

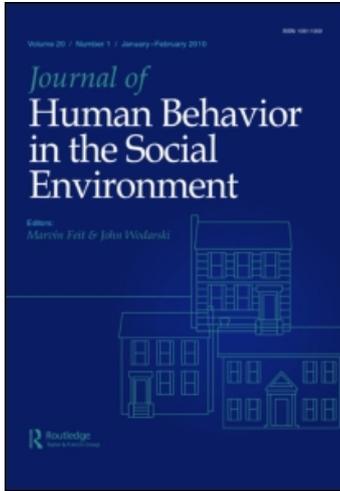
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### Memory and Resilience

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## Memory and Resilience

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*This study reviews the memories of 40 Holocaust survivors who reflected on their lives more than 60 years after liberation. The participants were randomly selected from the larger group of Holocaust survivors in the “Forgiveness, Resiliency, and Survivorship Among Holocaust Survivors” study funded by the John Templeton Foundation. Data collected from open-end questions about their memories were analyzed. The findings revealed that their critical memories involve loss, violence, and survival. The legacies of these survivors reflect the importance of reconstructing family, transmitting values, contributing to the community, and educating the next generation. Survivors’ ability to rebuild their lives after the Holocaust demonstrate that memory promoted resilience by enabling them to remember the past, to share their meaningful stories with others, to remember why and how they survived, and to find meaning in the aftermath of such injustice. Their remembrances provide historical specificity to survivors’ experiences and their ability to develop resilience. Despite negative and traumatic experiences, people can resolve the tension between integrity and despair.*

**KEYWORDS** *Memory, Holocaust, resilience, Judaism*

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## INTRODUCTION

Remembering and storytelling are fundamental parts of the lives of human beings. The quest to make meaning of one's life experiences often involves telling stories. These stories may be memories, fictional accounts recited to teach some lesson or truth, or some mixture of the two. Stories of old often take on larger-than-life dimensions or become legends, or they may be taken as fact. This is often true in religious settings. Religions are formed around stories of creation, redemption, and human interaction with the Divine. These stories strive to explain the unexplainable, to make the mysterious tangible.

However, it is not only in religious settings that people use memory and storytelling to create meaning. Secular holidays are often created to honor or commemorate the memory of an event or person. In the United States, families come together annually to commemorate and retell the stories of their history: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the Civil Rights movement; the tragedy of 9/11; the election of the first African American president, Barack Obama; and the sacrifices of men and women who have died and are dying in wars both on U. S. soil and throughout the world. Even the fiction of young George Washington cutting down the cherry tree joins countless others to form a story of national heritage and identity. It seems that in both the religious and secular realms of life, the development of memories is key to the foundation, formation, and continuity of human communities.

## MEMORY

The role of memory within both individual lives and societies as a whole is complicated by its exceedingly subjective and little-understood nature. Though in the past memory was considered subjective, recently remembering has come to be understood as both a communal and individual construct. Memory is based on one's mental capacity, personality tendencies, previous experiences, cultural and social location, and personal contacts with others. Whereas many once considered memory to be what Lang (1996) described as a "natural faculty or repository waiting to be filled" (p. 16), scholars are now studying memory in a much more subtle fashion. It is a common concern among scholars of memory that remembering is a highly selective enterprise (Becker, 1997; Roth, 2007). People construct worldviews based on a belief that the world is predictable and consistent; however, when their world becomes unmanageable and challenging as a result of a tragedy or disaster, they often experience a crisis. As a result, "people attempt to manage discontinuities and disruptions primarily through memories that have cultural salience" (Becker, p. 182). Memory is socially constructed, present-oriented,

and experientially based. It helps people maintain an illusion of continuity (Becker, 1997; Halbswachs, 1992; Polkinghorne, 1996).

