

Interview (Part 1) with Liat Suvorov on April 10, 2023

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Good morning, Liat! It's so nice to see you today.

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Thank you for taking the time to tell me your story. I'm going to begin with a short biography about you, and then I'll tell a little bit about the project, and then we'll have a conversation.

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Liat Suvorov was born in kibbutz Ein Dor, Israel, and now lives with her husband, son, two cats, and two dogs in Myersville, Maryland.

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She moved to the United States in 2002. She speaks Hebrew and English.

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She has been a student at Montgomery College since August of 2020, and is majoring in General Studies with a focus on English. She will transfer in the fall to Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia, and will Major in English. In her spare time, she

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enjoys writing poetry, cooking, baking, listening to audio books, and going to baseball games with her son.

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A little bit of background for those who are watching this video.

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My name is Heather Bruce Saturn, I teach an ELAP, English Language for Academic Purposes at Montgomery College.

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This project is called History in the Making: Documenting Stories of Immigrant and Refugee Students at Montgomery College. The goal of the project is to help others better understand the experiences of immigrants in the United States, particularly at Montgomery college. Today is Monday,

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April 10th, 2023. You had a chance to read these questions in advance, but if at any point you don't want to answer questions, just let me know.

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We can skip them. If you need a break. That's fine,

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too, and we'll take about an hour for our conversation.

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-First, could you tell me your full name?

-Liat Suvorov.

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And do I have permission to record this interview?

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Yes, you do.

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My first question is a very big question, that could probably take.. your response could take a long time, because it's a very interesting answer. But tell m a little bit about the place where you grew up.

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I was born and raised in Kibbutz, Ein Dor in Israel, in 1971.

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A Kibbutz is a socialist co-op. And we had basically communal living, which meant, I'll start with the start with a bang.

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It wasn't like that in all Kibbutzim, but

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the Kibbutz I grew up in, and the children, we did not live with our parents in the same house. And when I say we did not live with our parents in the same house,

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that was when my mom came back from the hospital, when my twin brother and I were two days old. Because we were twins,

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They kept her at the hospital for an extra day. She brought us to the children's house, as we call it, I mean, the baby house for babies, and she left us there under the care of caregivers.

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We would see our parents when you're too small to walk by yourself, they pick you up from the children's house.

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at 4 p.m. And we will return to the children's house at 7 p.m.

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When you're a little older and you can walk by yourself, you walk to your parents house and you get back to the children House around 8 in the evening.

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So, yes. We slept in the baby house. So basically, it was

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a group of babies, my peers that were born around the same time I was. There was basically a big house, and we had caregivers that took care of us during the day.

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In Hebrew it's called "metappelet." I think literally you can translate it to a caregiver. And

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when you're little, mom would come and breastfeed every three hours or so.

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Actually, by the time I was... a little later, nursing moms would get a beeper, and the the caregiver would beep them if the baby cried and wanted to eat, and they would leave their work and ride their bicycle to the

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baby house to breastfeed. And I think if you haven't thought about it, yet, you might think what were the sleeping arrangements? We slept in the baby house.

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It was a bunch of us babies at the baby house.

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There would be a woman that would sit there overnight.

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But all the rest of the children of different age groups lived in stand alone houses. Generally speaking, we called them children's houses.

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So baby house was zero to one year. All the other children by age groups lived in a stand alone

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house, and after lights are out, all the grown ups caregivers would leave, and the children would be alone in that house overnight until about 6 or 7 a.m.

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in the morning. So it's from 8 or 9 p.m.

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And yeah, I mean the house that had the one to two year old,

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it was a very small place when I grew up from 0 to 90.

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There were about 700 people. So in each year there would be maybe 6 to 10 babies.

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So the babies, or the 10 year old to 11 year old age group, in the house, we would be alone there. It was the 70s, before cell phones, and before very sophisticated communication systems.

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So the baby house was the only house where they had somewhere there overnight. They had this very basic intercom system.

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So, if someone cried in any of the other houses.. there were two ladies that would sit overnight in the baby house. It was a very, very basic intercom system.

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So let's say a baby cry, a child cries

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in the Kindergarten,

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the night.. we called them the night watch Ladies..

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-Interesting.

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They would hear a cry, but the system wasn't sophisticated enough

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back then to say even where. Let's say they were like 10 or 15 children houses,

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they would have to start hitting buttons. When they hit the right button,

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then, they would hear the cry louder, and one of them would get on her bicycle and ride to that house to console the crying child to see

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if someone needs a fresh bed sheets, or if someone had a nightmare.

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So, if you were five years old and you woke up from a nightmare and you're crying, a woman that's not your mother, and you don't even necessarily know, would show up to

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comfort you.

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And when you were older and you could speak,

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you would stand under this intercom. It was so basic.

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There was no button to push. It was always open, and each of our.. age groups or peers,

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these were the people we grew up with continuously, and we had names for the groups.

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My group was "dekel," which means a palm tree.

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Okay. So let's say myself, or one of my peers woke up and fell ill, we would stand under this intercom

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speaker and say,

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"Shomeret layla," which is the night watch

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lady,

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come to the "dekel" house.

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Interesting.

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Now there were, I would say, probably between 0 to 12 years old, which was the children that were under the care of the night watch ladies during night.

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There were about a 100 to a 150 children, and they were not allowed to leave the baby house unattended.

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So, there were two of them. And what happens if someone is crying at the three-years-old house, and someone needs something

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at the seven years-old-house, right. The women would go first to the younger child, but, I mean, who knows how long it could take for her to take care of the needs of that child.

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And meanwhile, you could be seven years old, and you woke up from a nightmare, and you could be waiting for an hour for someone to come, and attend to you, and then, when someone comes, it's someone that you might know a little bit, or not

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at all. So yeah, that wasn't ideal,

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I would say. Now, we lived in a very rural environment.

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I keep saying that the

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night watch lady would ride her bicycle, because basically, the whole community was a pedestrian community.

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All the houses were stand alone, spread over a certain area.

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My dogs just came in, so, if you hear panting, that's not me.

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So, the whole place was pedestrian zone.

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There were only sidewalks or lawns that we walked across.

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There were no roads for cars. There was no private property in the Kibbutz, so if someone needed to go.. if someone needed to go somewhere, there was a car pool that the cars belonged to the Kibbutz.

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And by the way, when I say Kibbutz, that's a general name for this type of settlement. It's like saying a city, or village, or a town.

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Kibbutzim is the plural. The private name of Kibbutz Ein Dor.

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Okay.

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So there was no private property, and the people who lived in the Kibbutz did not get a salary, and people who lived in the Kibbutz are called Kibbutz members. The Kibbutz was a voluntary society.

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It was founded by my grandparents and their generation out of socialist ideals.

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So, if..

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They.. my grandparents, they founded the Kibbutz, so, of course, they chose to live there. Now,

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their kids, my mother, they already. they didn't choose to live there,

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they were just born into it and grew up there. But as an adult you had the choice to leave,

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which is not an easy thing to do for many reasons, but the whole.. which was it, was a voluntary structure..

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I lost my train of thought.

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-Well, you were talking about how the Kibbutz was founded.

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I found that very interesting. Could you tell me what year it was founded, and the people who are finding it and founding it?

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My Kibbutz was founded in 1948, which is when a lot of Kibbutzim were founded, because

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that's the year the State of Israel was founded.

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The first Kibbutz was founded in 1906, though, so it's way before the State of Israel.

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Now the group of founders that founded my Kibbutz,

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they existed as a group years prior to the formal founding of the Kibbutz.

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There were main three sources of

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founding groups. They were called.. They were called..

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Where did they come from?

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Yeah, that's that's where I'm getting at.

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Great.

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First of all, they were called "gare'in," or "gare'inim."

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"Gare'in" literally means seed. So they were

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the seed groups. So, they were the three main groups that founded my Kibbutz, and if I, you know, miss anyone or anything, they will have to forgive me in advance.

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So, we had.. It was called "Israeli Seed,"

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and we had the "American Seed," and we had the "Hungarian Seed."

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"Gare'in." I'll use the Hebrew word

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Okay.

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"gare'in" going forward. Okay?

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The most important thing is that all these people, Americans, Israelis, and Hungarians,

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they belonged to an ideological movement called "Hashomer Hatzair,"

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which literally translates into The Young Guard, and

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"Hashomer Hatzair" was a secular..

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Jewish, secular, Zionist, socialist movement. That's a lot of adjectives.

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Yeah, that's a lot of adjectives.

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It wasn't a simple idea.

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"Hashomer Hatzair" started in the early 19 hundreds and

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it was a movement that believed in.. the main thing was Socialism, and you know, I think, I wanted to say it goes without saying..

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It goes without saying to those who know a little bit about political movements that they were secular, because socialists were always secular.

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But it was also a Jewish movement and Zionist, and that's also not necessarily..

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It doesn't usually.. Sorry.. It doesn't mean that one has to go with the other,

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but yes, there were Zionists, and established in Eastern Europe.

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In different places, people who were members of "Hashomer Hatzair" movement would get together into groups, and the ideal was to

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Immigrate to the.. back then it was mandatory

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Palestine, and establish the Kibbutz, communal socialist settlement. For those who were in Israel,

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they lived in the cities, their ideal was to move out of the city into this, you know, cooperative living.

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So the Israeli and the Israeli "gare'in" were people who grew up in cities in mandatory Palestine, and going forward, I will call it Israel. And the American

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group, I will actually leave them for last, because to me that's the most interesting one.

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The Hungarian group were people who were in "Hashomer Hatzair" even prior to the Holocaust.

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The people, of course, who have been in the group and got to found the Kibbutz, were people who survived the

Holocaust. For many members of "Hashomer Hatzair" being members of "Hashomer Hatzair" was what actually helped them survive the Holocaust, because

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there was some kind of an organization there that they helped each other as much as they can.

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Sorry. Definitely the members of the "gare'in" were people that were all Holocaust survivors themselves.

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Maybe some were lucky enough to leave Europe before, but their families were.. there definitely was not one person there who was not touched by the Holocaust.

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I mean they had, many of them had tattoos on their arms,

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or Auschwitz survivors. Those of them who survive and managed to get to Israel,

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they got together to Israel as a group, and they live together. The Israeli "gare'in" people joined together from some cities. I think mainly from one city called Petah Tikva, which was.. Let's not get into it right now..

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Is that where your..

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I cannot go.. I'm a stream of consciousness.

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Is that where your ancestors were from?

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My..

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My grandmother, who was in the founding of the Kibbutz, she was from Petah Tikva,

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and my grandfather was born and raised in Berlin, and he managed to leave Germany in 1936.

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Got to Israel through.. after being in refugee camps in Italy, and joined the "Shomer Hatzair," the movement and joined the

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group. You know, other people that weren't out of the three founding groups also joined.

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The town that you mentioned that your grandmother's from,

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I'm not familiar with that. Today, what country would that be in?

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Oh, Petah Tikva.. sorry, my grandmother was from the Israeli "gare'in."

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So Patah Tikva is a city in Israel.

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I see. Okay, I see. So you have ancestry going back to Israel and to Germany?

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Yes. That's my maternal

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ancestry. We'll get into my dad later.

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My dad was not the son of the founders of the Kibbutz. He immigrated to Israel?

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He immigrated to Israel later on. Well, I'll talk about him later.

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Great.

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So here's why I left the American "gare'in" for last.

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These were Americans. They were all, at least second generation Americans, and they were members of a Jewish, socialists,

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Zionist movement, and they were born and raised in the U.S.

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Most of them were from Detroit and New York, New York City area.

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The reason I'm saying, I think these are the most interesting ones is because these are people that had

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comfortable living. They weren't from rich families. Most of them were middle class, working class,

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but living in New York City or Detroit in

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The 1930s and in the 1940s was definitely a much more comfortable living than a barren hill in mandatory Palestine, with no roads, and with our neighbors shooting at you.

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So that was

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pure idealism.

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I mean, the others were idealist, too, but it's much more understandable why the Hungarians, why they would like to move to Israel and start something together.

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But yeah, the American "gare'in," that's interesting.

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Now, definitely, there was a lot of influence by who established the Kibbutz, and how the Kibbutz went. Because there were other Kibbutzim, neighboring Kibbutz that most of the people were from Argentina and South America.

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That Kibbutz had a very different character from the Kibbutz that was established by Americans and Hungarians.

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Absolutely.

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We were considered an American Kibbutz, because there were other Kibbutzim where they had founders from the United States.

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So..

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If you want to help me focus a little bit, because the topic is so,

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so wide. I mean, there have been books and Ph.Ds that were written about it.

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Absolutely. I really appreciate the historical background that you gave.

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I think that was fascinating and really important. I would love to know a little bit about your experience growing up in this community, like the responsibilities

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you had. I can see advantages and disadvantages, and it's very different from the way you're raising yourself.

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Yes.

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So I have so many questions, but I want you to tell me your story.

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Maybe you could tell me a little bit about when you were growing up,

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what kind of responsibilities you have?

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Yeah. So I will more generally speak about growing up as a child in a Kibbutz living in the children's house rather than with your parents.

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And I want to make a disclaimer here, I mean, it's obvious to anybody that I'm speaking about

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Right.

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my experiences. Because whenever someone speaks about their experience growing up in the Kibbutz, or people who wrote books, it's usually a lot of.. other people who grew up in Kibbutzim become very emotional and

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each of us experienced it very, very differently. For many

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it's traumatic, and you know, if I talk about my experiences, someone else would say it wasn't like that at all, and it's 100% true.

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That makes sense.

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It wasn't like that at all for them. So while it's obvious I'm talking about my opinions and my experiences, I want to stress it.

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I'm glad that you said that. I think that's an important thing to mention.

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And I think it's very important for all your interviews, and anybody who watches anything, any of your work, to know that whatever one person says, it's 100% true for them,

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but it can only represents their own experiences.

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So don't think when you hear one immigrant talks about their country, or one refugee talks about their experience,

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that now you know everything about that country or the immigrant experience, or the refugee experience.

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Okay?

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I think that was beautifully expressed. Thank you! I think that's very important, what you just said.

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So..

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We

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grew up in the children's house. The physical structure would be that of a stand-alone structure.

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We had a classroom. We had a dining room, and I don't know how big people have it in their mind, but I'm looking at my living room in my 1,800 square feet

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house in Myersville, and my living room is probably bigger than the dining room, or about as big as the classroom

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we had. Because there were only 16 of us, and the 16 of us were all the children that were born in Kibbutz Ein Dor between the beginning.. between 1970 to the end of 1971, and it was eight of us per year

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in my group, Okay? in the 1971 group there were eight children.

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So there are 16 of us living in that house, so the dining room was four dining tables, and we sat their four per

0:30:39.692,0:31:07.692

per table, plus two caregivers. Our caregivers were, one was what you might call a house mother in a boarding school, or something like that, and the other one was called the educator.

0:31:07.692,0:31:13.692

The educator was kind of like the home room teacher in elementary schools

0:31:13.692,0:31:17.692

here, but of course it's much more than that, because

0:31:17.692,0:31:19.692

it's not a teacher that sees you during the school,

0:31:19.692,0:31:30.692

she is in charge of your education, not only teaching in class. The caregiver was in charge of

0:31:30.692,0:31:37.692

all the household needs. The structure of the house,

0:31:37.692,0:31:48.692

we had a classroom, and we had a dining room. We had like a corridor with five bedrooms branching out of it.

0:31:48.692,0:31:51.692

We would sleep

0:31:51.692,0:31:59.692

Two.. three to four children per room.

0:31:59.692,0:32:10.692

The rooms, I would say, the average American bedroom. Actually even smaller than that.

0:32:10.692,0:32:14.692

So we had four single beds there, and four of us would sleep in the same room.

0:32:14.692,0:32:22.692

But boys and girls together, but we grew up together since age 0.

0:32:22.692,0:32:40.692

It's like sharing a room with your brother or your sister.

