

CHILDREN
DURING THE
NAZI REIGN

Psychological Perspective
on the Interview Process

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Chapter 8

A Child Survivor's Appraisal of His Own Interview

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As a child survivor who had the privilege of being interviewed by a psychiatrist who has interviewed many child survivors, I have had cause to reflect on child survivor interviews and general clinical-historical interviews.

First, I think the term *interview* is used by professionals who, from an objective standpoint, want to gather information for some social, clinical, or research purpose. From the subjective viewpoint of the other person, people do not want to be interviewed; they want to tell stories. I concentrate here on this latter subjective viewpoint.

Why are personal stories so important? Sir Hal Cook, a psychologist colleague of mine, told the anecdote that in World War II in London, people had placards saying they would pay others to hear their stories. When I led a team to a recently affected bushfire area, what struck us was how people were overflowing with things they wanted to say, and when allowed, they told their stories, even to us strangers, with great emotion and detail.

With time, stories may become difficult to tell. There is a waning of sympathy and desire to help with time; yet, stories tend to reestablish connections and meanings. No matter how difficult the task, there is a desire to tell, even if indirectly, one's story in order to become whole. As a psychiatrist, I was often amazed how even schizophrenics and criminals tended to expose their truths, even if this was against their immediate interests. This is akin to the experience of Robert Lifton, who found that Nazi doctors were relieved and keen to tell their stories to him. What they were afraid to tell, he could often read "between the lines."

The desire to tell one's story can, however, be outweighed by extreme forces that can make the discovery of a story a difficult task. Clinically the task can last years. The terrors of knowing one's story and the injunctions not to know may suppress one's story indefinitely.

Telling the truth was difficult for us child survivors from the very start, when we would have loved to gush our anguish. We would have been killed had we exposed ourselves. Through severe internal and external injunctions, our stories were not acknowledged. They were hidden, fragmented, splintered, inside a similarly hidden, compartmentalized non-coherent self.

Once stories are hidden, it requires a special relationship and context for people to be able to bring their stories together and speak them out loud. The relationship must include security in order to overcome the terror. It must include trust and conviction that the listener is genuinely interested. It must include a meaningfulness that the pain of telling the story is for the sake of something worthwhile.

I have told my story many times on different levels. I want to concentrate on a particular time, the interview with the psychiatrist working for the International Study of Organized Persecution of Children, but it may be relevant to highlight some way stations that preceded the interview.

My mother, my father, and I crossed the border from Slovakia into Hungary illegally in 1942, and we lived in Budapest on false Aryan papers. One day in 1942, (and this is the kernel of my story) while in the street, two men in trench coats approached my parents. After some time, my father said that they were going with these gentlemen to buy ice cream and they would be back in ten minutes. My parents came back after three months, after escaping from a cattle car bound for Auschwitz. I do not know after how many minutes I went to a lady in our block of apartments, who called my uncle. He took me to his farm, where I stayed with two aunts and three cousins. That is where my parents picked me up on their return, and they took me into hiding again. We stayed hidden as Aryans till the end of the war. My aunts and cousins were rounded up and murdered after I left them.

In my psychoanalysis of eight years' duration with a psychoanalyst who had been in Budapest at the same time I was, I came back to this story continually. Details came back to me that I had forgotten. However, for my analyst, what was important were the close sleeping arrangements during the war, which accentuated my oedipal desires; the opportunities for peeping in air raid shelters, which we shared with many people; and the playing with a little girl who was in the air raid shelter. My analyst had

been analyzed during the war. Her wartime and postwar traumas had not been analyzed. She did not listen to the lost little boy who talked to her for eight years. In my supervision of both medical and psychiatric residents, I continuously see residents' shutting off from patients' stories. I could not tell my story effectively to my parents, peers, or analyst. My parents and their generation believed that small children could not remember. In any case, that was their desire, and I, among many child survivors, obliged. Children and patients can oblige by arranging their stories as required.

