

CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center

Transcript of Eva Mozes Kor's comments made on [Günther Jauch talk show](#)

26 April 2015

[3:00]

The trial is important because I don't think we should forget and also the fact that a Nazi is willing to take responsibility for his actions. No, I am not interested in putting any old man into jail. On the contrary, I hope the judicial system would take into consideration my suggestion that he could go to many schools or all the schools in his area and tell these misguided neo-Nazis that it happened, that it was terrible, and they should never wish anything like that should happen to German society again.

[14:25]

I am surprised that nobody is really trying to figure out what is the ultimate purpose for society in bringing any Nazi to trial, to justice. What do we want at the end to see? Do we want these Nazis to say, "Oh I didn't know what I was doing or I was ordered to do it?" and the victims are saying "Oh you did it, we are poor, we are suffering 70 years later?" Or do we want a better world? And if we want a better world then I think the accusations have to stop. Because I think bringing together people is not about putting them on trial and having them go to jail, it is about talking to one another. That was my main purpose for going up to Mr. Groening and telling him, number one, we are all human beings; number 2, I accept the fact that you did what you did and you are trying at your age and with your best ability to take responsibility for it. I do not absolve you from it and you have to pay the price for it. But society has not learned anything for thousands of years and I think it's time that we try something new.

I understand the survivors. However, I feel very sorry for them because the question is what can we survivors do to change the world, and if we think we can do that by accusing the perpetrators...that has been done many times. But if we at least try to have a meeting of the minds, to talk to one another – communication is very, very important. 70 years – it is kind of late. I do wish it would have started 10 or five years after the Holocaust. But I think my forgiveness, which nobody really understands, it's designed for the victims. There was nothing I could do. Even if every Nazi was hanged for their crimes, my life would still be the same. I would still be an orphan, I would have still survived horrible experiments from which my sister died 22 years ago. But if Mengele had testified, my sister may still be alive today. And also – when we reach out to one another as human beings, which we are all human beings, good bad and in-between, there is something happening. And this is what happened in that picture. I went up to him and I wanted to thank him for taking responsibility and to tell him to try to teach the young misguided neo-Nazis that their thinking is incorrect, that it happened. Second, that you should appeal to all Nazis alive in Germany to come forward, write a statement with an attorney, notarize it, and put it in the press so more and more of you can bear witness to what has happened. The neo-Nazis don't care about what I, a survivor, say. They say I made it up. But if YOU talked about it, it might make a difference.

[24:37]

No, I am not a victim. I am a survivor. I refuse to be a victim.

[Describing the selection process] A lot of confusion, a lot of cry, pushing ,shoving, yelling, and within 30 minutes my family was gone.

Now I want to say something here because I realize we are in a discussion involving justice. First of all, for everybody who is advocating justice, that is absolutely impossible, that in Nazi situations there would be justice. Every person has only one life and if they killed five or ten or 300,000, how can they pay for it? Second, I think nobody is addressing my major concern. Look around in the world. There are more victims and more perpetrators. But every victim that is not healed becomes a potential perpetrator. Hitler said it himself. He saw himself as a victim. We might argue about that but he thought of himself as a victim. So if society paid as much attention to the victims and helping them heal their pain we might be way, way ahead. But there is tremendous attention paid involving the perpetrators and it never helps the victims, even though they are standing trial and testifying and they think they are going to feel better because so and so is put in jail. They are still left with the same pain and the same problem.

[On the choice of other survivors not to forgive] They are doing it differently. The question really is, are they happier people, are they freer people, are they passing onto their children peace, love, and caring, or are they passing onto their children anger and revenge? And from there it becomes a vicious cycle. Because I have met with grandchildren of survivors who were very resentful and want revenge against children of perpetrators. Which again becomes a new victim class. But I would say that because my simple idea that I happened to stumble on cost zero money, all you have to do is get a piece of paper, write a letter to the perpetrator or perpetrators, and at the end write "I forgive you" and mean it. You don't have to mail it, you don't have to give it to anybody. It's just for you to heal yourself. These people try it and it works for them. I don't see any problem. If they don't like being free from what happened, then they can always go and take their pain back. But the mentality in society which really makes me very, very sad is nurturing victimhood. "Oh, you poor little soul, this and this and this was done to you, therefore we are going to do this for you"... and the victims are never ever happy and it doesn't help society. So I think that we should stop nurturing victimhood. It's not a glorious thing to be. It's not a great position to be in and society should not nurture it. It should nurture victims, not victimhood.

[45:00]

No, no, no, I was a child who was just trying to find a home, find somebody to help me grow up, to eat enough food, I was not aware. But I want to comment on something else. What some of the people here brought into action - the idea that nobody talked. And that is something that should be put in action. The survivors, the victims must talk in order to share their pain, their stories, and the dialogue should begin at least a year or two after the end of the war. And the perpetrators also should have been made to talk for leniency of their sentences. As it was, the world was quiet, the perpetrators were hiding, avoiding being caught, and the survivors were suffering, not being able to talk and carrying all their pain to the next generation. And nothing was changing. And how are we to create a new world with all these things festering underneath the surface? It's impossible. So the one thing that I would like – that doesn't cost much money – is for survivors to talk and get their stories laid out into the open and share it with the public. And for perpetrators to validate that tragedy by talking about what they have done. Then we would be much, much further ahead than we are today.

[55:40]

Incorrect, did not "come," was taken [to Auschwitz].

I don't live in fear, I don't like to live in fear, I don't waste my energy on that. I am trying to do with the years I have left. I am trying to live 30 more years to attend the 100th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and I invite you. But what good can I do right now, with my limited abilities and means, I am trying to tell the world what is possible. I cannot change the world. I am in a minority. I know just by looking here at this panel that forgiveness and healing has not been accepted by anybody here except me and yet it is a possible option. The victims have not healed themselves. I see them sitting in a corner and being angry with me that I healed myself. The one thing that we could start talking about immediately is start talking about what happened and I as a survivor - I have a request to all of you and all of you in the media. Our files have disappeared from Mengele and there were two sets of files. I still do not know 70 years later what was injected into my body that was supposed to kill me and two weeks and I do not know what was injected in the other twins' bodies and if I knew, my sister would still be alive today. So I appeal to everybody who hears this program – you want to help the victims, you want to help me the survivor – if anybody knows anything about Mengele's files please contact the show or contact me.