0:32:40.692,0:32:41.692

0:32:41.692,0:32:46.692

In some ways. In some ways the children of my group were like my brothers and sisters, and in many other ways they weren't. I think, at this point we just don't have time to get into all the intricacies of that.

0:32:46.692,0:32:47.692

Sure!

0:32:47.692,0:32:57.692

And there were showers and bathrooms, and

0:32:57.692,0:33:09.692

we would get up in the morning, it was around quarter to seven, and we would, you know, brush our teeth and everything.

0:33:09.692,0:33:34.692

There were two sinks, you know, and we all got their toothbrushes and stood a bunch of kids around every sink, in front every mirror and brushed our teeth together, and then we would have the first period and then we would all eat breakfast together.

0:33:34.692,0:33:46.692

The food for breakfast was provided from a central kitchen. Actually in the Kibbutz,

0:33:46.692,0:33:48.692

at that time, the residential houses where parents lived didn't have kitchens.

0:33:48.692,0:33:58.692

They barely had something you could call a kitchenette.

0:33:58.692,0:34:04.692

The members would go three times a day to the dining hall and eat the meals

0:34:04.692,0:34:10.692

there. So all the meals were cooked and provided by the community.

0:34:10.692,0:34:14.692

So our caregiver would go to the central kitchen and

0:34:14.692,0:34:23.692

get us the food. I know one of the questions on your written questions was about the food. We ate,

0:34:23.692,0:34:30.692

what you would call in the U.S. the kind of Mediterranean diet, which, of course, that was just what we ate, you know.

0:34:30.692,0:34:50.692

It's a diet.. We had basically rye bread, a lot of fresh, fresh vegetables. It's kind of funny to me that in the U.S.

0:34:50.692,0:35:00.692

people kind of look at you funny that you eat fresh vegetables for breakfast and chopped salads and things like that.

0:35:00.692,0:35:08.692

We didn't have meat, no bacon and steak for breakfast, so we had rye

0:35:08.692,0:35:30.692

bread, a lot of fresh vegetables, and possibly some kind of a porridge, and and some kind of omelet, and we would bring tea and

0:35:30.692,0:35:36.692

hot cocoa. My breakfast for as long as I can remember

0:35:36.692,0:35:47.692

during my time at the children's house is, rye bread, smear some salt

0:35:47.692,0:35:57.692

margarine on it. We didn't have butter almost at all where I grew up.

0:35:57.692,0:36:05.692

It was more expensive, and also, I guess.. anyways, that doesn't matter.

0:36:05.692,0:36:24.692

I would just smear a slice of rye bread with margarine, and then I would slice a tomato, and if.. I was very slow, so if I had time, I would also peel some green olives, and I would make basically a slice of

0:36:24.692,0:36:31.692

bread with margarine, with sliced tomatoes, and olives on top of it.

0:36:31.692,0:36:34.692

That was my breakfast.

0:36:34.692,0:36:43.692

I loved it, I saw no reason to change it. I ate an omelet sometimes, I ate some porridge sometimes, but.. and then you were talking about our chores and duties..

0:36:43.692,0:36:51.692

So basically, it's 16 kids living in a house

0:36:51.692,0:37:03.692

and there is a one caregiver who's in charge of everything. Since we were in 3rd grade,

0:37:03.692,0:37:18.692

we were responsible for cleaning our own house. So the caregiver was in charge, but we did it. There was kind of a schedule of who does what, and the schedule would change every week.

0:37:18.692,0:37:29.692

Some children would be assigned for cleaning up after breakfast and washing the dishes. It was all hand washing.

0:37:29.692,0:37:36.692

There were no dishwashers in 1970s in a Kibbutz in Israel.

0:37:36.692,0:37:39.692

Probably no dishwashers in any residence in Israel

0:37:39.692,0:37:46.692

in the 1970. So two kids would be in charge of the dining hall, they would wipe the tables, and

0:37:46.692,0:38:04.692

they would wash and dry the dishes. Some children were in charge of cleaning the classroom, or cleaning the the showers and bathrooms, and some would be in charge of the bedrooms. So every day of the week, six days a week,

0:38:04.692,0:38:10.692

because the week in Israel was Sunday through Saturday.

0:38:10.692,0:38:14.692

Saturday was the only day off. Every day of the week,

0:38:14.692,0:38:24.692

there was different rotation of chores. So let's say, if you're, I mean dining room and showers and bathrooms were all the same.

0:38:24.692,0:38:30.692

You have to clean it. But let's say the the bedrooms,

0:38:30.692,0:38:40.692

There were five bedrooms, some days you just, you know, swipe the floor and dust the window seals.

0:38:40.692,0:38:52.692

Once a week, we would change the beddings. So, let's say four children were in charge of the bedrooms for that week,

0:38:52.692,0:39:08.692

these four children would go into all the rooms, take all the beddings off the beds, and then put fresh beddings. A few times a week we would wash the floor. We didn't have wood floors,

0:39:08.692,0:39:13.692

it was all tiled. The way we wash the floors in the Kibbutz,

0:39:13.692,0:39:19.692

we would take a bucket with water and detergent,

0:39:19.692,0:39:33.692

and we would spill it on the floor, just flood it. And then we had squeegees, and we would squeegee all the water outside to the front lawn.

0:39:33.692,0:39:39.692

And then we would take the mop and dry the floors.

0:39:39.692,0:39:41.692
So yes, we did everything, including...

0:39:41.692,0:39:47.692
Did boys and the girls have different chores, or..

0:39:47.692,0:39:48.692
No!

0:39:48.692,0:39:49.692
was it a assigned regardless of gender?

0:39:49.692,0:39:52.692
No. The assignments were regardless of gender.

0:39:52.692,0:40:08.692
Yeah, that's it.

0:40:08.692,0:40:09.692

0:40:09.692,0:40:12.692
I never even thought about it. Although in the adult world, the roles were very genderized, which is completely against the ideology of the Kibbutz.

0:40:12.692,0:40:13.692
Interesting.

0:40:13.692,0:40:20.692
But yeah, at that point.. but we also cleaned our own toilets,

0:40:20.692,0:40:25.692
and we would.. people who cleaned the toilets, again,

0:40:25.692,0:40:26.692
we were.. What? third grade? What is it.. nine year old or whatever?

0:40:26.692,0:40:32.692
We would take bleach, put it in the toilets, scrub it, you know, there was no issue like "Oh, my God!

0:40:32.692,0:40:43.692
The children are touching dangerous chemicals!" you know? We had bleach and

0:40:43.692,0:40:48.692
it wasn't the Clorox in spray bottles.

0:40:48.692,0:40:52.692
We had the bottle with leach. We would put some bleach in the toilets and scrub it.

0:40:52.692,0:40:56.692
Nobody got hurt, you know?

0:40:56.692,0:41:03.692
You mentioned you have a twin brother. So he grew up in that same group of children with you?

0:41:03.692,0:41:07.692
Yes.

0:41:07.692,0:41:20.692
And definitely the relationship between him and I was definitely much stronger and deeper than between myself and the other children.

0:41:20.692,0:41:22.692
He would protect me. You know, I could..

0:41:22.692,0:41:30.692
I sometimes annoyed people. My brother would protect me.

0:41:30.692,0:41:39.692
Basically, he was the only one who's allowed to beat me up.

0:41:39.692,0:41:40.692

Yeah.

0:41:40.692,0:41:44.692

If someone else tried to, he would have

0:41:44.692,0:41:47.692

defended me.

0:41:47.692,0:41:48.692

How much time did you spend with your parents

0:41:48.692,0:41:54.692

if they were living in a different house than where you were living?

0:41:54.692,0:42:02.692

So, basically, you know what, I just want

0:42:02.692,0:42:09.692

two more minutes about our duties. -Sure! Absolutely.

-So other than cleaning your own houses..

0:42:09.692,0:42:10.692

Oh, by the way, there was also folding the laundry.

0:42:10.692,0:42:12.692

0:42:12.692,0:42:20.692

The laundry, when we had dirty clothes, we would put them all in a big

0:42:20.692,0:42:32.692

cloth bags. It would be sent to a central laundry service, and we would get the clothes back in those clothes bags, but all mashed up.

0:42:32.692,0:42:39.692

So one of the duties was, it was usually one child plus the caregiver.

0:42:39.692,0:42:50.692

And, by the way, those chores were half an hour a day. We would sit there and fold laundry for 16 children,

0:42:50.692,0:42:54.692

and put it in.. each had their own cubbies and there was labels with their name on the clothes, so

0:42:54.692,0:42:55.692

they would fold the laundry for 16 people,

0:42:55.692,0:43:05.692

and put it each in our cubbies. Now the favorite, you know..

0:43:05.692,0:43:15.692

Nobody liked doing the cleaning chores and laundry and dishes, but the most fun,

0:43:15.692,0:43:16.692

0:43:16.692,0:43:35.692

There were two things that were outside of the children's house. We had a petting zoo and library. During the chores rotation, which was changing weekly, always two children will also go help in the library, and two children will go help in the petting zoo. Help meaning, you know,

0:43:35.692,0:43:39.692

sweeping the poop from the goat shed, and feeding the animals, whatever.

0:43:39.692,0:43:51.692

So everybody always wanted to be on a library and petting zoo duty because it was much more fun.

0:43:51.692,0:44:04.692

So, about our parents. People in the Kibbutz lived in very, very humble accommodations.

0:44:04.692,0:44:20.692

The Kibbutz members worked. They don't get a salary, but we did get everything from the community, not for free, in return for the work,

0:44:20.692,0:44:27.692

okay? but basically, the grown ups worked and they got the house where they lived.

0:44:27.692,0:44:30.692

I mean it wasn't their house, but it was

0:44:30.692,0:44:35.692

the houses belonging to the Kibbutz. They got their house,

0:44:35.692,0:44:52.692

and there was a dining hall that provided all the food, and there was a little bit of a general store with that all the things that were considered essential, like soap and toilet paper were provided..

0:44:52.692,0:44:59.692

Again, I can't say free. It's all included, included in the membership.

0:44:59.692,0:45:05.692

We were provided for no additional cost, and things like chocolate

0:45:05.692,0:45:18.692

and, you know, this that you pay a little extra.

0:45:18.692,0:45:22.692

Was there a big farm where all the vegetables were grown?

0:45:22.692,0:45:24.692

Did you get the vegetables from there?

0:45:24.692,0:45:42.692

No! We had.. There was.. the Kibbutz had a huge farm, but it was a commercial farm. Basically, my Kibbutz specialized in a few crops.

0:45:42.692,0:45:54.692

There was mainly melons, watermelons, and cotton.

0:45:54.692,0:45:59.692

These were the major ones. When I was growing up, and

0:45:59.692,0:46:10.692

maybe some sorghum. And these would be sold, and the rest of the food for the Kibbutz would be bought from other..

0:46:10.692,0:46:18.692

No, we were not.. the Kibbutz.. We were not growing our own food.

0:46:18.692,0:46:19.692

We had a huge dairy farm.

0:46:19.692,0:46:37.692

Literally there were more cows than people. I mean, when I grew up, we were around 700 people residents in the Kibbutz, and you know, might be 800 or 900 cows.

0:46:37.692,0:46:54.692

But even the dairy.. It has also a lot to do with how Israel was at that time. All the dairy was basically sold to some kind of all of co-op that belonged to the State of Israel.

0:46:54.692,0:47:03.692

And then we would buy milk. We didn't even drink the milk that was produced in our Kibbutz.

0:47:03.692,0:47:04.692

Okay. Come Toby.

0:47:04.692,0:47:13.692

I have to ask you a follow-up question on that.

0:47:13.692,0:47:14.692

0:47:14.692,0:47:18.692

When I think about Israel, I think about a desert, and when I think about growing cotton and raising cows, I'm thinking about the water that would be needed to..

0:47:18.692,0:47:27.692

Well, your vision of Israel is very misconstrued and the kind of.. you see..

0:47:27.692,0:47:29.692

Sorry, my..

0:47:29.692,0:47:31.692

It's nice to see your dog.

0:47:31.692,0:47:38.692

Toby wants to participate. I mean, your view is very stir.. it's based on a stereotype.

0:47:38.692,0:47:50.692

Israel, first of all, geographically,

0:47:50.692,0:47:51.692

maybe half or a little bit more than half of Israel

0:47:51.692,0:48:09.692

is a desert. But I grew up in the north, which is, basically it's called subtropical climate, which means we had,

0:48:09.692,0:48:18.692

we had dry summers. It wouldn't rain between

0:48:18.692,0:48:29.692

probably May to October, and rain only.. it's only raining in Israel in the winter

0:48:29.692,0:48:40.692

if we're lucky. But it's very rich, dark, heavy soil. Green trees.. I mean,

0:48:40.692,0:48:50.692

Yeah, I mean, you can Google it. And now, Israel, is..

0:48:50.692,0:49:00.692

Because there is some kind of arid conditions, when Jews started settling mandatory

0:49:00.692,0:49:04.692

Palestine, they..

0:49:04.692,0:49:11.692

They started using a very sophisticated methods of irrigation.

0:49:11.692,0:49:27.692

So even in the desert in Israel some crops grow very well, but I did not grow up in the desert. I grew up in a place that's nice and green with dark, rich soil.

0:49:27.692,0:49:28.692

Thank you for describing that. That's very helpful.

0:49:28.692,0:49:36.692

Also, but really,

0:49:36.692,0:49:45.692

Jews in Israel developed very, very advanced agricultural methods that are being exported to the whole world.

0:49:45.692,0:49:51.692

But you know, that's really digressing here.

0:49:51.692,0:49:54.692

But thank you for clarifying that. Yeah..

0:49:54.692,0:49:57.692
Do you want to go back to.. you were talking about a housing situation and your parents?

0:49:57.692,0:50:11.692
The parents?

-Yeah.

-So basically, the Kibbutz members lived in very humble residences.

0:50:11.692,0:50:17.692

So when my parents just got married and had their first child,

0:50:17.692,0:50:29.692

they lived in, what you would call here, efficiency. I mean, it's not even that, because there was no kitchen.

0:50:29.692,0:50:30.692

0:50:30.692,0:50:45.692

It was a one room apartment and the shower and bathroom was shared between two units.

0:50:45.692,0:50:51.692

Later on they we didn't call it our parents houses.

0:50:51.692,0:51:04.692

We didn't call it a house. We called.. we said, our parents' room. Actually up to a certain point, that was a much better description.

0:51:04.692,0:51:13.692

So every day at 4 p.m., we would go to our parents' room.

0:51:13.692,0:51:23.692

Well, let's say, house. So basically, since you are maybe four, you would just walk by yourself.

0:51:23.692,0:51:33.692

Because as I said, it was all pedestrian, and we were also a very small community, everybody did know each other, so we would walk to our parents' house.

0:51:33.692,0:51:48.692

We would be there between 4 and 7 p.m. later on, maybe 4 and 8 p.m., and our parents will hang out with us for those three hours.

0:51:48.692,0:51:58.692

When I was little there were still, yet.. there wasn't TV yet. On the one hand, it sounds very little,

0:51:58.692,0:52:06.692

on the other hand, people in the Kibbutz started working around 6 a.m.

0:52:06.692,0:52:13.692

So by 2 p.m. everybody, were already, you know, worked 8 hours.

0:52:13.692,0:52:15.692

I need a short break. Can you pause, or something?

0:52:15.692,0:52:20.692

That's fine. Yeah, let's pause it.

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Interview (Part 2) with Liat Suvorov on April 10, 2023

0:00:03.723,0:00:05.173

Hey! So, we're back and you were talking about your parents.

0:00:05.412,0:00:09.563

Yeah, so, it might sound like three hours or four hours a day

0:00:09.673,0:00:11.643

is a very little time,

0:00:12.013,0:00:20.653

but, what you have to take in consideration is that people in the Kibbutz started

0:00:20.773,0:00:22.823
their workday around

0:00:23.083,0:00:26.853
6 a.m. or so,

0:00:26.973,0:00:30.093
and usually by

0:00:31.543,0:00:32.443
2 p.m.