In 1989, at a conference in San Francisco, the title to my story was evoked from me in the space of one minute. Sarah Moskowitz (as I found out she was called) asked me whether I was going to a particular session, which she chaired, because I was a child survivor. No, I answered, my parents were survivors. When she learned that I had been in Budapest during the war and that I was seven when the war ended, she declared that I was a child survivor. But I had not been in concentration camps, I protested. She insisted that I was a child survivor. At this session, I met another child survivor like myself who also survived in Budapest. We told our stories to each other for the next two days, finding many corresponding details. We were like brothers. Telling our stories connected us to ourselves and to each other.

I formed a child survivor group in Melbourne. Lici, who had been discovered earlier by Sarah Moskowitz, came down from Sydney for our first meeting. She told us her story, and then each of us, including myself, briefly shared our stories for the first time in public. We were given an identity as child survivors—a label. Finally, we were someone, and this meant that we were entitled to a story. In the last year, we in Melbourne have taken turns telling our stories in detail to the group. I took my turn too. It took a great effort to tell our stories. We had to integrate fragments to produce some coherence. It took courage to trust the group to take the risk of appearing weak or shameful. Yet, we felt that in this group, we could take such risks and tell our stories truthfully. Many things were said for the first time in our group.

After the first story was told, we came to appreciate its preciousness, both for the individual and for others. Perhaps reflecting a similar need as with interviews, our stories, too, needed to be recorded. We decided to videotape stories subsequently. The stories then became documents, testimonies. Beyond a subjective purpose, one's story came to assume a broader aim. It became part of a pool of knowledge that could be used both for historical documentation and as a means to prevent similar stories having to be told in future generations. The stories, thus, became

connected with the rest of humanity, and they came to be gifts to it. It was the most that individuals could give to others, for their stories were living expressions of themselves. One lives in one's story; one is one's story. From being nonexistent and valueless, our stories came to life and assumed worth.

My imagination flourished before my interview with the well-known interviewer. From my point of view, I was going to tell my story to the ultimate authority on stories such as mine. She would certainly understand my story, and she would judge it and me as valid or not. While I looked forward to a valuable learning experience about myself and hoped I would think better about myself after it, I was afraid that the opposite might happen. Intellectually, I knew that I was investing too much in one person, but this person was, after all, the discoverer and world authority on child survivors. She had interviewed 350 of us, more than anyone else.

Yet, I was wary too. I had had previous contact with my prospective interviewer in writing, and her return letters sounded very formal to me. Further, I had already had a long-distance interview with her. Following being asked to transpose my painfully executed video story to sound tape, the transcribed sound track was sent back to me with only a few comments, which I did not find helpful or meaningful. I was fearful that my previous psychoanalytic experience might be repeated in the live interview. I respected my interviewer's writings, with which I had become familiar, but I wondered whether she would treat me only with scientific curiosity.

Yet, there had been a turning point toward trust and gratitude to my future interviewer, too. I had sent her a paper that I delivered to a psychotherapy conference in Melbourne. It was my story, combining the personal with the scientific. I received a warm response and was asked whether I would deliver a similar paper at the Hidden Child Conference in New York in 1991. It was just the encouragement that I needed. I gathered my energies and wrote a paper with much love. I put all of myself into it. I felt greatly honored to be on the same panel with Judith Kestenberg, Sarah Moskovitz, and Robert Krell, but I was apprehensive.

It takes a number of people to make one's story cohere, especially when the integrative break is in early childhood. Sarah Moskovitz and Judith Kestenberg discovered me as a child survivor. A therapist, who this time did listen to me, facilitated my own self-discovery in all its details. My wife showed much interest and encouragement in my search. As my story evolved, I developed a sense of gratitude toward those who helped the story and me come into being.

The Hidden Child Conference was the highlight of the year for me. I was meeting with my fellow child mates, I was meeting with my past, present, and future in emotional circumstances opposite to the Holocaust ones.

On the first morning, I met my "grandmothers/mothers," Sarah Moskovitz and Judith Kestenberg. The latter was a small old lady with a youthful mien, an intelligence and alertness, and an emotional openness that was engaging and reassuring to me.

We took our place on the panel, and again I told my story, this time to the whole audience, to the whole world. At the conference, I told my story many more times—to my friend Ervin from two years ago, to Tom, with whom I was friends forty-two years ago, to other individuals, and in small workshops.