Buruma (in Arthur, 1999) referred to memory as “history as it is felt” (p. 42). As such, history itself becomes a subjective entity made up of the constructed memories of humanity. “The ‘past’ is not something fixed with an independent existence, a once-and-for-all set of events. The ‘past’ is a remembered past, and as such it is something that is constructed and reproduced in a multitude of ways” (Rigby, 2003, p. 95). Further adding to the ambiguities of dealing with history, one must take into account the magnitude of differing perspectives when studying the nature of memory:

What we refer to as the “past” is our historical *memory* or representation of a particular period of the past; our particular memory is just one in a range of alternative memories (or interpretations) that it is possible to hold. (Rigby, 2003, p. 95; italics in the original)

Questions arise as to whose memories are more authoritative and how many perspectives must be present in order to constitute the fullness of truth. How, for example, does truth relate to memory and history? When memory does not create shared historical understanding, power dynamics and politics play a greater role in defining truth. “Remembering seems more a problem than resource; the questions of what to remember, how, and why are exceedingly complicated” (Keshgegian, 2000, p. 87). These questions are important in reference to the aftermath of crimes committed: how individuals and communities move forward either together or apart, how those who were victimized seek justice, how victims become resilient and either pursue forgiveness or refuse it, how the perpetrators go about making amends for their crimes. The implications of this are widespread and complex.

## Memory and Justice

Memory has tremendous influence over how societies make meaning of their past and create communal identity. It dictates how people choose to relate to one another, influences cultural identity, and enables or hinders the process of reconciliation.

When examining the function of memory for individuals and communities that have undergone great injustice or injury, it is important to ask the following questions: Why do people remember? What is it that motivates people to remember their painful pasts?

The first, and most pressing, reason for remembering publicly the injustices that one has endured is for preventive purposes. That is, people remember to prevent such atrocities from reoccurring (Helmreich, 1992). This speaks to the relevance of the adage “Those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it.” Thus, people remember to keep the world

accountable, to promote justice, and to make sure that no one must go through the suffering that they themselves have gone through. According to Stortz (2007), "Memory is the only way to prevent atrocity from happening again" (p. 19). Furthermore, accountability requires that those who would rather not remember take a hard look at what happened. For both the perpetrators of the injustice and those who chose not to become involved, memory serves to remind that injustice is possible and must be addressed. In thinking about the words *forgetting* and *justice*, Yerushalmi (1996) raised the question whether the opposite of forgetting is not remembering but rather justice.

An African parable illustrates this point well:

It is a parable about a chick that was snatched from its mother by a hawk; the chick was asked why it was crying in such a hopeless situation. It replied, "I am not crying because I hope that someone will save me but because I want the world to know what happened to me." (Hadebe, 2008)

Memory is a way of resisting the powers of injustice. "Resistance is continuous in remembrance, the acknowledgment of guilt, the refusal to repress truth or remain silent" (Kaplan in Keshgegian, 2000, p. 87). To prevent future injustice, the story of what happened must be heard and acknowledged by others.

Furthermore, remembering can provide healing from the pain that people connect with the past (Keshgegian, 2000; Lang, 1996; Rigby, 2003; Roth, 2007). On one level, the truth of what happened allows people (especially family members of a victim who died in the injustice) the opportunity to move on (Rigby, p. 105). On another level, memory allows people to reinterpret the past in light of the present (Pasupathi, 2001). It "involves the capacity to reiterate or 're'-present what is recalled there. Without the capacity for this projection forward, memory would be in the past as well as of it" (Lang, p. 16). People can become

reconciled to loss as a way of dealing with the pain of the past ... [by] looking backwards through time with a different lens that enables them to reconstruct their memories in such a manner that eases the intensity of feelings of hatred, bitterness, and loss. (Rigby, 2003, p. 95)

It is a process that is "comparable to that of forgiveness: the formation of a new memory (personal and collective) that liberates people from their over determined negative influences of the past" (Rigby, 2003, p. 96).

### Collective Memory and Judaism

*Collective memory* is the memory of a group that is usually passed from generation to generation. Collective memory involves two actions: receiving

and transmitting movement. Jewish collective memory is the union of Jewish memory and Jewish history. Jewish memory is based on the teaching that life is sacred, more sacred than anything else (Yerushalmi, 1996). According to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, the Jewish people are a “community based on memory . . . an organic memory because it had been the source of the life and strength of the community” (Luz, 1995, p. 71), a memory that is transferred from one generation to another.