0:00:35.013,0:00:37.853
everybody will be done with their day.

0:00:39.123,0:00:44.533
The the grown ups would go home, take a nap,

0:00:44.623,0:00:50.943
and take a shower. And those of them who were parents, by the time it was

0:00:51.693,0:00:58.173
4 p.m. they already came home, rested, and

0:00:58.793,0:01:01.683
they didn't have to worry

0:01:01.812,0:01:07.343
about paying the bills, and how, you know..

0:01:09.463,0:01:13.163
They didn't have all the..

0:01:14.303,0:01:27.663
A lot of the worries that people in the cities have, if you're a parent, or whoever you, who's
watching it, is a parent, or in general a grown up here in the U.S.,

0:01:28.703,0:01:31.093
think about when you're getting home,

0:01:31.183,0:01:35.993
5 or 6 p.m. and then you have to worry about so many things.

0:01:36.303,0:01:40.453
You have to cook. Tthere are bills to pay.

0:01:40.573,0:01:45.463
The car broke and you need to take it to the shop.

0:01:45.843,0:02:01.043
A million things. Your mind is thinking about so many things. So Yes, you come home, and your
children are already there, and they're going to be there until they go to school at 7 or 8 in
the morning,

0:02:01.213,0:02:06.163
but your brain, your mind is not really there most of the time.

0:02:06.423,0:02:09.613
And the hours we spent with our parents,

0:02:11.773,0:02:16.343
could have been fully dedicated to us.

0:02:16.673,0:02:22.593
So I don't even know that many parents here would have

0:02:22.843,0:02:36.303
full three hours a day that are family time and kids time. So in that way..
-I think this is interesting, it's uninterrupted

0:02:36.303,0:02:43.053
by having to make dinner, for example, or all of the...

0:02:43.973,0:02:55.993
I mean, there was very, all the kind of.. the word escapes my mind.. But all the little.. all the everyday worries about survival,

0:02:56.593,0:02:58.423
they didn't have it.

0:03:00.443,0:03:01.333
So,

0:03:01.413,0:03:08.083
on the one hand, it's a much more focused and concentrated..

0:03:09.103,0:03:10.663
concentrated time.

0:03:10.753,0:03:22.663
Yeah.. With your children, which is nice. I mean, we we took our showers, and most of us did homework at the children's house.

0:03:22.843,0:03:32.223
So our parents didn't even have to take care of that. And, I mean, if we were sick, our caregiver would take us to the doctor.

0:03:32.883,0:03:35.263
So yeah..

0:03:35.673,0:03:42.993
When you had time with your parents, how did you spend it? Did you read books, play games, go for a walk?

0:03:43.623,0:03:46.483
Yeah, that's

0:03:46.513,0:03:49.793
what we did. Read books,

0:03:50.003,0:04:04.693
played games, and play with my brothers. I have four brothers, but the age gap is so that there were never,

0:04:04.883,0:04:06.123
basically..

0:04:09.083,0:04:21.523
I have a twin brother, and our older brother is two years older than us. So yeah, we would spend time together.

0:04:21.633,0:04:35.383
Beat each other up. but also, we would go out and play with other children, you know, because we could run outside completely unsupervised, because it was so safe.

0:04:35.743,0:04:45.333
It was physically safe, and mostly safe from

0:04:46.663,0:04:48.303
that bad things.

0:04:50.243,0:04:54.543
-How many brothers do you have all together?
-I have 4 brothers.

0:04:54.593,0:04:56.773
And you're the only girl in your family?

0:04:56.893,0:04:58.833
Yeah. So..

0:04:59.153,0:05:08.933
One thing about this thing of meeting your parents for 3-4 hours a day, that's very, you know,

0:05:09.243,0:05:21.943
focused on on that, on the one hand, it's good, on the other hand, it's very artificial. Because you never get to see

0:05:22.453,0:05:25.823
your parents being

0:05:26.113,0:05:27.123
human.

0:05:27.703,0:05:29.633
I mean,

0:05:29.763,0:05:31.073
I..

0:05:33.443,0:05:37.583
You know, you don't see your parents

0:05:37.913,0:05:38.723
cry.

0:05:38.793,0:05:42.913
I mean, I think maybe when I was

0:05:44.433,0:05:45.053

0:05:45.793,0:05:53.223
7, or 8, or 9, maybe it was the first time I saw my mother ever cry,

0:05:53.523,0:05:55.153
and it was

0:05:55.393,0:06:15.843
a really shocking event. We didn't know that grown ups cry. Now, I guess not everybody are like me, but my son, who grew up with me and my husband at the same house. He saw me cry many times, and

0:06:16.213,0:06:20.503
when it was very young.

0:06:21.583,0:06:27.463
You know, if I had a bad mood or something, and

0:06:30.043,0:06:34.353
let's.. I'll say it shortly, just because it's not

0:06:34.803,0:06:53.463
completely relevant, somewhat relevant. I also have a bipolar disorder, which wasn't diagnosed until I was 43 years old, which is less than 10 years ago. So at certain times I was depressed.

0:06:53.633,0:06:59.893
So my son.. and I can't say if it's good or bad, but he did get to see,

0:07:01.463,0:07:05.273
you know, his mother being in a

0:07:05.563,0:07:09.823
depressed mood, or his mother cry, and

0:07:09.843,0:07:10.863

0:07:13.693,0:07:16.393
things like that. So we

0:07:16.743,0:07:17.433

0:07:18.633,0:07:20.913
we didn't..

0:07:22.153,0:07:23.533
a lot of things..

0:07:23.673,0:07:28.273
Children who live in the same house with their parents

0:07:28.583,0:07:32.373
are more aware of their parents being.

0:07:32.393,0:07:35.823
Excuse me.. a whole person. Okay?

0:07:38.033,0:07:44.343
And, so I think, kind of for our timeframe that maybe

0:07:44.393,0:08:00.993
enough, unless you want to ask a follow up question about that.
-I did have a follow up question about playing outside, and how you describe it as this rural environment, very safe. What kind of games would you play outside with your brothers or with the other children?

0:08:02.273,0:08:15.663
Some of these games they don't actually know how to call them in English, but we would play tag we would play hide and seek. We would play cowboys and Indians.

0:08:15.743,0:08:24.693
Snd yes, in 1970 in Israel. It was not native Americans, or..

0:08:25.173,0:08:26.293

0:08:26.603,0:08:35.993
My brother really loved pretending he's a soldier and this type of games.

0:08:36.003,0:08:43.243
But yeah, we were playing with marbles and capture the flag.

0:08:44.803,0:08:51.223
These were.. It was fun, you know, playing with the other kids.

0:08:51.523,0:08:57.393
You mentioned that there was no television there for a while. Did you eventually have a television?

0:08:57.563,0:08:59.303
So..

0:08:59.703,0:09:09.863
When we were very little.. first of all, in Israel there was only one TV channel. It was one government

0:09:10.153,0:09:13.593
controlled TV channel. Black and white.

0:09:13.833,0:09:18.203
So I think probably when I was around four,

0:09:19.253,0:09:24.623
there was one TV in a central location, kind of like a clubhouse, and

0:09:25.533,0:09:34.393
sometimes my mom would take us there, and we sit with other people and watch TV. But it was

0:09:34.993,0:09:40.023
one government controlled channel. So basically,

0:09:41.183,0:09:52.883
children programming was only between 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. There wasn't a choice of programs. So, you know,

0:09:53.303,0:10:04.423
The TV, we loved it, but it wasn't a big thing. Later on, I don't remember exactly how old I was, probably less than 10,

0:10:05.263,0:10:11.723
we got a TV, and when I say we got a TV, remember, I said there was no private property in the Kibbutz,

0:10:11.763,0:10:16.143
everything like a TV.. also, the members didn't have money,

0:10:16.223,0:10:23.173
Okay? So the way you would get things in the Kibbutz is that by

0:10:23.273,0:10:33.503
order of seniority. How many years you've been in the Kibbutz. The Kibbutz will distribute things that the Kibbutz Assembly decided that

0:10:33.833,0:10:35.783
the Kibbutz would provide.

0:10:35.893,0:10:51.003
So, I don't know, let's say, in 1975, the Kibbutz Assembly decided that members would get TVs. But then there is a limited budget and.. but we had budget only for buying

0:10:52.443,0:11:03.023
30 TVs a year, and there were about 200 households. So, you know, maybe by 1977, my parents got their TV from the Kibbutz.

0:11:03.263,0:11:08.593
In 1986, a very important thing happened, and it was that we got a colored TV

0:11:08.773,0:11:13.303
A big event, no doubt.

0:11:13.553,0:11:17.743
So tell me a little bit about your education growing up.

0:11:18.623,0:11:19.833
So..

0:11:20.273,0:11:28.323
As I mentioned many times, we all grew up in one house with our peers from the same age group.

0:11:29.513,0:11:39.063
My age group of 1971 was eight children. four boys and four girls.

0:11:40.983,0:11:42.273
So..

0:11:44.313,0:11:56.113
Education starts.. it's the whole time basically when you're in the children's house. So, in preschool..

0:11:56.833,0:12:10.663
Well, basically, most of it was through, you know, play and the educator and caregiver, they would read to us, and we would listen to records.

0:12:11.913,0:12:14.293
We had naps every day,

0:12:14.393,0:12:19.403
and they would play a record as the time we were going to sleep.

0:12:19.533,0:12:31.293
And when we were young it was records with stories, or sometimes they would put classical music, and we all hated it.

0:12:31.313,0:12:36.763
We wanted, you know, Peter and the Wolf, and...

0:12:36.793,0:12:37.803
anyways.

0:12:39.533,0:12:43.713
Starting kindergarten was more, a little bit more formal.

0:12:46.403,0:12:49.213
The woman who was our,

0:12:50.033,0:12:55.453
basically my preschool teacher, from the time I was around three years old.

0:12:55.803,0:12:58.363
She was also our

0:12:59.523,0:13:03.393
Home room teacher until I was

0:13:03.843,0:13:05.203
in 2nd grade.

0:13:08.433,0:13:22.213
So when you start your more formal education, you go to the classroom, and they teach you whatever they teach you. But the Kibbutz definitely had a different educational system.

0:13:22.353,0:13:25.773
Than the cities.

0:13:26.793,0:13:29.153
We had

0:13:30.403,0:13:38.623
much more opportunities for, I'd call it experiential learning. So

0:13:38.653,0:13:50.533
when we learned about birds, we would go outside with the teachers and walk around the community and see birds and collect feathers, and things like that.

0:13:52.483,0:13:54.173

0:13:56.093,0:14:03.313
Now I know, I always had some learning differences,

0:14:07.073,0:14:09.603
but I'm also

0:14:11.393,0:14:21.993
in today's in today's terms, in Montgomery County, it would be called GTLD Are you familiar with GTLD?

0:14:22.003,0:14:24.123
No. What's that?

0:14:24.153,0:14:25.893
Twice exceptional.

0:14:26.373,0:14:28.653
Oh, interesting.

0:14:28.793,0:14:32.203
Gifted and Talented Learning Disabled (GTLD).

0:14:32.283,0:14:33.143
I see.

0:14:33.223,0:14:34.133

Okay.

0:14:34.533,0:14:36.503
Now let's start with..

0:14:36.853,0:14:40.423
There were eight children in my class.

0:14:40.743,0:14:47.153
It might sound great to you all that have 30 children in the class,

0:14:47.893,0:14:51.483
but it's a problem because

0:14:54.353,0:14:57.133
you really have to..

0:14:59.553,0:15:09.993
You can't divide kids into groups of.. those who are more advanced in something would study with those. So you have eight children,

0:15:11.643,0:15:15.843
one or two are kind of below average,

0:15:16.013,0:15:20.543
one or two are above average, and a few more in the middle.

0:15:21.023,0:15:22.043
But,

0:15:25.373,0:15:26.753
funnily,

0:15:26.823,0:15:35.713
because it's such a small group, there is actually less space for personalized curriculum.

0:15:38.193,0:15:43.303
Because personalized would really, literally mean each person gets their own..

0:15:43.893,0:15:56.623
So I was in some things in the above average group, which meant I understood what they say very quickly,

0:15:56.953,0:16:02.353
but the whole classroom would always have to go by the slowest person,

0:16:06.103,0:16:13.803
and that's very frustrating. It's very frustrating for the slowest person, too. Because they know

0:16:14.263,0:16:21.173
that everybody is waiting for them, and

0:16:23.973,0:16:26.603
I was very, very bored.

0:16:27.813,0:16:29.623
On the other hand,

0:16:32.173,0:16:37.293
My difficulties.. I mean, I was writing very slowly,

0:16:39.283,0:16:40.653
but

0:16:40.773,0:16:52.773
it really wasn't a physiological issue. I think very fast, but for me to kind of have a physical output..

0:16:52.863,0:16:54.673

0:16:56.313,0:17:00.663

I could very easily verbally

0:17:01.693,0:17:10.953

tell you what I learned and do a good job of it, but if I had to write it, I I had a problem with it.

0:17:12.933,0:17:22.293

And also I have the issue that if I don't understand something a%100, I kind of get stuck.

0:17:22.793,0:17:28.943

And this is basically ADHD. I mean, that's one of the things.

0:17:29.143,0:17:35.133

So when we were doing homework, and we're doing it on our own..

0:17:37.923,0:17:44.383

just to do it by myself, was very hard to to put it into writing, and whatever.

0:17:44.523,0:17:49.553

And in class, I was very good. So I was okay.

0:17:50.273,0:17:54.223

I basically wasn't doing my homework.

0:17:56.393,0:18:01.133

I was getting scolded for it.

0:18:01.803,0:18:09.363

But, on the other hand, nothing else was done because I was doing so well in class, okay?

0:18:10.833,0:18:14.203

But I always felt

0:18:15.813,0:18:18.213

inadequate,

0:18:18.313,0:18:20.323

because I

0:18:20.413,0:18:25.253

wanted to do what I needed to do. You know? I wanted to be a good girl.

0:18:27.113,0:18:28.323

0:18:29.763,0:18:31.813

And also in math I..

0:18:32.003,0:18:41.893

Well, still had.. I want to say good grades, but there was no such thing as grades in the Kibbutz school.

0:18:41.973,0:18:50.673

That's different than the cities. The cities in Israel had the regular, normal system like other places.

0:18:51.263,0:18:56.913

We didn't exactly have tests. We didn't exactly have grades, but

0:19:00.203,0:19:07.403

it's a very complicated topic.

-One thing that I'd love to know about, is when you first

0:19:07.473,0:19:21.923

started studying English, you were going to be an English major. You've written poetry that's been published. You obviously have love for the language. Can you talk a little bit about that, about your love for poetry?

0:19:22.203,0:19:23.033

0:19:26.573,0:19:45.613

Yeah. Well.. When you say started learning English, when you say English in the U.S., we call it literature in our.. In Israel, when we say you study English, it means English language, English as a second language,

0:19:45.613,0:19:52.983

which, by the way, we started at 4th grade. Now they start at third grade and it goes all the way through high school.

0:19:54.903,0:19:56.113

Because

0:19:56.243,0:20:05.673

there isn't.. you can't learn a language in school by having one semester like they have here in high schools, and

0:20:05.713,0:20:14.613

a year later another semester. So we started learning English as a second language in 4th grade.

0:20:17.283,0:20:27.633

Are you asking about my love of English as an academic subject in a U.S. University?

0:20:28.513,0:20:31.103

That is such a great question.

0:20:31.263,0:20:36.803

English to non native speakers. So initially, I was very interested in

0:20:37.573,0:20:41.383

your interest in English, and how you learn English as a second language,

0:20:41.393,0:20:44.013

and also interested

0:20:44.293,0:20:49.433

in a follow up question, which is your love for literature and for poetry,

0:20:49.743,0:20:50.573

so, you can answer that however you like.

0:20:50.853,0:20:53.673

So English as a second language,

0:20:54.133,0:21:01.983

It's very interesting. As I said, we studied from 4th grade an up through the end of high school.