In a workshop two older child survivors made comments about my story to the effect that it had been harder for me than for them, because I lacked vivid memories. They felt it was harder for younger children altogether, and, most of all, they seemed genuinely concerned for the little boy in me, lost in the street, without his parents. At the end of this session, my friend Ervin left the conference, and I cried for the first time.

I think it is important for me to have described the prelude to the interview. For us younger child survivors who remember primarily through the body, through emotions, "atmosphere feels," and our actions, the atmosphere of the interview is most important. It provides a context in which to express one's life story. For me, the atmosphere was highly charged with everything I have described thus far. Like the prelude, I remember the interview with certain highlights in a context of atmospheres and "feels." I could not write a chapter describing just the verbal interview.

I approached the interviewer's office on time. It was in an established, European-looking part of New York near Central Park. I entered a huge courtyard with massive solid buildings surrounding it. I thought nostalgically that this was like a *gemutlich*, a solid, wealthy remnant of the Austro-Hungarian empire in Vienna. The impression was confirmed by the courteous elevator man and the marble-lined entrance to a high-middle-class, tasteful, comfortable, yet unpretentious suite.

I was introduced to M., the interviewer's husband, and they informed me that we would have lunch together. I then followed the interviewer to her room, where she professionally adjusted the tape recorder, asked me to sign documents relating to the interview, instructed me about the technique of interviewing for when I would be doing interviews myself, and, like a colleague, asked me something about the conference.

As I am putting together for the first time the story of the interview proper, I feel that I need to relate it according to my subjective view. I understood that there were formats and protocols and standardized information to collect, but I left all this in the able hands of my interviewer. I had waited too long for this opportunity to tell my story to be too involved in the objective needs of history taking.

I think eventually my interviewer asked me to relate my story chronologically. Almost immediately, I was disappointed. I felt a distance, an observer feel, a lack of emotional involvement. I understand now that this was not because I was not involved but because I was involved. I think that at the time of my trauma and ever since, I removed myself from the scene and observed it. It was too much to feel the danger and my powerlessness. I could feel only my anxiety somatically in my bowels and through a thick fog, which blurred my sense that something was very wrong. In retrospect, I was probably also reacting to the interviewer's scientific and collegial approach. Both were approaches distant from my subjective story, which I strongly desired to impart to her.

I started to tell my story. I was surprised at her insistence on knowing the earliest details. What I did not remember, she asked me to imagine. I realized she was using a technique that she described in one of her papers. I think, for me, the technique was at times successful and at other times, not. I was grateful for the scooter, which she brought back to my memory. It was like the repetition of a small child receiving a precious gift again. I recovered an old friend in the memory of that scooter. But not only that—I also recovered the sense that my parents did buy me toys and were concerned that I played happily, something that had been lost to my memory before. I also retrieved the sense of other toys—abandoned memories like the abandoned toys I had to leave behind when we fled. I could change the background “feel” that my parents did not care for me enough to make sure I had kept toys.

I also remet and relived my governess who cared for me when I was small. I came to better understand her sudden disappearance, a precursor to my parents' later abandonment. Single, young women were the first to be rounded up in Slovakia. My father's family had also been rounded up, my father's business confiscated. We had to wear the star. I remet my earliest traumas.

I looked at the interviewer with the sharp mind, who insisted that everything be remembered and recorded. She seemed intent on “giving me” as many memories, as much information and integration as she could. As for the recording, I was glad that perhaps sometime in the future, some

researcher would learn something from this information. But what fascinated me most was her motivation. At times, she lost concentration. At other times, the machine malfunctioned. She took it all in good humor and made sure we lost nothing. Even if this was a scientific interest, to have such an interest must say something about this dear interviewer.

I made sure I told her everything. I wanted to see whether any of it would bring a trace of judgment to her face, whether she would show a sign of disgust, contempt, or tiredness of me. Not once. Toward the end, she was tired, but not of me, I was sure. I told her my most shameful fantasies. I told her my moral dilemmas throughout my life. She did not flinch once. There were no shadows of judgment on her face. She fitted my darkest fantasies in context with what happened to me. This was much more than my previous psychoanalytic experience. She was looking at me. She was a psychoanalyst, and the science stood behind her. It gave her knowledge, authority, and a podium. But she was in front of it, a human being. Sometimes I felt she stepped behind it to protect herself from being overwhelmed. How could she have listened to so many such stories with intense involvement and not have collapsed? She protected herself by making a study of it. But as the interview progressed, the human interviewer was engaged with me.

