quite a long time. Yeah, all these troubles.

Do you remember specific conversations with your uncle, some of the stories he told you from the holocaust?

Yeah. He certainly did. But also behind these stories, where it was such a desperation. And it was actually also but I don't get it together right now.

Can you forgive me if I have to go back to my office now?

Yeah. Please, it's not because--