0:21:02.293,0:21:09.293

Usually it was twice a week, because we didn't have a system like here, where you learn the same subject every day.

0:21:09.393,0:21:18.603

We had each subject a few times a week. Therefore, we were able to learn 8 or 9 subjects

0:21:18.653,0:21:26.693

a week, and not four like they do here in high school, which I completely don't get. Anyways..

0:21:26.913,0:21:31.773

And the results are actually less good than if you do it like the system we had.

0:21:32.443,0:21:38.633

The interesting thing is that there are kids that were in my class that studied the same number of years

0:21:38.723,0:21:48.863

of English. Some of us speak excellent English, and some of some of them finished high school without being able to carry a daily conversation.

0:21:49.013,0:21:59.953

So it's very different between each person. Another thing is about English as a second language, and it's actually one of your written questions, which I think is a really good one.

0:22:01.273,0:22:03.173
TV in Israel..

0:22:04.683,0:22:09.823
Those children programs that we watched, that were available for two hours a day,

0:22:11.083,0:22:12.583
all the..

0:22:13.973,0:22:17.303
all the like drama series was

0:22:17.533,0:22:24.203
American shows. I grew up watching "Little House on the Prairie,"

0:22:24.283,0:22:26.353
I remember that

0:22:26.673,0:22:37.983
and fire stations show. It was in the 70s, so it's not Chicago Fire, okay?

0:22:38.163,0:22:40.103

0:22:41.523,0:22:55.013
It was in English, and in Israel, unlike in many other countries, the non-Hebrew speaking shows were not dubbed or synchronized.

0:22:55.343,0:23:03.023
There was no voice over. It was in English with subtitles. And actually,

0:23:04.083,0:23:08.103
this is a very good way to learn a language.

0:23:08.403,0:23:14.423
If it's synchronized with the voice over, you learn nothing,

0:23:14.863,0:23:24.123
because you hear your own language. But you watch TV for many years, and it's in English with subtitles, you actually learn a lot.

0:23:24.533,0:23:29.223
and also it helps with the the accent.

0:23:31.643,0:23:36.003
And again, that's me and my brother and a bunch of other kids, it's not everybody.

0:23:37.443,0:23:45.843
Do you think your interest in the United States was sparked by watching some of these television shows?

0:23:48.313,0:23:49.443

0:23:50.323,0:23:54.713
I.. You know, actually that would.. I want to

0:23:55.203,0:24:01.403
speak a little more about the education thing, and then it is actually a good transition to

0:24:01.953,0:24:07.043
the U.S. immigrant things. Anyways, I..

0:24:09.573,0:24:16.843
My 12 years of school were intense suffering.

0:24:17.323,0:24:22.293
-Sorry.

-Growing up in the small Kibbutz in Israel,

0:24:22.543,0:24:32.203
there were no such things as programs for gifted children.

0:24:33.853,0:24:45.373
And help for people with learning disabilities. You have had to have something very significant

0:24:45.833,0:24:55.653
to be considered. The children in my class that got help for learning disabilities, were really slow,

0:24:55.853,0:25:04.253
okay? You could see. They were having hard problems with comprehension and things like that.

0:25:07.563,0:25:14.163
I didn't get any additional stimulation as a gifted person,

0:25:15.113,0:25:18.133
and definitely nobody

0:25:18.213,0:25:30.973
could have imagined back then that you can be gifted and challenged at the same time, learning disabled at the same time.

0:25:31.343,0:25:32.643
So

0:25:34.373,0:25:35.503
I was

0:25:37.933,0:25:49.163
deathly board. I mean, because everything they spoke of in class, I would get the first time, and maybe some other kids needed the second time.

0:25:49.463,0:25:57.573
But we would have to sit there and listen to also the 4th and 5th time for that last, you know, straggler,

0:25:58.833,0:26:09.513
until they did that guy a huge favor that really.. and sent him to a school that was more suitable for him.

0:26:11.973,0:26:12.883
And..

0:26:13.143,0:26:17.043
I mean I feel

0:26:17.243,0:26:23.663
bad for what he had to go through by the fact.. and it wasn't out of bad intentions

0:26:24.793,0:26:29.133
the thing is that he needed the special education school.

0:26:29.243,0:26:35.533
But think about, you couldn't have a special education school in a place where

0:26:36.083,0:26:40.553
1st to 6th grade you have 70 students.

0:26:41.743,0:26:51.303
That's the whole, you know, had eight kids. So the special ED school was somewhere where he had to go by bus for 45 minutes a day.

0:26:52.393,0:26:57.473
His life got much better once he got what he needed.

0:26:57.773,0:27:01.213
Now, I never got what I needed.

0:27:01.693,0:27:08.283
I didn't have the extra stimulation that I needed as a gifted person.

0:27:08.553,0:27:13.743
And on the other hand, I kept

0:27:15.523,0:27:19.323
being told that I, you know..

0:27:22.203,0:27:30.953
I kept being scolded for not doing what I'm supposed to do. Not doing my homework, and whatever

0:27:31.153,0:27:34.033
and always the thought was..

0:27:35.083,0:27:42.843
"She's so intelligent, so she's not doing homework just because she's lazy." And..

0:27:43.183,0:27:43.973

0:27:46.033,0:27:52.773
I kind of intuitively know in my heart that's not true, but of course, I didn't have the words for it.

0:27:53.063,0:27:54.323
and

0:27:56.583,0:28:06.123
there are a lot of other things also, that's not exactly directly about education, but it was very, what they call, sensitive.

0:28:07.303,0:28:09.073
So I was

0:28:10.243,0:28:16.583
stimulated very easily. So I was, you know, maybe

0:28:17.633,0:28:29.053
throwing fits if someone would tease me, I would like respond very strongly, and I cried a lot, and whatever. And the grown ups in my life,

0:28:29.543,0:28:31.873
it was continuously,

0:28:32.623,0:28:37.833
"Oh, stop being so sensitive, don't take it so hard."

0:28:37.983,0:28:39.693

0:28:39.963,0:28:42.753
People, don't tell this to your kids.

0:28:43.733,0:28:50.993
"If you ignore them, they will stop teasing you." "What they want is.." That doesn't work.

0:28:51.043,0:28:59.843
Parents don't say this to your children. I get literally angry with this, when people say,

0:29:00.393,0:29:06.413
bullies, or or someone that teases you, if you ignore them, they go away. That's not true.

0:29:06.683,0:29:13.213
But what I'm saying is what kind of thing it is to say to a four-year-old, a five-year-old, a seven-year-old,

0:29:14.323,0:29:18.713
"stop being so sensitive. Don't take it too hard so much."

0:29:20.773,0:29:32.963

You need to give them strategies how to deal with stuff, okay? And that was never done. And I mean nobody had bad intentions. It was just not..

0:29:35.523,0:29:44.513
It didn't exist. ADHD didn't exist, or sensory processing thing.

0:29:44.663,0:29:55.613
So instead of.. so, me as a child it was always.. my brain was always overwhelmed, my senses were

0:29:55.743,0:29:57.843
always overwhelmed,

0:29:58.153,0:30:01.053
and I never got any kind of

0:30:02.083,0:30:12.113
acknowledgment that, you know, it was not like character, and I never got any strategies how to deal with

0:30:12.523,0:30:16.803
being so overwhelmed. It Wasn't acknowledged of me being

0:30:17.193,0:30:22.053
neurologically overwhelmed. It's as "stop being so sensitive," or whatever.

0:30:22.243,0:30:23.283

0:30:26.533,0:30:27.653
This..

0:30:29.953,0:30:31.953
I mean, I I grew up,

0:30:33.553,0:30:41.053
and it went all the way through high school. In high school, we already did have tests and grades, and whatever. And I would

0:30:42.403,0:30:53.633
come, sit in class, listen to the lectures. Barely ever did any homework. Barely, maybe read a little of the material, and I would come, and I would get

0:30:54.753,0:30:57.863
(A) or worse (B+).

0:30:59.643,0:31:03.233
But let's say, when we had to write essays, I wouldn't,

0:31:05.813,0:31:11.243
because I never

0:31:11.683,0:31:14.033
got the study skills

0:31:15.033,0:31:20.543
I would give up. I wouldn't do it, and they would tell me that

0:31:21.353,0:31:33.153
it's bad that they don't do it. But they never gave me the help I needed. Nobody ever even realized if you are an (A) student

0:31:33.883,0:31:36.943
and you also don't disrupt the class,

0:31:38.023,0:31:40.003
you are not going to get help.

0:31:40.653,0:31:45.023
That's just the the fact of life.

0:31:46.213,0:31:47.323
And..

0:31:47.513,0:31:52.713
that does have, I think, my belief is, it definitely has something to do

0:31:53.493,0:32:07.213
with the gender differences, and it's not that anybody deliberately discriminated against girls,
but manifestation of ADHD in girls and boys can be very different.

0:32:08.183,0:32:11.783
My brain was so overwhelmed that

0:32:12.783,0:32:15.903
I was kind of frozen.

0:32:15.913,0:32:24.923
I barely moved, you know. It's just because.. My brain was so overwhelmed I didn't have even,

0:32:25.313,0:32:27.163
I couldn't even move.

0:32:27.473,0:32:28.773

0:32:30.123,0:32:34.193
I also, you know, a good girl, so I didn't disrupt in class.

0:32:34.493,0:32:44.943
And, on the other hand, boys, when they're bored and frustrated, they usually, they don't sit
quietly and suffer internally.

0:32:44.983,0:32:47.863
They are acting out physically.

0:32:48.603,0:32:50.083
And as a result,

0:32:50.423,0:32:54.573
boys get diagnosed more and get more help.

0:32:54.863,0:33:02.073
But this is really doesn't have to do specifically with the Kibbutz. I think it's through
everywhere.

0:33:02.223,0:33:14.523
I think. First of all, thank you so much for sharing that experience. I think what you're talking
about is so important. You grew up in a time and a place where you were not getting the
resources you needed.

0:33:15.413,0:33:23.723
So I'm very interested to learn how you.. what changed for you and how you are able to
eventually get what you needed?

0:33:24.153,0:33:28.613
What's hard for people to understand

0:33:28.883,0:33:35.143
is how mentally damaging it is to be

0:33:36.603,0:33:39.633
under challenged and bored

0:33:39.893,0:33:46.753
for so long. I mean, the level of frustration

0:33:47.293,0:33:59.573
is just, it's terrible. I finished 12 years of school with (A) average

0:33:59.973,0:34:04.993
and 0 learning skills. I could not

0:34:06.233,0:34:07.063

0:34:08.673,0:34:11.233
I guess, also, my school was just easier

0:34:11.393,0:34:13.923
Then other schools.

0:34:14.952,0:34:16.472
I could not

0:34:16.633,0:34:22.782
read the whole book and summarize it. It also has a lot to do with ADHD.

0:34:24.373,0:34:29.143
I didn't get the writing skills.

0:34:30.883,0:34:33.893
Do you want to pause and get some water?

0:34:34.012,0:34:36.242
-We can pause.
-It's okay.

0:34:41.893,0:34:45.523
I had 0 study skills, and when I was

0:34:45.733,0:34:50.233
mid 20s, I attempted to go to college in Israel.

0:34:51.083,0:34:52.053

0:34:53.222,0:34:54.843
And between the

0:34:56.093,0:35:07.613
ADHD and.. I mean, nothing was diagnosed back then, and the bipolar disorder that I didn't know I had,

0:35:08.813,0:35:12.273
I was signed up to college,

0:35:12.833,0:35:13.883

0:35:15.203,0:35:21.573
I showed up sometimes to some of my classes, and only those that were at least after 10 a.m.

0:35:24.053,0:35:25.123

0:35:26.623,0:35:27.323

0:35:27.983,0:35:33.403
I partied and drank. I also had to work

0:35:33.683,0:35:35.053
because..

0:35:36.793,0:35:41.573
So basically, I finished that one year, and the college told me, I mean,

0:35:42.273,0:35:55.163
"you can stay, but you have to repeat the whole first year, because you don't have.. In college failed, but it's mainly... I didn't even go to the exams. So, you know, things like that.

0:35:57.113,0:35:57.983

0:35:58.013,0:36:05.673
And I was.. I left the Kibbutz when I was around 24 years old, and

0:36:05.783,0:36:09.453
and when you left the Kibbutz, you had

0:36:09.573,0:36:14.123
nothing, you had no money.

0:36:14.243,0:36:19.933
You had to work, and that's okay, but of course it makes, I mean..

0:36:21.943,0:36:28.313
my parents would have liked to support me, but they didn't have money. So when you left the Kibbutz,

0:36:28.513,0:36:30.213
you pretty much

0:36:30.283,0:36:36.833
had to do everything for yourself and start from literally 0. Anyways..

0:36:37.153,0:36:42.243
What changed? Why am I now in Montgomery College,

0:36:43.353,0:36:45.373
with a high GPA?

0:36:47.463,0:36:50.093
Academically,

0:36:50.613,0:36:53.093
I am very successful.

0:36:53.193,0:36:57.293
It's a fact. I guess I can say it without it being, you know..

0:36:58.653,0:37:05.853
Well, what changed? First of all, I started going to school when I was 49 years old.

0:37:08.133,0:37:12.683
I am married. I have a supportive environment

0:37:12.733,0:37:14.803
and a stable environment,

0:37:15.763,0:37:24.503
but what changes is that I got that my learning disabilities and my bipolar disorder got diagnosed. So

0:37:25.553,0:37:39.513
my son also has ADHD and he is on the autistic spectrum, very high functioning, but he's definitely on the spectrum. And, like many parents of my generation,

0:37:41.083,0:37:47.273
I realized I have ADHD when I started filling up those beautiful questionnaires

0:37:50.053,0:37:55.223
for all those scales and stuff. And they ask

0:37:55.423,0:37:58.803
all kind of questions about your child,

0:38:00.193,0:38:03.873
which we did for him when he was about six, or seven years old.

0:38:04.083,0:38:09.013
So, "how many times a week.."

0:38:09.233,0:38:17.433
I forgot actually. You know, there were all kinds of questions. "How many times a week you

0:38:17.773,0:38:24.593
feel distracted, or you forget to do things..." and blah blah blah.

0:38:24.853,0:38:28.613
And I'm filling it up for him and

0:38:29.013,0:38:39.693
you know, for scales of 1 to 5. I'm doing it about him 4, 4, 4 and I'm thinking about myself,

0:38:39.753,0:38:51.313
5, 5, 7, 5, and that's really pretty much all the people my age that I know that

0:38:51.443,0:39:01.573
are diagnosed with ADHD, they diagnosed themselves through the questionnaire for their children.
Surprise, surprise, our children also have ADHD

0:39:01.863,0:39:02.813
and..

0:39:04.213,0:39:05.433
Anyways..

0:39:06.813,0:39:09.513
I definitely, I realized

0:39:09.783,0:39:20.203
that I have ADHD when I was around 41 years old, but I was busy working, taking care of my son.
So only when I was 43 years old, I went to the doctor.

0:39:20.723,0:39:29.973
Interestingly, children go to a neurologist, and adults go to psychiatrists to get diagnosed
with ADHD.

0:39:30.113,0:39:35.093
So I went to a psychiatrist to get a diagnosis,

0:39:36.533,0:39:45.493
and he wholeheartedly agreed with me about my diagnosis, and I started

0:39:45.823,0:39:47.853
taking a Concerta.

0:39:48.113,0:39:51.203
long release Ritalin basically.

0:39:52.763,0:39:53.903
And

0:39:55.313,0:40:00.053
it's a very significant difference.

0:40:01.443,0:40:06.713
Of course, it doesn't fix the past.

0:40:07.203,0:40:15.103
It doesn't fix all the frustration. It doesn't fix the lack of study skills.

0:40:15.363,0:40:22.773
Even more focused, if I never learned how to summarize a book,

0:40:22.983,0:40:29.863
it it doesn't fix that. Now, another thing, though..

0:40:30.143,0:40:31.133

0:40:31.983,0:40:37.213
A quick, unrelated to immigration stuff, but I have to say it.