How do I know? A child survivor psychiatrist can be very canny. I may test the interviewer's genuineness of interest in my story in many ways. I remembered that the interviewer through her interview with my friend Tom made the link that he and I were childhood friends, and by writing to us, she was instrumental in our meeting in New York. So beyond her interviewing, she was interested in promoting human contact to make links between past and present more tangible than just words.

But more than that, and this is an unforgettable experience, which could not be repeated, after I had been talking about becoming separated from my parents, she suddenly said, “Excuse me, I have to go out; I have diarrhea.” I was struck by the fact that this was my physiological response to the very experience I was describing. I was just so grateful that this woman was so willing to come so close to me and to understand me on this basic somatic level. I was grateful for her honesty and naïveté, for at that time, she did not understand the reason for her sudden onset of diarrhea. When I told her what I thought had happened, she looked at me quizzically, a little reluctantly, but ultimately with an open mind and with some humor. My interpretation cured her diarrhea.

After lunch, it did not take long before I returned to the separation from my parents, as I have always returned to it. Now came the second inimitable response from my interviewer. Tears came to her eyes. The

psychiatrist-child-me was dumbstruck. She explained that she was so sorry for the little boy abandoned in the street. I was awed that she was responding to my story, not just recording it.

Before the conference, it had never struck me that I, who was the little abandoned boy, should be felt sorry for. This boy, above all, should be "good." He should not cry and should do the right thing, which was to go to the lady in the block of flats when his parents did not return. He should not make a fuss with his aunts on the farm. After all, I should consider myself lucky my parents came back and the three of us survived.

But now, together with the two other older child survivors in the workshop who had felt sorry for me, with the sobs I experienced when Ervin left the conference, I experienced the interviewer's tears as genuinely appropriate to my situation. I asked her what she would do if this were the time of my abandonment. She reached out and took my hand and said she would hug me and console me in my grief.

I introduced the beautiful interviewer into the separation memory. It became a sort of compound experience, and I wished it had really happened that someone at the time had taken my hand, picked me up, and taken all my worries away from me.

Near the end, I asked for a "diagnosis." The interviewer seemed to be surprised and said: "Well, you know it well enough. You have been depressed a lot of your life." I did not know it. I never looked at myself as depressed. We clarified it as a kind of existential depression. More important for me was a "diagnosis" of me as a person. "Well, now that you know me, what do you think of me?" I asked in a number of disguised ways. Again, with some surprise, as if with my cleverness, she said I should have known that I was a nice person. Then I asked a number of questions to which I required specific answers. I had to have confirmed, without shadows on her face, without flinching, that "No, of course, that is not shameful" and that "Yes, this is understandable under the circumstances." I had to have these matters confirmed by this person whom I loved, so I could believe them. But this time words had to confirm, "in black and white," the nonverbal messages.

At the end of our meeting, she talked to me again as a colleague, with undiminished respect. After seeing my warts and insides, I was, on one hand, one of her beloved child(ren) survivors whom she found and whose wounds she tended and described to the world; on the other hand, she also respected who I grew up to be.

In all subsequent correspondence, I called her by her first name. She invariably called me Paul. In her first letter, she signed her full name. In the second, she just wrote her initials. She was softening, but not as far as

writing just her first name. Well, perhaps, we were not friends after all, and I was just a junior colleague. Or perhaps, I was just a child survivor number 351? I believe otherwise. I believe that she is respectful of reality; I am a child survivor and a junior colleague. She also realizes my transference responses, upon which she is careful not to act out. Perhaps, as well as all this, she hides inside her psychoanalytic home. Perhaps, she needs a rest from her many children. On the other hand, perhaps her own uprootedness and her pioneering thinking require a base to which to belong. Of course, all these musings are fantasies, and they indicate that I had imaginations about my interviewer not only before, but also after the interview.