In Judaism, historic events are filtered through the lens of the dynamic, collective memory—from the exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom to the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel—with stories of survival transmitted from one generation to the next (Luz, 1995, p. 90). For example, Passover is “the greatest festival of the Jewish people, and the Haggadah is its book of remembrance and redemption. Here the memory of the nation is annually renewed and replenished, and the collective hope sustained” (Blum in Yerushalmi, 1996, p. xv). The collective memory of the Jewish people is conveyed through ritual and traditions and is based on the interlocking institutions of family, community, and the Jewish religion.

Jews are instructed to *zakhor*, a Hebrew word meaning to remember, to act, and not just to think about the past. By using the term *remember*, “we are really saying that a past has been actively transmitted to the present generation and that this past has been accepted as meaningful” (Yerushalmi, 1996, p. 109). The Jewish people are instructed to remember all of the positive and negative experiences that form their collective identity. The components of the Jewish collective memory are to remember, to blot out, and not to forget memories of evil and violence and can be found in Deuteronomy 25:17–19 (Rabbi D. Friedman, personal communication, March 2009):

*Remember* what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt—how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on your march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers at the rear. Therefore, when your God Adonai grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that your God Adonai is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall not *blot out* the memory of Amalek from under heaven. *Do not forget!* (Eskenazi, 2008, p. 1184; italics added)

## Memory and the Holocaust

For those who survived the Holocaust, remembering is not an option: They remember. They are driven by an imperative to bear witness to the events of the Holocaust (Liben, 2000). Remembering is an intentional act of honoring all those affected by the Holocaust, those who died, and those who lived.

Foer (2002) described the collective, post-Holocaust Jewish memory:

Touch, taste, sight, smell, hearing . . . memory. While Gentiles experience and process the world through the traditional senses, and use memory

only as a second-order means of interpreting events, for Jews memory is no less primary than the prick of a pin, or its silver glimmer, or the taste of the blood it pulls from the finger. The Jew is pricked by a pin and remembers other pins. It is only by tracing the pinprick back to other pinpricks—when his mother tried to fix his sleeve while his arm was still in it, when his grandfather's fingers fell asleep while stroking his great-grandfather's damp forehead, when Abraham tested his knife point to be sure Isaac would feel no pain—that the Jew is able to know why it hurts. When a Jew encounters a pin, he asks: What does it remember like? (p. 198)

The teachings on Jewish memory have become canonized in the teachings and traditions of the Jewish people. However, in post-Holocaust times, it is difficult to know “what we should remember, what can we afford to forget, what we must not forget” (Yerushalmi, 1996, p. 107).

Grossman (2006) identified six significant reasons to remember the Holocaust (Figure 1), although she acknowledged that there are many others. First, one person can make a difference. Many Jews lived because of the intervention of more than 21,000 righteous Gentiles who jeopardized their lives and often those of their families to save them during the Holocaust. Second, not doing anything is an act of collusion. During the Holocaust, too many people stood by while their neighbors, coworkers, friends, and others were taken away. The third and fourth reasons prompt us to remember that during the Holocaust, news about the atrocities happening in Germany and Europe was reported by reliable sources and that today, as then, tyrants and evil leaders are perpetuating genocide with limited intervention from the outside world. Twenty-first-century dictators and oppressors continue to torture and kill, and the world has the opportunity to intervene. The fifth reason identified by Grossman is that the fate of all Jews is entangled and, in this current global world, the fate of all people is intertwined. The sixth reason is a reminder that people are resilient and creative. Survivors moved to foreign countries, rebuilt their lives, created families, contributed to their communities, and shared a legacy with their stories of survival, resourcefulness, and hope.

1. One person can make a difference.
2. Not doing anything is an act of complicity.
3. Believe what you read in the news from reliable sources.
4. Believe the threats of tyrants.
5. The fate of all Jews is intertwined.
6. The human spirit can triumph over evil.

**FIGURE 1** Reasons to Remember the Holocaust. *Source.* Grossman (2006).

Collective remembrance requires that “we continually reinterpret and evaluate our memories and create links between diverse events in our life in sequential order in order so that we are able to maintain a coherent told or written life story” (Cohler, 2008, p. 4). Interviews with older Holocaust survivors provide the opportunity to understand the relationship between memory and social context, past, present, and future.