0:40:38.563,0:40:46.003

Many people don't understand what ADHD is, and I think the name Attention Deficit Disorder is misleading,

0:40:46.513,0:40:53.323

because the main issue with people with ADHD is that we have too much attention.

0:40:53.483,0:40:56.213

Basically the ADHD brain,

0:40:57.093,0:40:59.853

you pay attention to everything,

0:41:00.443,0:41:01.913

all details,

0:41:02.323,0:41:12.543

and while, rationally, I know that not all details are important, some are not important at all, and definitely not all of them are as important as others.

0:41:12.573,0:41:14.433

ADHD brain

0:41:14.723,0:41:15.643

0:41:15.843,0:41:17.843

my brain doesn't

0:41:18.173,0:41:20.273

prioritize facts.

0:41:20.283,0:41:21.373

So,

0:41:21.973,0:41:23.313

when you're

0:41:23.483,0:41:29.813

compelled to pay attention to all details, you end up not being able to focus.

0:41:30.243,0:41:33.133

Attention and focus is not the same, okay?

0:41:35.043,0:41:44.003

And people also have a lot of misconceptions about Ritalin other things like that, and how I'm seeing it is,

0:41:44.243,0:41:45.663

I describe it that

0:41:46.923,0:41:49.483

without the Concerta,

0:41:51.513,0:41:54.093

100 thoughts,

0:41:54.523,0:41:58.103

a 1000 details are all bouncing in my head,

0:41:58.263,0:42:03.583

and they're all yelling as loud. They're all

0:42:04.813,0:42:10.343

asking for the same level of attention from me, which, of course, is not possible.

0:42:10.903,0:42:11.853

0:42:12.653,0:42:23.993

with the ADHD if you're trying to write a paper sitting on the shoulders of I-270 during rush hour, and you take

0:42:24.153,0:42:26.063
the medicine,

0:42:26.443,0:42:33.643
and suddenly you're writing the paper on the beach with only the waves.

0:42:34.023,0:42:36.923
That is kind of how it works for me. However,

0:42:38.173,0:42:42.473
after I started taking that,

0:42:43.133,0:42:56.713
my doctor, when I came for a follow up, from medication management, kept asking me questions. The screening for depression.

0:42:57.423,0:42:58.453
And

0:42:59.743,0:43:05.613
the reason I'm talking about all of that, because that's what allowed me to become a student and

0:43:05.963,0:43:08.393
to be successful in it.

0:43:10.633,0:43:16.273
Problem with these diagnostic questions for depression is that their subjective and

0:43:16.733,0:43:22.243
they have these "how many days a week do you feel bad?"

0:43:22.613,0:43:25.853
Now, or "how many days a month?"

0:43:28.913,0:43:33.413
And if you felt really bad for like 30 or 40 years,

0:43:33.913,0:43:39.983
you already don't know that this is feeling bad. That's just your regular state, okay?

0:43:42.063,0:43:43.363
And..

0:43:44.373,0:43:54.063
I would say, maybe 2- 3 days a month. Because 2-3 days a month, I was feeling really bad and crying and thinking everything is hopeless and whatever.

0:43:54.293,0:44:00.973
But he kept asking me, so I came to my husband and said, "listen. He keeps asking me those questions, but

0:44:01.253,0:44:05.973
it's so subjective." I told my husband "you tell me,

0:44:08.323,0:44:26.273
if I asked you about myself how many days a month I'm in a bad mood?" and my husband said over %50, and he was being very generous, because it's probably over %90 would be a much more accurate description.

0:44:27.343,0:44:31.603
So I went to the doctor and started taking antidepressants,

0:44:31.953,0:44:44.783
and that was shocking. I would wake up in the morning, and if nothing really bad happened, I would feel fine.

0:44:44.873,0:44:53.033

I thought, "oh, my God! that's how other people feel all the time? If nothing is wrong, they feel fine?"

0:44:53.143,0:45:00.153

I didn't even know I'm not feeling fine, because I always was not feeling fine.

0:45:01.563,0:45:12.973

I didn't.. I was in so much physical pain. I didn't even know I was in pain, until I started taking the antidepressants, and the pain went away.

0:45:14.163,0:45:17.283

So, I'll try to make a long story a little shorter.

0:45:18.573,0:45:22.993

After a little bit with antidepressants, I got a manic episode,

0:45:24.553,0:45:30.373

and of course, I didn't know it's a manic episode, but I called my doctor and

0:45:30.553,0:45:32.333

told him something is wrong.

0:45:32.343,0:45:41.623

The Concerta doesn't work anymore. I can't call focus, and I also told them, I'm too happy for the circumstances.

0:45:42.843,0:45:49.293

It could happen that if you're not bipolar antidepressant would cause a manic episode, but in my case,

0:45:49.353,0:45:59.683

we went to the doctor me and my husband, and my husband helped with answering the diagnostic questions, and I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder type two.

0:46:01.863,0:46:06.203

You can Google it? If you don't know the difference between type one and type two.

0:46:07.733,0:46:10.063

I started taking the medicines,

0:46:10.443,0:46:12.993

and that is

0:46:13.453,0:46:17.273

what allowed me to start

0:46:18.383,0:46:22.303

fulfilling my potential.

0:46:27.043,0:46:29.023

I was working in

0:46:29.653,0:46:33.653

jobs that made me miserable, and

0:46:34.263,0:46:37.723

I, you know, of course were

0:46:38.623,0:46:45.603

not intellectually any kind of fulfilling or satisfying, but if you don't have a degree,

0:46:46.103,0:46:48.323

you can't get jobs.

0:46:50.703,0:46:53.393

You know, so anyways..

0:46:54.553,0:46:56.053

During..

0:46:57.103,0:47:01.403

I was 43. It was 2014,

0:47:02.863,0:47:06.863
and fast forward to 2020 pandemic.

0:47:07.883,0:47:14.253
What once I was able to fulfill my potential more, I became a realtor, which I loved.

0:47:14.503,0:47:28.103
But after we moved to Myersville that's more remote, and whatever. Beginning of 2020, I retired from being a realtor. Not because of the pandemic, but it was excellent timing

0:47:29.293,0:47:31.513
and the pandemic started,

0:47:31.933,0:47:40.573
and my husband started working from home, my son started having school from home, and I was home, kind of doing nothing.

0:47:40.823,0:47:42.343
And also

0:47:43.843,0:47:45.833
because of the pandemic, I couldn't

0:47:45.903,0:47:50.703
go out anymore. I mean, we live in a rural area, so we would go for walks, but

0:47:51.363,0:47:55.073
I didn't have any human contact other than my family,

0:47:57.613,0:48:07.593
and other than going to grocery stores, which is not a real human contact. So basically my break.. (a) I was the only one in the household who was doing nothing.

0:48:07.763,0:48:12.043
And also my brain got already, really.

0:48:12.453,0:48:14.193
It was not good.

0:48:14.843,0:48:17.353
So I started

0:48:17.853,0:48:23.673
August of 2020, and signed up for a class in Montgomery College.

0:48:24.423,0:48:30.963
The reason I'm in Montgomery College, even though I live in Frederick County is that my husband works for Montgomery College.

0:48:32.613,0:48:34.973
So I took a class online.

0:48:35.653,0:48:38.903
It was for brain stimulation.

0:48:39.333,0:48:46.603
I took English 101, because I had to. That's the first class you have to take if you don't,

0:48:46.623,0:48:47.493
you know.

0:48:50.233,0:49:02.073
I wasn't even expecting it, but I enjoyed it tremendously. Wow! So I took one more class, which

0:49:02.113,0:49:05.193
shall remain nameless, because I didn't enjoy it.

0:49:08.513,0:49:10.963
And I think Montgomery College has

0:49:11.273,0:49:13.953
excellent spectacular

0:49:14.623,0:49:15.813
faculty,

0:49:16.013,0:49:18.963
but the fall class was not.

0:49:19.073,0:49:19.903

0:49:20.333,0:49:23.763
But I realized, I enjoyed

0:49:23.903,0:49:36.573
studying. I enjoy.. So basically by fall of 2020 I said I'm going to do an associate degree.

0:49:36.583,0:49:45.453
And a month later, I wanted to do a complete undergrad, and a few months later, that was the plan, and now

0:49:45.973,0:49:49.123
I'm going to do a masters.

0:49:51.323,0:49:53.503
What an incredible journey!

0:49:53.653,0:49:57.993
Yeah. That would be the focus of my book.

0:49:59.113,0:50:02.583
Coming in 10 years to a store near you.

0:50:03.583,0:50:05.403
I feel you need it.

0:50:05.453,0:50:08.613
Let's hope it's six years.

0:50:08.653,0:50:09.513
Now..

0:50:09.763,0:50:17.743
Could you tell me a little bit about.. you mentioned that there were some faculty members that helped you a lot. That you had some positive experience.

0:50:17.793,0:50:19.543
Can you talk a little bit about that?

0:50:20.123,0:50:32.903
At first, it was not directly helping, but they were just fabulous. In the winter of 2020, or is it called 2021?

0:50:33.783,0:50:34.593
Yeah.

0:50:34.683,0:50:40.253
in the winter, the period between.. I think it's in January, so it might be..

0:50:40.313,0:50:53.353
No, winter starts at the end of December. I took introduction to, it's a long name, Introduction to Women Sexuality, Studies, whatever,

0:51:00.153,0:51:04.053
with professor..

0:51:04.883,0:51:08.883
My dog. Come on, Toby, stop nagging. Come here, come.

0:51:11.023,0:51:14.173
My dogs, he wants attention.

0:51:14.453,0:51:15.703
My baby.

0:51:17.913,0:51:20.693
Professor Carly-Miles

0:51:22.813,0:51:25.483
Women & Gender Studies, and

0:51:26.813,0:51:30.233
that was the first class I took that was

0:51:33.383,0:51:37.253
mind blowing. I mean,

0:51:40.633,0:51:46.423
it really was something that opened

0:51:47.393,0:51:53.163
new worlds for me. Both the specific material, but also

0:51:53.653,0:52:04.633
learning how to intellectually and academically study and analyze those materials. Just a
minute, Toby, come here. Come.

0:52:04.643,0:52:05.413

0:52:05.923,0:52:20.393
He's nagging me to pet him, but he doesn't want to go on the sofa, so I need to lean forward.
And then I took two political science classes with

0:52:22.273,0:52:28.373
Professor Greg Sember, I believe.

0:52:29.693,0:52:30.573

0:52:31.583,0:52:46.173
And it was excellent. Some other classes, the classes themselves might have been a little bit
less interesting, but it's more, I think, about the topic than the professor. Like psychology,

0:52:46.303,0:52:49.113
for me, It was just not

0:52:50.133,0:52:53.453
the topic doesn't speak to me as much

0:52:53.573,0:53:01.743
Can you talk a little bit about how you started writing poetry, and why you decided to become an
English major?

0:53:01.993,0:53:03.193
Okay.

0:53:03.423,0:53:15.623
When I started, I thought.. my declared major, was Political Science, and again, in Montgomery
College it's some more general names. I called it Political Science.

0:53:16.973,0:53:27.643
As for poetry, so first of all, through English 101 class, I realized that I enjoy writing

0:53:27.743,0:53:29.583
structured essays.

0:53:29.873,0:53:40.593
Because I did write a lot of stuff before, mainly on Facebook, but people write short posts on
Facebook, I would write a three-pages essay on Facebook.

0:53:40.763,0:53:51.893
I realized how much I'm enjoying the fact that I can structure it and make it more cohesive and stuff, and I always

0:53:52.323,0:53:57.123
wanted to also write for publishing, so I knew that I need to

0:53:57.793,0:53:59.403
write, you know,

0:53:59.533,0:54:05.603
Not like I talk here, when it's going all over the place. I needed to focus a little more.

0:54:08.123,0:54:25.133
With the poetry, it seems like it's very important for you that they speak about the poetry?
-Well, the reason I ask is because I watched the video when you were in Monica Mische's class, and I watched you reading the poem and I thought it was very moving.

0:54:25.133,0:54:35.153
Except since I was, you know,.. Last time I wrote poetry before Montgomery College was probably when I was 12.

0:54:37.123,0:54:48.653
Professor Sember mentioned that there was the "Raptor Slam," or something, like a talent show and there were prizes.

0:54:49.283,0:54:50.263

0:54:50.633,0:54:52.673
I thought, "okay,

0:54:54.503,0:54:59.313
I'll write a poem for

0:55:00.183,0:55:05.773
the show. Maybe I'll win a Roku TV."

0:55:07.683,0:55:09.473
I wrote a poem,

0:55:10.433,0:55:17.293
and then I kind of got selected to go to the second stage.

0:55:17.773,0:55:21.803
So I had to write another poem, because I only had one.

0:55:23.973,0:55:31.313
I love this story.

0:55:31.383,0:55:34.003
So, I wrote another poem.

0:55:35.393,0:55:36.233

0:55:37.283,0:55:40.813
I've enjoyed it, but it's not..

0:55:41.353,0:55:48.223
I'm not a person who's walking around, and "I have to let it out, and the poetry

0:55:48.443,0:55:52.133
is in my blood and in my bones!"

0:55:54.163,0:55:57.653
Excuse me.

0:55:58.883,0:56:00.703
Then, Professor..

0:56:01.983,0:56:05.213
I don't want to Mispronounce her name. Mische?

0:56:05.373,0:56:09.723
I think it's Monica Mische. But I can check on that.

0:56:10.203,0:56:18.913
Oh, Monica, forgive me. I spoke with her, and I actually interviewed her on.. whatever.

0:56:19.173,0:56:22.203
let's, it's definitely not Mische, but..

0:56:22.493,0:56:23.613
We can check.

0:56:23.693,0:56:27.793
We have.. But I'm saying it now. Anyways, she

0:56:30.413,0:56:36.423
produced and edited and published a book through Montgomery College,

0:56:36.463,0:56:44.393
that's called, "You Have Been Planted Here to Create Something Beautiful."

0:56:44.753,0:56:48.443
I have the book somewhere here.

0:56:48.523,0:57:00.023
-"You Have Been Planted Here to Create Something Beautiful."
-Okay.
-And it is anthology? Can you read the whole title since you have it there?

0:57:00.173,0:57:13.523
-So I'm looking at it on YouTube right now, but I can pull it up. Let's see here.
-On Barnes & Noble, it's available for sale on Barnes & Noble. It's an anthology...

0:57:14.093,0:57:21.963
Through poetry, memoir, essays, and visual art, the contributors—all past or current students at Montgomery College,

0:57:22.053,0:57:29.423
all living with a disability, share...
-In the title. It says something like "Anthology by

0:57:29.833,0:57:36.993
students with... Montgomery College students with disabilities.." whatever.

0:57:38.843,0:57:40.163
So..

0:57:42.453,0:57:45.913
I guess she probably contacted..

0:57:46.303,0:58:02.313
-Oh, no. I just got emails, general emails. Oh, yeah..
-"You Have Been Planted Here to Create Something Beautiful: An Anthology by Writers and Artists with Disabilities. By Monica Mische." I don't know how to pronounce her last name, Mische, maybe, m, i, s, c, h, e.

0:58:02.443,0:58:11.913
The editor.
-Yu will have to forgive us, and we'll go with Mische, right now.
-I always call her Monica, but she..

0:58:12.663,0:58:18.803
Maybe talk about her efforts to put together this work and how that impacted you?

0:58:19.173,0:58:33.173
I got the email from the DSS, the Disability Support Services, about this anthology. They sent it to everybody, and I thought I'll submit my poems.

0:58:33.963,0:58:36.953

So I submitted my poems, and,

0:58:37.243,0:58:45.563

I mean this anthology, they didn't take every work that was sent to them, but it was not a highly selective one.

0:58:45.603,0:58:53.303

But still, I felt really happy that they are going to publish my poems, and

0:58:53.603,0:58:57.933

I wrote some kind of a forward, because

0:58:58.533,0:59:09.223

the poems, in some ways are contradictory, and they were written only a week or two apart. So,

0:59:09.303,0:59:14.613

you know what? can you do me a favor and pause for a moment?