I went to Frankfurt. I met my second-generation cousin who lived there. I was able to give her a lot in terms of understanding her Holocaust inheritance. She gave me a lot in terms of reconnecting with current and past family. I met a cousin of my mother's for the first time. My cousin and I intensely perused old family photographs. Many of the dead people came to life once more. I discovered a large, loving family, of which I was a part. I interviewed some children of Nazis, and they told me their stories. They were very grateful for the opportunity.

I returned to Melbourne. While on my departure, I had one child survivor patient, and after my return, I expanded the number to three. I noted that useful as single interviews (whether intake, testimony, or research) may be, child survivors like my patients or me needed a lot more work on their problems.

What was the impact of the interview on me? It brought back precious memories; it allowed me to readjust some meanings in my life. But what I want to talk about now are the nature of the organic matrix of interviews and their variety of usefulness and limitations from the storyteller's point of view.

It struck me how different it was on the other side of the interview duet. I was not concerned with research; I wanted my story to be properly heard by this great woman, and I wanted to receive the reflection of my story after it reverberated through her. Was the story worth receiving, worth reverberating? What did it say about the storyteller? What sort of person was I? What sense did I make?

Perhaps these were idiosyncratic quests in a unique personal context. Obviously I had great expectations. I came from the other end of the world for this; there was an anticipation period that lasted months, a crescendo at the time of the conference. I was ready, and yet, I think that for all people, there are a long journey and a long waiting time filled with much imagining before the first real telling of the story. Clinically, for many, it takes years

to build up to their first diagnostic interview and finally to face the truth about themselves and what happened to them.

This may be too daunting a task at the best of times. It may be impossible in just one session. At such times, people may simply attest to facts. The testimony may be a performance of a duty, like giving a report to the police. Even though the report may be about crimes that have unalterably changed the victim/witness forever, the report may be given as though it is for the listeners and not the storyteller to feel and act on the meanings of the story.

Paradoxically, the storytelling may then become like a partial reenactment of the traumatic situation, where the real story is looked at from a distance, as if it is happening to someone else—an interesting, fascinating, horrifying experience to be recorded and studied with curiosity but to be felt, if at all, only at some future date. The recorder, whether historian or psychiatrist, may absorb the story in a similar dissociated state. Of course, the listener may become a horrified and dissociated witness to an emotionally told story. The listener may even be unsympathetic. The storyteller is then suppressed. The trauma is reenacted now with the sense that the interviewer is associated with the original unsympathetic witnesses of his or her traumas.

I felt grateful to my interviewer because she was able to allow us to move beyond the initial detachment. With her encouragement, we left no stone unturned. The trauma was far from having been reenacted. If anything, it was repaired to some extent.

I talked a lot about my interviewer here, almost as if she was under analysis. I realized how much, in fact, I had been assessing her. I think storytellers do assess their audiences and adjust their stories accordingly. People may come to say only what is heard. I don't think my interviewer was tuned in all the time. At times, her mind was on the research, the protocol, the tape; she was exhausted. But I measured my pace and came back to things, because she was willing and capable to properly hear everything.

Of course, I had some unrealistic expectations and idealizations of my interviewer. It may be seen from what I have said that I had a transference hunger. Further, I was emotionally open before the interview, and I was ready; I was actually almost demanding a full experience. The interview took place in the context of a world gathering, where we hidden children talked to the world, and the world this time was keen to listen to us, to me. The interviewer was somehow instrumental in producing this world for me, and she invited me to participate in it by her side. Sure, she was idealized, and so was the occasion. I was lucky because there were grains of truth in the fantasy. But with all this idealization, I do not think I was

very different from many people who come for interviews in the context of a heightened emotional charge and who desire to follow their expert, who will change the world for them.

I cast my interviewer in the role of my idealized, undamaged parents. No doubt my perceptions were distorted. For instance, I vaguely remember that the family of the interviewer actually came from Poland, not Austria. But this did not suit me; I wanted her to come from Vienna, a place in which my parents experienced culture and *Gemutlichkeit* (comfort) before the war. I compounded the fantasy that this mother-psychoanalyst was a "wife" of Freud's in Vienna, a mother versed in his ultimate secrets but strong enough to withstand Freud's renunciation of children's traumas and interested in looking after mine. Her husband was an alternate father too, actually, the one who drew his wife's attention to child survivors. Thus, they were kindly parents to whom I owed my existence. Ultimately, they were good parents. Perhaps, there was some rectification in the oedipal child, too; I now have a kind father as well as mother.

