

Sidebar

***Eva Schloss shares a personal Holocaust story very different from Anne Frank's***

After 40 years in the background as her mother and stepfather—Anne Frank's father, Otto—dedicated their post-war lives to keeping the memory of Anne Frank alive, Eva Schloss found her own voice.

Ironically, it was at an Anne Frank exhibit in London in 1986, when she was unexpectedly put on the spot and asked for comment, that Schloss discovered she had a lot to say about surviving the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The watershed moment led to 30 years as a sought-after speaker on the Holocaust, and authoring three books about her experience. While publishers insisted on including her relationship to Anne Frank on the Schloss book covers, she had a very different story to tell: the horrors of trying to stay alive in a camp dedicated to death.

"Where Anne's story stops, my story goes on," she said during her UW-FDL visit. "I remember every detail: I could talk three more hours."

Of Anne Frank's famous comment, "Despite everything I believe that people are really good at heart," Schloss queried, "If she lived, would she have said that after experiencing the Nazis?"

Both Schloss and her mother survived despite serious starvation and extreme conditions, but her father and beloved brother perished at Auschwitz. Among her tender recollections of her talented brother, Heinz, Schloss recounts being reunited with poems and paintings he created and hid while in hiding himself, prior to capture. Those paintings are now in the collection of The Dutch Resistance Museum in Amsterdam.

Immediately after liberation, Schloss felt consumed by hate and considered suicide. Otto Frank listened and Schloss reported his counsel: "I don't have it in me to hate. I am German, myself. Don't hate. People won't know, but you will be miserable."

Buried memories hindered healing. Schloss credits publication and support for her first book, *Eva's Story*, now in ten languages. "I had nightmares; it was with me, every little detail," she said. "As soon as I write it down and speak, I can let it go. I wrote the books to keep the promise that Heinz is not forgotten."

She understands her role in history. "Everybody should learn the atrocities of what men can do," Schloss said. "There has been prejudice and discrimination for centuries. Young people have a chance to create, I hope, a better and safer world. It is important for people to learn history, politics and mistakes made."

Schloss noted that, in her adult life, she had dual careers in photography and antiques, a long marriage, and healthy children and grandchildren. "Life has wonderful things and hardship," she said. "Life is a mixture. Never give up hope; you have to work for it."

To learn the details of Eva Schloss' experience in a Nazi concentration camp, read:

Eva's Story: A Survivor's Tale by the Sister of Anne Frank

The Promise: The Moving Story of a Family in the Holocaust

After Auschwitz: A Story of Heartbreak and Survival by the Stepsister of Anne Frank

--*Monica M. Walk*

###