=====

Interview (Part 3) with Liat Suvorov on April 10, 2023

0:00:07.840,0:00:14.320

We're back and what I would like to do for this next part is go back to this topic we were discussing related to, what made a difference for you to make your educational experience

0:00:14.380,0:00:24.110

better? You started talking about getting resources, getting medication, and getting a proper diagnosis. Could you talk a little bit about how

0:00:24.350,0:00:29.059

you were able to get a much better educational experience as an adult?

0:00:30.840,0:00:31.750

Okay.

0:00:33.740,0:00:39.070

So I honestly believe the reason I am

0:00:41.180,0:00:47.020

successful now in my academic studies.. Excuse me.

0:00:48.690,0:00:49.550

0:00:55.580,0:00:57.200

The reason

0:00:57.270,0:01:12.530

I believe I'm now successful in my academic studies, other than the things you already mentioned, I mean, the most important thing was that I got diagnosed. I got the right medical treatment.

0:01:12.600,0:01:17.360

That's what allowed me to start

0:01:17.760,0:01:20.540

realizing my potential.

0:01:20.900,0:01:28.570

So I joined Montgomery College during the pandemic basically as a brain exercise,

0:01:28.630,0:01:33.400

and I very soon realized that I enjoy it

0:01:36.110,0:01:51.490

more than I could ever imagined. I always liked learning things, but I didn't have a really good experience in a structured study environment.

0:01:51.730,0:01:54.850
And when I go to Montgomery College,

0:01:55.070,0:01:58.490
I realized I enjoy it a lot,

0:01:58.900,0:02:04.680
and I honestly believe the reason I'm successful now is the

0:02:06.209,0:02:16.250
tremendous amount of resources and support that I got in Montgomery College. Now,

0:02:16.560,0:02:21.520
this interview is done by a professor in Montgomery College.

0:02:21.750,0:02:26.550
I promise you, I'm not a paid spokesperson,

0:02:27.360,0:02:37.030
although if someone wants, down the line, to make an offer, I will consider, but

0:02:39.830,0:02:43.830
Montgomery College as an educational institution,

0:02:45.310,0:02:46.990
it really,

0:02:47.540,0:02:53.520
again, it blew my mind. Montgomery College has this

0:02:54.870,0:03:02.090
part of the mission statement, all of this.. there is a term "radical inclusion,"

0:03:02.430,0:03:06.200
and while most people

0:03:07.260,0:03:14.860
probably think more about all kind of of race and and things like that,

0:03:14.900,0:03:19.550
when it comes to radical inclusion. Radical inclusion

0:03:19.570,0:03:30.720
extends basically to the fact that Montgomery College, they really, I mean, it's not only in the mission statement, they really do it.

0:03:31.980,0:03:39.910
I feel they provide each student, each student that's motivated and want to succeed..

0:03:40.040,0:03:41.490
They provide

0:03:41.920,0:03:51.710
students with individually, what that student needs for succeeding. So,

0:03:52.870,0:03:58.740
for people like me. the

0:03:59.640,0:04:03.560
Disability Services

0:04:05.080,0:04:13.120
is there. I mean, first of all, there is wonderful support services to all students.

0:04:13.260,0:04:22.750
The writing centers, and there is for math and science and tutoring that's available to all students.

0:04:23.960,0:04:32.010
It's easily available, and it's fabulous. The tutors are really, really good and really dedicated.

0:04:32.400,0:04:40.710
But it extends to.. if students that have food insecurity, or housing insecurity,

0:04:40.990,0:04:50.470
Montgomery College provides them resources with food. It's literally directly providing food.

0:04:50.670,0:05:03.320
I guess, with housing, it's more providing resources of how to get housing, but it's an environment where

0:05:03.390,0:05:06.620
if you want to succeed.

0:05:08.080,0:05:10.470
the college would do everything

0:05:10.560,0:05:23.150
it can to help you get over the barriers that prevent you from succeeding. And definitely, as someone with

0:05:23.580,0:05:25.480
learning disabilities,

0:05:26.260,0:05:29.640
it was tremendous, and

0:05:30.480,0:05:31.520

0:05:32.390,0:05:49.530
it's not only directly.. Okay, of course, you get the accommodations and double time, and whatever, or if you need assistive technology. That's kind of the basic that every college and university has that,

0:05:49.850,0:05:53.580
but these are technicalities.

0:05:53.850,0:06:01.670
But most.. the vast majority of the professors I met in Montgomery College,

0:06:03.690,0:06:13.000
they are dedicated to their students' success. If you have a problem

0:06:14.620,0:06:15.730
that

0:06:17.310,0:06:18.230
is

0:06:18.950,0:06:26.160
you know.. a barrier for your success.. My experience is that if you speak to the Professors,

0:06:26.690,0:06:41.280
the vast majority of them are very understanding. It's not only about understanding that you have an issue, they would work with you

0:06:41.700,0:06:42.610
to

0:06:42.750,0:06:43.380

0:06:44.320,0:06:50.080
get to a solution that would allow you to

0:06:51.120,0:06:56.910
fulfill your academic potential, or achieve it.

0:06:58.210,0:07:01.860
Before we started recording, you mentioned that the Writing Center

0:07:01.890,0:07:06.860
has been really helpful to you. Do you want to talk a little bit about the Writing Center and the tutors?

0:07:07.410,0:07:12.290
And again, not a paid spokesperson for anybody, but

0:07:12.330,0:07:18.710
the writing center is a resource that's available to any student in Montgomery College,

0:07:18.800,0:07:23.400
regardless of anything. And they

0:07:23.670,0:07:31.000
help with pretty much everything in humanities.

0:07:32.900,0:07:34.190

0:07:37.040,0:07:40.040
Any student that hasn't used them, should.

0:07:43.020,0:07:44.280
So,

0:07:46.040,0:07:51.520
Most of my classes up to a certain point that I took were online

0:07:51.590,0:07:59.710
because I started in August of 2020. Those of you who are going to watch this video 15 years from now,

0:08:00.840,0:08:09.660
that's when the Covid pandemic was raging, and we did everything online because we were on lockdown and not allowed to leave the house.

0:08:11.470,0:08:12.450

0:08:15.710,0:08:19.360
But you know what, even after, when there is face-to-face classes,

0:08:19.460,0:08:24.340
the professors, they have time to teach you in class,

0:08:24.440,0:08:27.080
they give homework that you should read,

0:08:27.280,0:08:36.410
and they have office hours, that you can go, and, you know.. 15 minutes, 20 minutes with some specific issue about the material.

0:08:36.580,0:08:45.040
But they don't have the capacity to work with each student individually, so, if you have

0:08:46.920,0:08:53.370
some kind of of difficulty or need extra instruction on anything,

0:08:53.770,0:09:01.570
you can set an appointment with the Writing Center, and that's where the tutors there would work with you individually

0:09:01.900,0:09:08.440
on what you need extra work.. extra help with.

0:09:10.490,0:09:15.090
And they are excellent. That's really,

0:09:15.720,0:09:20.610
it's especially relevant to English 101, 102.

0:09:23.080,0:09:28.390

When you learn how to write an essay.

0:09:28.980,0:09:35.970

Sometimes what the professor teaches in class, is not enough.

0:09:36.190,0:09:49.400

They say it, you take notes, you even have some written material. But it's it's difficult. Learning how to write academic writing is not a simple thing.

0:09:50.160,0:09:56.270

Sometimes it's even hard to understand the instructions that, you know..

0:09:56.370,0:09:59.280

You set an appointment with the Writing Center.

0:09:59.430,0:10:08.080

They will work with you on what you need. If you need help understanding the instructions, they will go over it with you.

0:10:08.230,0:10:16.010

But then, you write the draft, you can send it to them, or have a face-to-face appointment.

0:10:17.600,0:10:19.930

For me, that's where a lot of my

0:10:19.960,0:10:21.180

actual

0:10:22.610,0:10:27.820

learning happened. When I was able..

0:10:29.790,0:10:43.680

because I mentioned many times before, in some of my abilities I am, I would say, above average, but there are other things where it's below.

0:10:43.850,0:10:47.320

For me, when I read the instructions,

0:10:48.470,0:10:56.020

if I'm not a 100% clear on each detail, I get stuck, and I can't move forward.

0:10:56.280,0:11:08.020

And that's where.. or also, if I write a draft, it takes me a very long time, because I'm trying to write the draft,

0:11:08.180,0:11:10.350

I want it to be perfect.

0:11:10.360,0:11:18.530

And you can't have your first draft be perfect. So I get stuck. I get frustrated. I want to quit.

0:11:18.750,0:11:22.740

And that's where basically working with the Writing Center

0:11:24.310,0:11:31.880

helped a lot. So yeah. Anybody should use it. And

0:11:32.240,0:11:45.150

there is also a program called "Trio." Are you familiar with the "Trio" program?

0:11:45.290,0:11:49.650

-I'm not familiar with the "Trio" program. Tell me about that.

-Because they're centered at Rockville campus. "Trio" is a federally funded program.

0:11:49.870,0:11:57.760

That's one program that's really only for citizens, because it's federally funded.

0:11:59.550,0:12:00.560

0:12:01.680,0:12:06.740
You're eligible to participate in trio

0:12:06.840,0:12:09.070
if you are..

0:12:10.900,0:12:14.540
It's either, if you have a documented disability,

0:12:15.050,0:12:20.250
or if you're eligible for financial aid,

0:12:20.820,0:12:29.820
or if you're a first generation.. first generation college. Your parents don't have academic degrees.

0:12:30.200,0:12:35.960
They have kind of a center in Rockville.

0:12:37.820,0:12:38.900

0:12:39.530,0:12:45.920
It's called "Trio," because it's the financial, the first generation, and

0:12:46.250,0:12:49.360
documented disability. So, it's three things.

0:12:50.520,0:12:51.480
They

0:12:51.670,0:12:53.970
basically help with

0:12:54.020,0:12:59.490
everything. You can go there and

0:13:00.800,0:13:05.530
literally, let's say, if because you have

0:13:06.820,0:13:14.120
learning disabilities, it's hard for you to navigate the website,

0:13:15.750,0:13:30.710
it's hard for you to figure out what other resources, you're having problems scheduling, or you don't understand how to schedule an appointment through the online appointment scheduling.

0:13:30.790,0:13:34.670
There are people there, they would work with you

0:13:34.750,0:13:37.250
on everything.

0:13:38.030,0:13:41.240
That's the nice thing about Trio.

0:13:44.120,0:13:55.480
I wanted to talk to you also about something I recently learned about you. My colleague, David Lott, mentioned that you're the winner of the most recent

0:13:55.490,0:14:09.500
Sligo Journal Student Poetry Contest. So congratulations! That's really a wonderful accomplishment. And I'm wondering, would you like to read that poem, or one of your poems that you..

0:14:10.210,0:14:17.910
Yes. I would, and it's actually what would be probably the most relevant thing I would have said today

0:14:18.080,0:14:19.690
to our topic.

0:14:21.600,0:14:22.510

0:14:22.660,0:14:34.000
Okay, yeah. I was going on about Trio, but I didn't think about it in advance, so it got kind of unclear. You should check that it's on the website.

0:14:34.080,0:14:40.790
-Do you want me to pause, so you can get the poems, or do you have the poem with you?
-Yes, I want you to pause to pull the poem up.
-Okay, I will pause.

0:14:43.480,0:14:57.630
So, tell me a little bit more about your journey to starting to write poetry. You mentioned that National Poetry Month, and having prompts really helped you get going and writing.

0:14:58.070,0:15:06.540
Yeah. So, as I mentioned before, the first two poems I wrote, ended up published in the book

0:15:06.600,0:15:11.570
that Montgomery College produced. I wrote it for the Raptor Slam.

0:15:11.860,0:15:17.840
And then, they got good feedback, but that's it, I didn't write again.

0:15:18.180,0:15:24.790
And last year, I believe 2020, 2022

0:15:24.810,0:15:30.070
when I did it. In April it's National Poetry Month,

0:15:30.310,0:15:35.850
and they sent by email, if you want.. sent to everybody.

0:15:36.050,0:15:47.150
They did a Poem-A-Day Challenge and gave prompts and whoever wanted could send to.. can write a poem according to the prompts, and

0:15:48.060,0:15:58.930
send it and get professional feedback from the Writing Center. So I thought I'll do it. And I wrote,

0:16:00.100,0:16:11.930
it helped me that I wrote, and I went by the prompt, which was completely, you know, a choice. You could have just written anything.

0:16:12.270,0:16:15.600
Using the prompt, I was able to write

0:16:15.620,0:16:18.790
poems and I got good feedback

0:16:18.960,0:16:20.700
on it again.

0:16:21.730,0:16:22.480

0:16:23.920,0:16:25.570
last

0:16:26.010,0:16:29.970
fall, fall of 2022,

0:16:30.200,0:16:35.460
I submitted some poem for the Sligo..

0:16:35.810,0:16:37.160

Sligo Journal.

0:16:37.360,0:16:38.920
Sligo Journal.

0:16:38.990,0:16:47.590
Which is a literary journal that Tacoma Park Silver Spring campus produces, right?
-That's right, yes.

0:16:47.870,0:16:51.780
So a student poetry contest.

0:16:51.870,0:16:59.050
-I won the first.
-Congratulations! I would love to hear this poem if you would like to read it out loud for us.

0:17:00.190,0:17:12.780
So, yeah, but I think about my creative process, as a poet, it's funny, for me to call myself a poet. But, okay, that's what others say.

0:17:12.800,0:17:23.910
It's not like he poems are bursting out of me, you know. It's not that I can't sleep at night until I write.

0:17:24.060,0:17:29.450
I only managed to write poems by using the prompts.

0:17:29.830,0:17:30.920

0:17:31.000,0:17:35.850
Some of the professors encourage me to write for.

0:17:36.070,0:17:40.870
So I'm trying to, maybe give myself a prompt and

0:17:40.910,0:17:49.150
write. So far, very limited success, but I think if I tried more times, it would probably

0:17:49.340,0:17:52.480
go better. So..

0:17:53.340,0:18:01.550
I will read the poem that won the Sligo Journal Students Poetry Contest.

0:18:02.460,0:18:04.840
And you're going to get to see my

0:18:05.140,0:18:06.780
lovely glasses.

0:18:08.300,0:18:13.200
Thank you for reading this poem. I'm very excited to hear it. What is the title of the poem?

0:18:14.810,0:18:18.540
Oh, you want me to do a screen share with you?

0:18:20.770,0:18:25.400
Maybe just hold up.. well, you have it on your screen. That's okay, just tell me the name.

0:18:26.180,0:18:31.120
Okay. The name is "The Makings of a Home."

0:18:33.050,0:18:35.540
So it has a

0:18:37.410,0:18:44.150
How do you call it? It has a little quote before I start the poem.

0:18:44.970,0:18:46.140

0:18:47.590,0:18:54.660
At the top I wrote.. There is a quote from a movie called

0:18:54.950,0:19:01.980
"Nomad Land," the 2020 Movie, and the quote is,

0:19:02.610,0:19:05.580
"I am not homeless. I am houseless."

0:19:06.690,0:19:10.420
And here is my poem, "The Makings of a Home."

0:19:19.500,0:19:23.150
Sorry. It's on my screen here.

0:19:23.170,0:19:24.560
So let's see.

0:19:28.170,0:19:28.990
Okay.

0:19:31.240,0:19:35.540
Nomads are not homeless, they are houseless.

0:19:36.400,0:19:43.320
Wandering through majestic vistas, rock formations, and ocean vastness.

0:19:43.660,0:19:57.130
Feeling the wind, caress their bodies, tasting the salt on their lips, and tethered to the soil
free like ocean mist. Nomads are not homeless, they are free.

0:19:57.570,0:20:01.250
Oh, how much I wish it could be me!