A part of me even then was quite aware of my distortions, and I did not regress to childlike behavior. But I enjoyed this new kind of emotional experience, superimposed on, and merging with, experiences of my own untraumatized parents and creating new possibilities. This is how it could have been.

Of course, it is not just telling one's story that is the purpose of interviews of my kind; there is also a desire to receive a salve for the wounds one exposes. As with a clinical storytelling, there is a fervent hope of changing the story from this moment on and also back in time. In the very act of one's story being listened to, understood, and being found acceptable and worthy, there is a change in the view of the story and of oneself. In the intense transference milieu, it's as if parents view one benevolently, with interest, respect, and compassion for the awful things that happened to the little child. As I went over the crucial symbol of my story again and again, through the interviewer's responses, I was able to reassess the story.

Patients often wonder what can be done about bad events that happened many years ago. Nothing can be done to change what happened. But attitudes to those events and oneself and one's parents can change. Even as they are being relived, one can see oneself differently, through the eyes of another. When bad things happen, one tends to regard oneself badly. One also regards parents badly for letting these things happen. Looking at these events again through the mutual perspective of compassionate historians, parents and oneself may be retrieved from the possessive claims of badness.

In this telling of the story to another human being, the two people reknear or refashion the meanings imbued in the story. I learned that I was not abandoned because I had done something awful for which I was being punished. Nor was I rejected because I was worthless and unlovable. The lack of feeling for my disappearing parents was not because I was callous but because they gave me strong messages through their own actions that crying was not appropriate. But above all, I learned that this experience really was a terrible one and that I was not crazy for returning to it all the time. There were people who could understand such an experience, but through force of circumstances, they were not there at the time to offer comfort and to cry with me, but they were here now. In the past and now, too, people loved me, and they did their best to safeguard me. It was important to them, as to me, that the Nazi perception of me was not correct.

Thus, storytellers want to find in their stories new meanings and purpose to enable the rest of their life stories to flow in greater harmony.

It may be said that I was searching not for an interview session but for therapy. This may be true, but it may be a mistake to rigidly distinguish the two or to denigrate one or the other. Therapy is but retelling the story in its many facets, till in the end, both parties understand it. The initial interview already contains the facets of the story. It is like an overture from which the themes develop later. The initial interview assesses whether the testimony engages the participants sufficiently to research the story further.

Many patients who seek interviews for their traumas, for instance, those who come to the Accident and Emergency department of my hospital, also hunger for parental transference figures. They seek benevolent parental figures in a hostile world. They also hunger for therapy that will change their fearful world. Any living or reliving of traumas evokes desires within good people to change the situation. Good people witnessing these desires do change the situation to some extent. My interview with my interviewer did change the situation to a degree, and it was part of a process of therapy.

An interview with a child survivor may have to capture more than an initial psychiatric or psychotherapy interview. This single record may be all that is bequeathed. The overture must be condensed to a single song. So I feel an inner consistency in my desire for my interview to achieve many things—to obtain clarity, integrity, and an emotional cohesion of myself. If I had transference hunger or therapy hunger in my quest for repair, that was part of my testimony, too. Researchers should understand this and explore the nature of these hungers and their contents in the

context of the history of the trauma. After all, what is the purpose of a recording if it does not convey the emotional nuances, needs, and desires that the story impacted on the storyteller?

Not conveying these flesh-and-blood aspects of the story is like recording the notes and missing out on the sound. In our child survivor group, we video each member's story and subsequent discussion, because we feel that it is important to convey for the record the facial expressions, the eyes, and the responses of the audience and the storyteller's responses to the audience. They are the reverberations, overtones, and harmonics that give the music its depth.

So I think that it is wrong to believe that one obtains an objective history through "scientific distance." Without the subjective and intersubjective, there is a crippled history. In my experience, distant, scientific doctors simply suppress the facts about their patients and their illnesses, and as a result, they develop crippled philosophies of medical action. This is important if we want child survivors' testimonies to have practical effect in the future.