## RESILIENCE THEORY AND HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Resilience refers to the ability of a system to overcome adversity by using a variety of adaptive behaviors (Greene, 2002; Masten, 1994) or to maintain continuity and consistency over life after traumatic events. *Resilience* “is the ability to maintain one’s personal narrative and a coherent sense of self following traumatic events” (Borden, 1992, p. 125). *Risk factors* are those events or influences that cause people to develop problems or deficits later (Greene, 2002; Saleebey, 2009). *Protective factors* are those conditions, events, and situations that cushion, disrupt, or thwart negative circumstances (Greene, 2002; Saleebey, 2009). Keshgegian (2000) told of her personal experience with her grandmother’s memories, saying,

I realized that she was giving me, through those tales, memories other than of victimization, stories that spoke of resistance and agency, of the practice of leadership even in settings where these were ostensibly denied. There was more to my family’s past than a history of victimization. (p. 14)

These stories formed Keshgegian’s future identity in a very powerful way as she learned from the family stories about survival and resilience.

Just as Keshgegian’s grandmother learned to overcome adversity, Helmreich (1992) noted that

the survivors were not supermen; they were ordinary individuals before the war, chosen by sheer accident of history to bear witness to one of its awful periods. . . . the story of the survivors is one of courage and strength, of people who are living proof of the indomitable will of human beings to survive and of their tremendous capacity for hope. It is not a story of remarkable people. It is a story of just how remarkable people can be. (p. 276)

Survivors who learned to overcome adversity have many lessons to teach about developing resilience across the life span (Hantman & Solomon, 2007).

Greene (2002) found that Holocaust survivors “possess an ability to reconstruct memory in such a way that they feel a sense of connection

to the past and the present, and establish the significance of their lives” (p. 14). Hantman, Solomon, and Horn (2003) revealed that the “hardiness and resilience of survivors of extreme trauma is part of an ongoing transformation that is occurring, affecting understanding of the long-term effects of exposure to trauma” (p. 132). A later study by Hantman and Solomon (2007) of older Holocaust survivors with cancer determined that survivors exhibited “inner strength, optimism, determination, and other qualities that point to an ample reservoir of inner resources and coping ability” (p. 400). According to Suedfeld et al. (2005), Holocaust survivors have an

ability to transcend horrible experiences [that] does not minimize their horribleness; rather, it reminds us of the strength and determination of which human beings are capable. . . . honors the survivors and their resilience, rather than diminishing them by labeling them all as irretrievably damaged. (p. 245)

Finally, many older Holocaust survivors, both immediately after liberation and 50 years later, achieved their goals, rebuilt their lives and families, contributed to the community, and achieved a sense of integrity about their lives (Helmreich, 1992). These research studies suggest that these Holocaust survivors have overcome adversity, developed a sense of coherence in their lives after the Holocaust, expressed optimism and hope, and maintained resilience across the life span (Greene, 2002; Hantman & Solomon, 2007; Hantman et al., 2003; Helmreich, 1992; Lewis & Harrell, 2002; Suedfeld et al., 2005; Wiesenthal, 1998).

## DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

The psychosocial development theory of older adulthood builds primarily on the work of Erik Erikson (1963). Erikson was born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1902 and was raised by his Jewish stepfather. In response to the spread of Nazism, he and his family fled Germany for the United States in 1933. Erikson’s focus on ego development and mastery across the life span built on Freudian theory; however, perhaps because of his early identity development, Erikson also recognized that the ego develops through interaction with the social environment (Greene, 2008; Urdang, 2008).

Erikson identified eight psychosocial stages or life tasks that healthy personalities experience throughout their lifetimes, each increasing a person’s capacity to enhance his or her quality of life (see Greene, Graham, & Morano, this issue). He used three concepts to discuss his psychosocial theory: life stage, psychosocial crises, and developmental activity (Greene, 2008; Norlin, Chess, Dale, & Smith, 2003). The life stage approach refers to the fact that each life stage builds on the previous stages, and each

stage has its own distinct qualities and outcomes. The resolution of each conflict occurs in social interaction with significant others (Rennemark & Hagberg, 1997). Erikson proposed that movement from one stage to the next involves the resolution of a psychosocial crisis or tension, marked by a clash between ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic traits or attitudes. These may or may not be resolved successfully. Positive resolution leads to a change in perspective and integration into healthy personality structure; negative resolution can lead to an inability to move to the next developmental level and permanent damage to the personality (Suedfeld et al., 2005). The resolution of any stage is not final but can be revisited throughout one's life (Greene, 2008).