0:20:04.500,0:20:05.550
-You know what.
-That was beautiful.

0:20:05.630,0:20:09.070
I'll print it on paper.

0:20:09.440,0:20:16.510
So I can read it in one.. Now I'm trying to scroll. It doesn't work well.

0:20:16.820,0:20:21.170
I really loved the images of the ocean and the salt,

0:20:21.520,0:20:30.280
and the idea of home. Did you finish the poem, or is there more?
-No, no. I'll have to restart it. I need to print it on paper.

0:20:30.420,0:20:40.290
-Okay?
-I was trying to read it from the screen.
-That's okay. Do you want me to pause, while you do that?
-Yes, pause..
-Okay, I'll pause.

0:20:44.000,0:20:52.810
-Okay, that's my award winning form.
-Yes, I'd love to hear it.
-"The Makings of a Home."

0:20:53.160,0:21:03.780
It starts with a quote on the top, "I am not homeless. I am houseless," and it's a quote from
2020 movie

0:21:04.120,0:21:06.100
called "Nomad Land."

0:21:06.480,0:21:09.230
Recommended.

0:21:14.060,0:21:15.910
The Makings of a Home.

0:21:17.230,0:21:31.540
"Nomads are not homeless, they are houseless. Wandering through majestic vistas, rock formations, and ocean vastness. Feeling the wind caress their bodies, tasting the salt on their lips,

0:21:31.640,0:21:46.630
untethered to the soil, free like ocean mist. Nomads are not homeless, they are free. Oh, how much I wish it could be me! Immigrants have houses, but rarely do they have a home.

0:21:46.810,0:21:57.920
Their house holds only half their heart beneath it's heavy dome. Thin walls of frame and sheetrock--holding their possessions,

0:21:58.220,0:22:09.310
weighed down by what they left behind, loved ones and confessions. Immigrants have houses, yet rarely feel at home,

0:22:09.780,0:22:21.380
in form they're anchored in one place, and yet their souls still roam. My home is not of brick and mortar, it has no walls or limits.

0:22:21.530,0:22:37.040
My house is not a worthy home, without my true love in it. My home is sweet-and-sour borsch, to chase away the winter chill. My son's singing in the shower makes my soul rejoice and heal.

0:22:37.500,0:22:44.360
My home is clarity of thought, a blessing from above--my home is love."

0:22:45.800,0:22:49.030
That was so beautiful. Oh, my gosh!

0:22:49.700,0:22:51.520
And this really..

0:22:55.570,0:23:05.200
a disclaimer I made before. I think that it's possible that a lot of immigrants can identify with what I wrote.

0:23:06.210,0:23:10.590
Not all of them. Some of them feel very differently.

0:23:10.660,0:23:12.320

0:23:15.990,0:23:18.120
But I have been..

0:23:18.400,0:23:31.520
Since I moved to the U.S. in 2002, I've been a member in all kind of online forums before there were Facebook and Facebook groups and stuff, there were online forums for

0:23:32.130,0:23:37.630
Israelis abroad, or Israelis in the U.S.

0:23:39.440,0:23:40.690

0:23:42.090,0:23:51.440
And we coined a phrase.. I mean some of us have been in these forums for so long, and some of the same people

0:23:51.620,0:23:56.960
that we feel we really know each other. Some online, and I actually

0:23:57.510,0:24:07.690

visited in Boston and met a few people that I knew for years through the forum, then we met in-person, and we became friends in-person.

0:24:07.850,0:24:13.380
So we coined a phrase, "the curse of the immigrant."

0:24:16.420,0:24:20.000
So yeah "the curse of the immigrant,"

0:24:20.250,0:24:27.970
you know, if one day it would become a widespread coined term,

0:24:28.460,0:24:31.190
you know where you heard it first, here.

0:24:33.230,0:24:35.770
What we mean..

0:24:37.020,0:24:45.620
Through these groups a lot of us moved to the U.S. and stayed here and going to stay here for, you know,

0:24:47.590,0:24:49.050
forever.

0:24:49.110,0:24:55.370
But some immigrated, and then two, three, 10 years later, they

0:24:55.490,0:24:56.650
move back

0:24:56.820,0:24:58.600
to Israel.

0:24:59.190,0:24:59.850

0:25:00.340,0:25:04.310
What we mean about "the curse of the immigrant" is that

0:25:05.200,0:25:07.910
once you leave your home country,

0:25:09.500,0:25:13.430
you never will,

0:25:14.300,0:25:16.290
or feel

0:25:16.310,0:25:18.420
fully at home

0:25:19.070,0:25:20.960
in your new country.

0:25:24.140,0:25:25.980
And if you move back

0:25:27.080,0:25:29.760
to your homeland,

0:25:30.320,0:25:34.970
you will never fully feel at home

0:25:35.550,0:25:40.960
there. Not the same way you felt before you left.

0:25:44.090,0:25:45.730
And it's really,

0:25:46.910,0:25:48.750

it's true for..

0:25:50.830,0:26:02.580

It's true for all the immigrants I know in person, and I know a lot of immigrants in person. For the vast majority of people I know who came back.. went back,

0:26:05.730,0:26:11.290

there is, you know, there is this cliché, "you can't go home again."

0:26:11.360,0:26:12.000

Right?

0:26:12.210,0:26:18.280

And that's basically very close to what I'm talking about, because

0:26:18.370,0:26:20.760

once you leave your home,

0:26:21.950,0:26:33.310

what does it mean, you can go home again? Of course, physically you can go home, which, by the way.. I say it as a given, but I'm sure you're speaking to some..

0:26:33.510,0:26:36.200

I mean, you're talking to

0:26:37.950,0:26:50.130

general population of immigrants, but you also specifically spoke to refugees. Even to say that you can go home again physically, that's not always true.
-That's right.

0:26:53.170,0:26:56.350

But I'm saying, if you're like me,

0:26:56.640,0:27:00.210

the place I grew up in,

0:27:00.670,0:27:06.760

it's still there. My parents live in the same house

0:27:06.870,0:27:14.280

they lived in since the late 70s, when their current house was built.

0:27:17.190,0:27:28.750

A bunch of my classmates, You know, those kids I shared a room with, they're still there in the Kibbutz. Two out of my four brothers are in the Kibbutz.

0:27:30.340,0:27:33.690

My grandparents, until they passed, were there.

0:27:34.700,0:27:46.040

It's not the same. Once you leave and you come back, you have changed, and the place has changed.

0:27:48.930,0:27:49.810

0:27:49.860,0:28:02.700

It's not always that dramatic, you know. In my poem, it's a big dramatic, when I say "the curse of the immigrant," it could sound dramatic,

0:28:03.140,0:28:07.730

but for most immigrants, it's just a fact. I mean,

0:28:09.180,0:28:13.170

when I speak about the U.S. or about Israel,

0:28:14.210,0:28:18.670

depending on the topic, I can use

0:28:18.870,0:28:28.300

"we" and "us" when they talk about the U.S. and I can use "we" and "us" when I talk about Israel.

0:28:28.740,0:28:33.880
But many times, and again it's very specific, depending on the topic..

0:28:35.170,0:28:39.510
Many times when I speak about Israel.

0:28:40.930,0:28:45.660
I would speak about "they" and "them," not about

0:28:46.680,0:28:52.050
"we" and "us," and and when I speak about the U.S., many times I say

0:28:52.350,0:28:54.760
"Americans are like this and that."

0:28:57.150,0:28:58.360
So,

0:29:00.160,0:29:11.890
when I go for a visit in Israel, I do not say "I'm going home." A lot of my

0:29:12.980,0:29:21.250
immigrant peers say "I'm going home." I'm saying, "I'm going to Israel."

0:29:24.300,0:29:36.970
It's.. now, by the way, even though interesting thing about my identity as an immigrant, I'm actually a naturally born American citizen.

0:29:37.450,0:29:46.010
My father, which we haven't, spoke about what's very interesting and relevant to me as an immigrant.

0:29:46.060,0:29:56.770
My father was born and raised in the Bronx, New York. He is, I believe, at least third generation American.

0:29:58.610,0:30:00.330
We descended of

0:30:01.610,0:30:12.900
Ashkenazi, Jews, Eastern European Jews from Ukraine. I believe, at least his grandparents were already born in the U.S.

0:30:13.230,0:30:20.900
Yeah, his great grandparents, I think, immigrated, and his parents, I believe, were born also already in the U.S.

0:30:22.080,0:30:30.470
He immigrated to Israel when he was around 19 years old, in 1964,

0:30:32.950,0:30:36.810
and he, at a certain point, he gave up his American citizenship,

0:30:37.910,0:30:51.040
and he never cared for getting it back. But we, my brothers and I, grew.. one of my brothers ask him if he can get his American citizenship back for

0:30:51.080,0:30:52.610
all kind of reasons.

0:30:53.170,0:30:58.610
Well, of course, reasons concerning my brother wanting to move the U.S.

0:31:01.140,0:31:15.200
And my father applied, and eventually he got his American citizenship back. So that means I'm a naturally born American citizen, because I didn't have to go through a process of naturalization.

0:31:15.700,0:31:22.250

By the fact my dad was born and raised in the U.S., I'm eligible for American citizenship.

0:31:23.250,0:31:24.400

However,

0:31:26.770,0:31:38.460

I did not know until I was around 28 or 29 that I can actually get it, because my father. That's only when he became an American citizen again.

0:31:38.650,0:31:41.700

Until that point, it was not an option for me.

0:31:42.010,0:31:43.010

so,

0:31:44.680,0:31:51.410

technically I'm a naturally born American citizen, but I didn't grow up

0:31:52.170,0:31:54.760

with dual citizenship.

0:31:56.020,0:32:00.460

My father never wanted to go back to the U.S.

0:32:02.290,0:32:14.480

I also only visited the U.S. for the first time when I was 29 years old, or so. And then I immigrated when I was 32 years old.

0:32:14.590,0:32:17.120

That was in 2002, is that right?

0:32:17.230,0:32:18.060

Yeah.

0:32:18.290,0:32:23.940

Can you tell me about what led to that decision? Why you decided to make a new home here?

0:32:25.910,0:32:39.600

So, I'll just finish the thought.. is that I I am an immigrant, regardless of me being an American citizen, a naturally born American citizen.

0:32:39.670,0:32:42.120

My identity is of

0:32:42.290,0:32:43.670

an immigrant.

0:32:44.150,0:32:46.380

So,

0:32:48.500,0:32:49.770

I

0:32:50.570,0:32:53.040

did not grow up

0:32:53.320,0:33:03.230

wanting to go to America. I did not grow up wanting to leave the State of Israel,

0:33:05.100,0:33:11.590

which is not the same thing. A lot of people, want to leave the State of Israel, it doesn't mean they want to move to America.

0:33:11.800,0:33:13.190

True.

0:33:19.190,0:33:26.330

On November 4th, 1995,

0:33:28.460,0:33:32.140

I participated in a really

0:33:32.160,0:33:34.530
big peace rally

0:33:34.930,0:33:46.970
in Israel. I was a political activist, a peace activist since I was around 11 or 12 years old.

0:33:47.970,0:33:54.410
Activists for human rights, civil rights, working towards

0:33:54.560,0:33:58.010
peace, and you know,

0:33:58.240,0:34:04.720
the resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. My whole life practically.

0:34:07.100,0:34:15.430
So I was active in all this peace movement, and there was a huge peace rally on November 4th,

0:34:15.499,0:34:20.560
1995. It was organized in part by

0:34:21.020,0:34:27.950
organizations that I was a member of. I wasn't actively involved in organizing the rally, but

0:34:28.590,0:34:33.550
a lot of my close friends were some of the organizers of this rally.

0:34:34.830,0:34:35.870
And,

0:34:37.100,0:34:42.999
you know, the guest of honor was the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin,

0:34:43.820,0:34:47.550
or "Yitzhak Rabin" (American pronunciation) in America.

0:34:50.040,0:34:51.649
We called him Rabin.

0:34:54.480,0:35:06.460
And it was a huge rally. The mood was excellent. It was really exhilarating.

0:35:07.220,0:35:09.980
We felt awesome.

0:35:10.800,0:35:14.020
At the end of this rally,

0:35:16.810,0:35:21.920
a right wing, fundamentalist

0:35:23.320,0:35:25.740
Orthodox Jew,

0:35:27.480,0:35:30.910
assassinated the Prime Minister, Rabin.

0:35:34.530,0:35:37.430
It was already.. It was kind of after the

0:35:39.600,0:35:44.520
rally formally ended. People were already, kind of, leaving, and

0:35:47.780,0:35:50.840
suddenly, in some corner,

0:35:51.940,0:36:04.990
we heard a big commotion, and people screaming. So my friends and I were.. I stayed to help them cleaning up, you know, we dropped what were doing and ran towards it.

0:36:07.400,0:36:17.560
And people were screaming, "someone shot.. Someone shot Rabin and he fell to the floor."

0:36:17.810,0:36:25.410
As we were running towards it, we saw a car speeding away

0:36:25.630,0:36:32.490
.That was the car that was taking Rabin to the hospital.

0:36:32.700,0:36:34.300
So yeah, we were..

0:36:34.420,0:36:36.760
Some people were shouting, and

0:36:39.700,0:36:45.740
for a little bit, we stayed behind to still kind of cleaning up, and

0:36:48.530,0:36:52.260
it's 1,995. Imagine that pre cell phones.

0:36:53.280,0:37:05.140
-So where were there? Can you tell us where you were?
-It was called.. the place was called back then, it's right..

0:37:05.230,0:37:08.770
It's in front of the City Hall of Tel Aviv.

0:37:09.480,0:37:12.190
It was called

0:37:12.510,0:37:18.460
"Kings of Israel Square," and that's where a lot of rallies happened.

0:37:21.520,0:37:27.780
So we were there. The shouting happened. We ran.

0:37:27.950,0:37:31.810
People said someone shot Rabin, and

0:37:31.870,0:37:44.810
people who were born after, or grew up with cell phones can't understand it. We were there, and other than knowing what the people we spoke with were shouting, which was completely contradictory accounts,

0:37:45.370,0:37:47.050
we didn't know what was going on.

0:37:47.340,0:37:51.380
So we ran to a pay phone, the relic of the past,

0:37:51.390,0:37:52.440
and

0:37:53.090,0:37:59.930
I called my father 2 hours away. I told him "what's going on?" and he said,

0:38:01.550,0:38:07.930
they just, you know, post all the regular broadcasting, and that, yeah, Rabin was shot,

0:38:09.170,0:38:12.900
and they don't know if he's dead or alive.

0:38:14.080,0:38:20.690
The hospital that took him is, I don't know, half a mile from the square.

0:38:22.290,0:38:35.130
So my friends and I, we left everything and started running towards the hospital. On the way to the hospital, my friend, another friend stopped, called her mom from a pay phone, and

0:38:35.370,0:38:36.690
her mom said,

0:38:37.640,0:38:47.560
"on Sky News they say he's dead, but on the Israeli television they didn't say it yet. Okay, we hang up. We kept on running

0:38:47.680,0:38:54.190
As we were approaching, there was a huge crowd of people in front of the hospital.

0:38:54.350,0:38:58.340
As we were approaching, you kind of heard a group

0:38:59.850,0:39:01.410

0:39:02.540,0:39:07.780
crying and people screaming. We kept on running and

0:39:07.860,0:39:11.140
people there said he died.

0:39:11.450,0:39:20.750
So later on, I watched TV, and that's in the video I sent you. And hopefully you will post it, maybe together with my interview.

0:39:20.850,0:39:23.590
We learned this..

0:39:24.050,0:39:34.300
You know, massive group cry that we heard and scream was when the

0:39:35.570,0:39:41.960
Secretary of the Cabinet, walked out of the

0:39:43.090,0:39:55.560
hospital, and in read.. these expressions by now are iconic that, the Government of Israel

0:39:59.070,0:40:00.540

0:40:00.660,0:40:03.130
is shocked to announce that

0:40:03.290,0:40:05.820
Yitzhak Rabin just died."