If the interviewer is an organic part of the storytelling, what, then, are the boundaries in an interview? What is the differentiation of roles? What is his or her purpose, and does he or she benefit?

In the word *history*, *story* takes up most of the word. Looked at differently, *histo*, meaning biological tissue, takes up most of the word. One's history, then, is one's biological tissue, one's life. At the same time, *interview* suggests that there is a view created by two people, a mutual creation between them. These two people evoke a life story, a life as living as biological tissue, by giving of their own tissues. There is no boundary in the purpose of evoking this life.

However, there is a strict boundary in the tasks the two people perform. It is one person's story, which is told while the other evokes it and makes sure it expresses itself to the full and enriches it. To use the musical analogy, the interviewer is the conductor, while the storyteller is the orchestra. Between them, they make, express, explore, and record. Each needs the other, each affects the other, each is changed by the other, and together, they enliven and make new interpretations of the story. In their work, they are not separate. They intertwine, and their tissues touch and crisscross, as did my interviewer's and mine. But after the creation, there is separateness. Only the creation unites.

For whose benefit is the interview? It is for the interviewee, who is deepening the meaning of his or her life. It is for the interviewer, who is learning something important about life, too. But the two have come together to contribute something of great value to posterity and to the

world. They unite to make a difference. So the interview is of benefit to the future historian or researcher and to his or her audience. The interview becomes a living gift to a living world. Indivisibly, the trio of interviewee, interviewer, and audience becomes part of the living tissue of this world. I suggest, if any component of the trio is compromised, so are the others and the creation. Something is lost for the past, the present, and for the future of all involved parties.

I do not want to idealize interviews. Even my good one was but part of a series of experiences that themselves were parts of other experiences over a long time; from all these experiences, I have needed to heal to the extent that I have. Similarly, my interview was but one message among others to the world and only of one person among many. With all our messages put together, the world may still not hear.

I also do not want to trivialize the differences between interviews, which provide relief, wisdom, and a potent message in contrast with those that evoke distress without inspiring or giving light. Interviewers with negative walls around them evoke or intensify the walls in the survivor, and the danger is that future historians will also be walled off from the real history. Thus, the facts of the trauma may be recorded, but the nature of the recording may perpetuate the defenses against it, its suppression, rather than appreciation of its true nature. At its worst, there may be repetition and perpetuation of the trauma.

I want the defensive walls recorded. They are there to be peeled off before the truth can be recorded, for they, too, are part of the truth. I was certainly detached as soon as I entered my story. But I also want documented how my interviewer removed walls and how her involvement in my story added a compassionate view of its truth and, with it, a message of hope.

In the interview, she provided the ingredients of the antidote to my experience of separation from my parents. She was there hugging me as I was left alone. She touched my hand instead of letting go of it. When she left the room because of her diarrhea, she left looking into my eyes and explained, in effect, that she was leaving because she was so deeply involved with me. In retrospect, that is why I was abandoned by my parents. If they had not loved me desperately, they would have taken me with them. If they had not loved me desperately, they would have looked at me, rather than erected walls for me. The walls have dissolved, and I have rediscovered their love.

From my interview, I do not want to testify only to the fact that Nazi occupation occurred and persecuted Jewish families; I also want to share my story for my benefit and for the benefit of all of us who can learn

what becomes of little children when cruelly separated from their parents, how love in perverse circumstances has long-lasting, perverse results, and how love and kindness can help facilitate finding the original love, even after a long time.

The impact of my interview on me has been to integrate me a little more within myself and with other people. I am grateful to have been asked to write this chapter, because it has continued the process. I have learned a little more, too, how interviews without a soul can be dehumanizing bureaucratic clerkships that may divide people within themselves and from each other. This process stifles the life of storytelling. On the other hand, in good interviews, one person lends himself or herself as a live vehicle or a bridge of living tissue for the emergence and transmission of the truth of the story of another. This process of life connects in an active, dynamic way the past through the present to the future for the mutual enrichment of the storyteller, the interviewer, and future observers.