The developmental task of older adulthood as identified by Erikson is to find a sense of meaning that determines one's position on the continuum between a sense of integrity and a sense of despair. "How we view our past, how we make sense of our stories, is always in relationship to the community that we live and developmental concerns" (Schiff, 2005, p. 212). Achieving integrity is a meaning-making process marked by the acceptance of past decisions, meaning, and satisfaction in one's life and the ability to encounter death without regret. Despair is manifested as anger, contempt for others, a feeling of not fulfilling one's desires, and regret exhibited toward external sources. The satisfactory resolution of this conflict leads to wisdom and successful aging (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006; Suedfeld et al., 2005).

According to Suedfeld et al. (2005), Holocaust survivors, both immediately after liberation and 50 years later, demonstrated a high degree of resilience, adjustment, and contentment. In fact, they "are concerned for others, are highly competent in daily life, know what they want, and have confidence in their ability to attain their goals" (p. 244). These survivors have experienced a positive resolution of Erikson's integrity versus despair conflict and have demonstrated successful aging while allowing for discontinuities, inconsistencies, and losses.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary source of the data for this study was a larger study titled "Forgiveness, Resiliency, and Survivorship Among Holocaust Survivors" (hereafter, the Templeton study) funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The project involved interviewing 133 survivors in nine U. S. locations: Austin, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, New Jersey, San Antonio, and Washington, DC. Participants in the Templeton study were identified through a snowball sampling technique in each of the cities. Interviewers were trained in each city. Participants completed a mixed-methods structured interview protocol about aspects of their life experiences

that helped to mitigate and protect them from the effects of the Holocaust. Qualitative questions infused throughout the interview protocol gave participants an opportunity to describe and reveal relevant information about their experiences. Interviews were conducted in person by trained interviewers, and information was written in a booklet and audio-recorded. The audio recordings were transcribed. For more about the Templeton study participants, see Greene, Armour, Hantman, Graham, and Sharabi (this issue).

### The Current Study

Forty transcribed interviews were randomly selected for this study on memory and resilience. Researchers examined the participants' responses to three open-ended questions contained in the research protocol:

- What images or events have been the hardest to forget?
- With whom do you talk about your memories of these traumatic events?
- What legacy will you leave us?

The researchers also hoped to learn

- how the Holocaust survivors reflected on their memories, given that Holocaust research is heavily dependent on the oral histories of survivors;
- how these older adults overcame distressing and hurtful experiences;
- what social supports helped survivors triumph over negative life events;
- how survivors' memories of trauma shaped their legacy for future generations; and
- how memory affected these older adults' past, present, and future perspectives.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of a constant-comparison approach, which involves "moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178) in an effort to make meaning of the data. Thematic analysis began after the first interview and continued throughout data collection. As themes emerged from the data, the researchers began to understand the themes in light of the original questions. Analytic memos provided a tool for recording emerging insights, hunches, and tentative themes.

Trustworthiness is a key consideration for achieving rigor in qualitative research. Research results are "trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability" (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). The following strategies were used to ensure rigor. To strengthen internal

validity, the researchers used peer examination, data triangulation, collaborative research, and colleague review and controlled for researcher bias. Validity and reliability were also strengthened through use of an audit trail and work with others to identify and manage personal biases. The findings from this study include thick, rich descriptions so that readers will know whether they can generalize the results to other situations.

## FINDINGS

Three open-end questions were selected from the Templeton study to learn about memory and resilience. Responses to the first question, about the event or image that was the most difficult to forget, revealed three themes: (1) memories of loss, (2) memories of violence, and (3) memories of survival. Responses to the second question, about modern-day social supports, revealed themes of (1) family members, (2) community members, (3) other survivors, and (4) friends. The third question asked the Holocaust survivors to identify the legacy they hoped to leave; it was designed to elicit how participants thought about the future. Their legacies reflected the importance of (1) rebuilding family, (2) passing on values, (3) contributing to the community, and (4) educating the next generation.

### Memories of the Past

#### MEMORIES OF LOSS

Experiencing the loss of family, parents, siblings, and other relatives was a common theme expressed by many of the Holocaust survivors. For some, the enduring image was seeing their parents or siblings for the last time; for others, it was receiving a death notification. Some remembered “the march with my family to the gas chambers. When I think of it, I get cramps,” or the last time they “saw my little brother kiss my mother, and I can still see his lips and cheeks.” Others talked about “when I got the answer that my parents were killed. That was the hardest to forget. They were only 52 and 55 years old,” whereas others wished that they had been able to convey the loving heart as

my mother [was] walking away. My father and brother disappeared very quickly. My mother was waving. I wanted to reach out for her and tell her I love her. To tell her that I didn't tell her enough how much I loved her.

Another loss experienced by the participants was that of their childhood. They told of happy childhood memories before German occupation: “Yes, I remember Bar Mitzvah under Italian occupation. Last service in synagogue.

Next week they burned the synagogue. Even now, I choke up. Choking up comes easier at my age.”

Some remembered losing their spiritual or physical home and community. One survivor talked about the loss of learning from his father about how to be a good parent:

I do remember the teaching of my parents—very often in a positive way. The few years I had with them. Eleven years were precious. My father was very intelligent. My brother was ordained as a rabbi at 17 because he was so smart. My brother was 15. He came to my father and said, “I want to be a plumber.” My father said, “We’ll talk about it in two weeks.” That’s what I do with my kids. You don’t slap them down right away.

The Holocaust survivors also shared how they coped with their losses, as reflected in the following story:

Sometimes I get mad that they threw us out and interrupted our life in Berlin. Because we had a wonderful life, and everything was fine. I probably would have the movie houses and a lot of money and we would travel. But Hitler came and ruined everything. Then I am angry for 4½ minutes!

#### MEMORIES OF VIOLENCE

Older Holocaust survivors witnessed countless acts of violence and, in many situations, were unable to stop or interrupt the harm perpetrated against others. Particularly disturbing were memories involving “the moaning, crying, stench from the wagons, the sound of the trains” and children and family members crying for help, and the reoccurrence of those memories even today. It “happens all the time. I have dreams that my mother is calling my name, asking for help.”

Another particularly painful memory was that

in the Holocaust when they dealt with an orphanage and threw children from the second and third floor. Used them for target practice, took them by their feet, and banged them against the wall. The blood was running in the street. I had many nightmares from it. This was the hardest vision I had from the Holocaust because being a mother today. . . . [the German soldiers] threw them [young children] from second- and third-floor windows for target practice.

#### MEMORIES OF SURVIVAL

Some Holocaust survivors remembered events in which something unexpected occurred, resulting in family, community members, or themselves being saved from death or persecution. They assigned positive meaning to the experiences that interrupted their narrative of loss and destruction.

My hand [was] wounded. Mother in hospital—frightening. When we were separated and mother thrown out in fields—Germans circling her—could have been caught. I always tell myself I have regret she never saw her grandchildren. She loved children. At least she realized her goal and got us out of Poland.

Another simply said, “I was one of the luckiest ones.” Yet another positive memory was being saved when

the 270 people on the train went to Luvoff. They had some of us get off the train and were going to take us in trucks. Some people had belongings and things like sewing machines that they wanted to go back and get. One train left and there was another train there. The train almost hit us, and everyone thought we were dying. It was like God heard, and the train stopped before it hit the belongings or us.

### Sharing Memories in the Present

The second question asked participants to identify the people with whom they shared their stories. It is these conversations and interactions with others about the past that influence identity development. Participants identified family members, community members, other survivors, and friends as persons with whom they chose to share their memories. One survivor explained, “Sometimes I tell my children that they are my psychiatrists.” Others talked about how couples often shared differently. A wife who spoke often reported, “My husband has more nightmares than I do because I lecture for all these years. I don’t know why, but that’s the way it is.” Survivors often shared their memories “with each other. We talk among ourselves. Always interested in others’ stories. Nobody knows everything that happened. . . . Because now I know others’ stories and know there is more.”

Others talked about the blessing that “you are here, that is wonderful.” Many felt “it is a very healthy key to talk about them. I will lecture today.” Others “find that speaking about our experiences is very important especially today considering that humanity didn’t learn much from our experiences and there are genocides going on right now. Yes, it is very important that we speak.”

### Leaving a Legacy

The third question asked the participants to think about their contribution or the legacy that they hoped to leave. The four themes that emerged were (1) rebuilding family, (2) passing on values, (3) contributing to the community, and (4) educating the next generation. One survivor expressed the following insight:

We are one race, the human race. We should not hate other religions, other people. It is important for me to talk about it. I am not going to tell you I have completely recovered from it. Nobody has. But not the major hang-ups. Basically, I am a very loving and very giving person. I was raised this way. How can I forget it? But life is beautiful and forgiving.

For other Holocaust survivors, they “leave my story. Not a pretty story but an important story.” One explained further:

I want people to know there was a Holocaust, and that the word *never* does not exist because there is still so much genocide in the world. We just don’t seem to learn. I know that sounds pessimistic, but I am hoping by learning that we will make this a better world. By keeping the Holocaust and genocide alive, that we will learn and have a better world for the future of the young people, the next generation.

Still others are leaving the legacy of the current generation to the next generation:

My legacy is of my son and his children; they are wonderful. Legacy at the museum is my story. Legacy shows that one person like my mother could achieve a miracle. Her bravery and imagination and how she saves us—I like to honor her, not make others feel bad if they couldn’t do it.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Memory serves to order and create identity. Stortz (2007) pointed out that survivors have two memories: the memory of the injustice and the memory of the survival. These memories come together to form a new identity of survivorship. In creating this identity, memory produces commonality with other victims and allows for the formation of new self-understanding. Memory unites people in a common identity. Furthermore, the telling of survival stories to later generations creates a reconstructed community identity and demonstrates survivors’ resilience.

The Jewish experience of memory—to remember, to blot out, and not to forget—is revealed in the memories of these Holocaust survivors. These Holocaust survivors “remember” their loved ones and the pain they felt and continue to feel because their loved ones did not survive. They learned to “blot out” the memories of violence and the impact of evil perpetrated by Hitler and others who tried to destroy the Jewish people. Last, they “did not forget” what Hitler did to the Jewish people or that they survived to bear witness for those who did not live by sharing their narratives of survival with their families, community members, and other survivors.

Jewish memory helps explain both risk and protective factors of resilience for older Holocaust survivors. If survivors have memories only of

loss and of violence, if they have learned only about the injustice and not the survival, and if they are not able to make meaning and move past the experience of injury, the memories become risk factors or barriers to resilience and lead to despair. However, Holocaust survivors may move into older adulthood feeling integration when they remember their families, share stories of the past with their families, and identify the creation of a new generation as their legacy. Also, it is important that they blot out the daily reminders of violence and remember that they continue to survive, rebuild families, contribute to the community, and educate the next generation (Greene, 2002; Helmreich, 1992).

In the narratives of these 40 Holocaust survivors, memory plays a twofold function: to remember as witness to the events of the Holocaust and to leave a legacy to be remembered by others. Memory provides a framework for understanding the interplay between personal experiences and the larger social context at the time of the event and later when the event is retold. Stories about survivors' lives and identities integrate the shared recollection of the negative and traumatic events of the past with a coherent and personal account to carry forth into the future.

Memories transmit the experiences of trauma to those who did not witness the inhumanity of the Holocaust, providing historical specificity of survivors' experiences and their ability to develop resilience. By allowing these survivors to function and find meaning in the aftermath of injustice, memories of the past and legacies of the future reveal how memory promotes resilience. The stories told and retold by these older Holocaust survivors reflect the satisfactory resolution of the tension between integrity and despair, thus demonstrating how people can review their lives and move forward successfully despite traumatic and negative experiences.

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