0:40:06.730,0:40:08.020
And..

0:40:09.280,0:40:13.650
People are screaming and shouting and crying,

0:40:15.040,0:40:16.410
and a lot.. I mean,

0:40:18.300,0:40:29.650
my friends and I, we all met Rabin in person, you know, multiple times, because we we were political activists, and whatever, and

0:40:31.810,0:40:35.370
I was never a person..

0:40:36.750,0:40:42.020
I was never a big fan, or admirer of any public

0:40:42.170,0:40:52.820
figure or celebrity, or whatever. But Rabin was pretty much the closest thing I had to someone

0:40:53.050,0:40:53.820

0:40:53.830,0:40:57.510
like a political figure that I admired.

0:41:01.170,0:41:03.180
It was..

0:41:04.500,0:41:06.800
It was hard, I mean,

0:41:08.450,0:41:12.510
days after that

0:41:13.670,0:41:21.240
hundreds of people, mostly young, set at the kings of Israel Square with candles and whatever,

0:41:23.750,0:41:26.810
for a few days.

0:41:27.720,0:41:32.840
It was amazing. The number of traffic accidents

0:41:33.950,0:41:37.900
went down. The number of just, you know,

0:41:38.100,0:41:41.830
violent and property crimes went down.

0:41:45.500,0:41:52.870
It was kind of, for a few days, there was a feeling of, kind of, unity

0:41:56.090,0:42:08.630
that didn't last long. Israel is not a country that has unity. And I mean I'm not even talking
about Israelis and Arabs, or Israelis and Palestinians. I'm talking about

0:42:09.020,0:42:11.480
between the Jews in Israel.

0:42:14.660,0:42:16.400
And the thing is,

0:42:17.610,0:42:23.850
after these few days of, you know, people were somber and calm, whatever..

0:42:26.280,0:42:32.690
It is my feeling that within few weeks things not only went back to normal..

0:42:34.170,0:42:42.680
To me.. and I never looked up studies or statistics to back this up.

0:42:42.900,0:42:45.600
It feels that after that,

0:42:47.450,0:42:52.950
Israeli society became even more

0:42:52.990,0:42:54.440
aggressive

0:42:54.920,0:42:58.440
and violent than it has been before.

0:42:59.690,0:43:05.370
Now, it's hard to explain it to people who are not familiar, but actually

0:43:06.750,0:43:12.550
other than terror attacks, Israel was a country where

0:43:14.360,0:43:19.640
I, and I think a lot of people, felt actually very safe

0:43:19.770,0:43:21.730
for our person

0:43:22.000,0:43:29.860
when it comes to.. you know, there were neighborhoods you don't go into. But in general, almost everywhere in Israel I felt very

0:43:30.110,0:43:31.170

0:43:31.260,0:43:37.150
safe to walk around, and whatever when it comes to regular crime.

0:43:37.610,0:43:38.550

0:43:40.990,0:43:42.300

0:43:45.170,0:43:50.670
But, the communication between people always been quite aggressive. First of all,

0:43:51.490,0:43:56.180
we are direct people.

0:43:58.330,0:44:08.000
In Israel, you really.. you say what you have to say. You don't beat around the bush. There is no..

0:44:09.280,0:44:10.340

0:44:10.360,0:44:13.730
The expression, "Would you please.."

0:44:14.190,0:44:28.760
doesn't exist. Let's say, if I want you to pass the salt, I wouldn't say, "would you pass the salt." If I'm a polite, I would say, "please pass the salt."

0:44:30.430,0:44:36.690
Or many other occasions, were people would say just "pass the salt." Okay?

0:44:37.490,0:44:47.750
That's even in the language. "Would you please," "do you mind," blah blah blah. If I want the salt I'd say, "give me the salt," or "please give me the salt."

0:44:50.440,0:44:51.390
But..

0:44:53.410,0:44:54.670
because

0:44:56.490,0:44:59.710
life in is really stressful,

0:45:00.430,0:45:03.570
both for the

0:45:04.080,0:45:07.460
political and safety issues

0:45:07.670,0:45:15.750
with the Palestinians, but also because of economical things.

0:45:17.390,0:45:19.730
Daily life is much.

0:45:19.800,0:45:24.960
harder and stress levels are much higher.

0:45:26.020,0:45:36.480
So people are being more aggressive with each other. The fuses are much shorter. You're under pressure all the time.

0:45:36.860,0:45:42.940
So there is a better chance of you exploding if you're under so much pressure.

0:45:43.980,0:45:48.230
To me, it felt that all of this got even worse

0:45:49.260,0:45:52.750
after Rabin's assassination.

0:45:55.910,0:45:59.240
And I started feeling kind of

0:46:00.160,0:46:04.130
alienated. A few months later

0:46:05.890,0:46:19.090
there were elections. The way it works in Israel, there isn't a President and Vice President, and if something happens to the President, the Vice President is automatically the President.

0:46:20.290,0:46:27.340
Something like this happen, you have an interim government, an interim Prime Minister, and then there is elections.

0:46:28.640,0:46:30.010
So, a few months later

0:46:30.250,0:46:32.420
there were elections

0:46:34.010,0:46:47.600
and the main two contenders were the Likud Party and the Labor Party. The candidate for the Labor Party is called Shimon Peres,

0:46:47.760,0:46:54.940
or in American
Shimon Peres" (American pronunciation). No, he's not Latino, it's Peres.

0:46:54.990,0:46:59.380

0:47:03.120,0:47:06.020
And Benjamin Netanyahu, aka known Bibi..

0:47:07.290,0:47:08.600

0:47:09.430,0:47:11.430

0:47:11.470,0:47:15.900
And those of you who follow he's still the Prime Minister.

0:47:15.910,0:47:29.860
I mean, he's been Prime Minister on and off since 1995. Anyways.. why am I talking so much about those elections? Around 1-2

0:47:30.970,0:47:32.540
we went to bed

0:47:34.890,0:47:42.270
after watching all the exit polls, and it showed that Shimon Peres has a nice lead.

0:47:44.820,0:47:46.740
Still hard to talk about it.

0:47:48.090,0:47:50.910
We woke. We woke up in the morning

0:47:52.510,0:48:00.240
and found out that Netanyahu won. Once they counted tally all the votes.

0:48:00.570,0:48:02.390
So there is

0:48:03.160,0:48:04.840
an expression

0:48:05.070,0:48:09.470
"We went to sleep with Peres, and we woke up with Netanyahu."

0:48:15.060,0:48:17.980
That, emotionally,

0:48:18.140,0:48:19.380
was..

0:48:22.970,0:48:28.830
as horrendous as the murder itself, as the assassination itself.

0:48:29.960,0:48:42.030
It still takes my breath away to talk about, "we went to sleep with Peres and woke up with Netanyahu."

0:48:43.250,0:48:46.870
Because the man that assassinated Yitzhak Rabin,

0:48:48.350,0:49:02.290
this is what he wanted. He wanted Netanyahu to be the Prime Minister. So 3-4 months after the murder, there were elections

0:49:02.780,0:49:06.260
and Netanyahu won.

0:49:08.520,0:49:21.150
I thought the murderer won. I mean, the assassin got his wish. He succeeded. He wanted to change

0:49:22.250,0:49:23.660
the government

0:49:23.760,0:49:25.660

0:49:26.160,0:49:37.140
from the center to the right. The conclusion of enough people in Israel was, I guess, they agreed with him.

0:49:38.270,0:49:42.030
And that's when I..

0:49:44.230,0:49:51.270
I think many immigrants could talk about the gradual process.

0:49:54.030,0:50:01.720
I, before Rabin's assassination, I never thought of leaving Israel. It was never a plan, or a desire, or a dream.

0:50:02.860,0:50:17.610
I started feeling I am not part of it. I was living in Israel, and I felt it's me and them I didn't feel

0:50:17.690,0:50:23.270
"we" and "us" anymore, and I had..

0:50:25.010,0:50:26.250

0:50:28.760,0:50:30.130
that was in late 90s.

0:50:31.380,0:50:33.060

0:50:35.550,0:50:37.710
Fast forward a few years,

0:50:39.470,0:50:49.800
I had a friend who came to Israel from the U.S. Her father had his own business, a private business in Ann Harbor Michigan.

0:50:50.620,0:50:56.690
Her father and I became friends and kept in touch by emails.

0:50:57.710,0:51:03.580
He told me that if I ever want to come and work for him to let him know.

0:51:03.710,0:51:09.490
That was before I had an American citizenship, and I didn't know..

0:51:09.620,0:51:11.710
I couldn't get one at that point.

0:51:11.820,0:51:17.090
But he said he's going to take care of, you know, getting me working papers.

0:51:20.160,0:51:22.170
Then, actually,

0:51:22.340,0:51:34.420
my dad got his American citizenship back, and myself and my brothers got a citizenship. So, when time came, when I was.. time was right for me,

0:51:37.430,0:51:38.590

0:51:38.730,0:51:41.900
From 2001, I

0:51:47.090,0:51:53.800
I was working. I actually liked my job, but I was single.

0:51:55.540,0:51:56.610

0:51:56.740,0:52:01.430
I was almost 30.. or I was 30, living

0:52:01.840,0:52:04.760
in an apartment with a roommate, because

0:52:05.110,0:52:13.280
a full time Job with a relatively good income was not enough for me to even rent the place by myself.

0:52:14.790,0:52:17.960
Income taxes in Israel are very high.

0:52:18.610,0:52:27.380
And I didn't have a college degree. I tried a few years earlier,

0:52:27.990,0:52:32.890
as I said, hours ago when we started this interview.

0:52:33.000,0:52:34.010
And..

0:52:35.780,0:52:36.560

0:52:36.890,0:52:42.840

I really, didn't feel part of of them, and

0:52:46.100,0:52:48.380
at a certain point, I..

0:52:49.390,0:52:58.500
And I liked my job, I mean, I really think I liked my job. At a certain point, I came back from a vacation and

0:52:59.580,0:53:08.460
thinking about having to go to work the next day, I started crying, and I couldn't stop, and I called a dear friend,

0:53:09.750,0:53:11.350
and..

0:53:13.710,0:53:14.970

0:53:15.730,0:53:19.750
he gave me device that I followed.

0:53:21.370,0:53:24.190

0:53:24.430,0:53:31.530
Two advices: One, get a bicycle.

0:53:31.680,0:53:38.990
He rode a bicycle everywhere, even if he had to go a 100 miles away, okay? he's a much more active person than I am.

0:53:39.520,0:53:43.420
And second, go to India.

0:53:45.200,0:53:53.070
-Now in the U.S..
-Very interesting advice, get a bicycle and go to India. Very interesting!

0:53:53.830,0:54:04.260
Now, the "go to India" thing might sound much more revolutionary in the U.S. than in Israel. Israel is small,

0:54:04.690,0:54:19.630
and our land borders are with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, which we do have peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt, but practically you can't travel anywhere by land, okay?

0:54:20.260,0:54:21.590
You grow up,

0:54:21.620,0:54:28.970
it's stress. You graduate from high school, you go to the army, for between 2-3 years,

0:54:30.500,0:54:32.570
you finish the army,

0:54:34.440,0:54:44.630
and maybe you go.. I think the percentage is much less.. I mean, maybe you go to university, as we call it,

0:54:44.830,0:54:51.990
maybe not. But what a lot of people do is, after they finish the army, and they're on 20 to 21 years old,

0:54:52.470,0:54:58.290
They work really, really hard for a year, save money and then go on

0:54:59.450,0:55:01.050
a long trip.

0:55:01.530,0:55:09.630

It's usually either to South East Asia or to South America, because these are places that are very cheap.

0:55:10.210,0:55:19.030

So, what you can spend, you know, three weeks trip across the U.S.A., you can be six months in India.

0:55:19.540,0:55:23.830

We have a name for it. It's called "the trip after the army."

0:55:26.120,0:55:35.940

What are you doing? "I'm going for the trip after the army." Now, I was 30, and I've never done the trip after the army.

0:55:38.070,0:55:41.870

But massive numbers of young Israelis

0:55:42.640,0:55:53.500

get the backpack and go hiking for six months to a year. So it's not that crazy like it sounds in

0:55:54.020,0:56:01.560

the U.S.. I thought "what? I'm 30 and I'm going to be alone." He said, "I'll prepare you. Don't worry.." blah blah blah.

0:56:04.560,0:56:10.850

I mean, basically, I realized that..

0:56:13.100,0:56:25.080

as much as consciously, I think I liked my job, obviously something isn't working in my life, if I cry and can't stop crying, bitter, ugly cry.

0:56:26.200,0:56:28.020

0:56:28.980,0:56:34.670

So I sold everything I had, which pretty much means I sold my

0:56:37.230,0:56:38.700

scooter..

0:56:39.030,0:56:49.600

cashed out the little bit of retirement money that I managed to accumulate by age 30, which was not a lot.

0:56:51.410,0:57:01.900

And I got a ticket and I went, and I backpacked in India for three months, and in Thailand for three weeks.

0:57:03.000,0:57:12.550

And already, before I went, I decided that once I come back, I will move to the U.S.

0:57:12.990,0:57:16.250

I contacted my friend's father, he said, "come over.

0:57:16.590,0:57:19.250

The job is waiting for you."

0:57:22.210,0:57:25.190

I went. I backpacked in India.

0:57:25.970,0:57:34.180

Came back to Israel, and it was November of 2001,

0:57:35.220,0:57:38.720

and my plan was to move in the spring.

0:57:40.470,0:57:41.640

0:57:43.480,0:57:44.550

So I..

0:57:44.620,0:57:53.100

Spent this winter living with my relatives, in Petah Tikva, which is funny, that's where my grandmother

0:57:53.800,0:57:55.110

came from

0:57:55.560,0:58:01.400

to the Kibbutz 60 years ago. Actually, it's not accidental.

0:58:04.250,0:58:06.990

The people they stayed in,

0:58:07.450,0:58:14.410

my mother's cousin.. So basically they had their grandparents were all from Peta Tikva, including mine.

0:58:14.700,0:58:19.260

They just stayed there for generations, this one. Anyways..

0:58:19.490,0:58:23.870

It was the winter of 2001, 2002.

0:58:26.030,0:58:32.500

It was a very hard time in Israel when it comes to terror attacks.

0:58:32.770,0:58:38.000

There were suicide bombings on public buses weekly.

0:58:41.490,0:58:43.800

And, by the way,

0:58:45.390,0:58:50.130

a lot of Americans might think, and I think any people think so,

0:58:51.670,0:58:55.580

that people leave Israel because they're scared of the

0:58:56.660,0:58:59.660

terror attacks. That's not true.

0:59:00.910,0:59:04.160

0:59:05.070,0:59:06.240

0:59:06.290,0:59:10.380

That had nothing to do with it. I mean, you heard my story.

0:59:13.390,0:59:16.460

The terror attacks are are there.

0:59:16.910,0:59:24.390

If you're scared of them, you wouldn't even survive to adulthood, just because of mental stress.

0:59:24.680,0:59:26.260

But that was

0:59:26.710,0:59:28.200

one of the worst

0:59:29.130,0:59:33.170

times with terror attacks, weekly or more.

0:59:35.550,0:59:36.680

0:59:37.020,0:59:43.510

It was Passover holiday while I was staying there with my relatives.

0:59:43.610,0:59:54.900
and all schools are on recess for almost two weeks around that time. And usually, on Passover break,

0:59:55.200,0:59:58.690

0:59:59.080,1:00:08.800
the shopping malls are so packed you can't get in it. It's awful. But it was Passover,

1:00:09.590,1:00:25.310
you know, school holiday. A friend of mine came and we went.. We were going to go to a movie at the mall, and, interestingly, Pitah Tikva had a large number of terror attacks.

1:00:25.940,1:00:29.380
I don't know why.

1:00:31.090,1:00:37.600
Suicide bombings happen mostly on buses, and my friend and I were

1:00:38.050,1:00:42.750
traveling by public bus. I believe both of us didn't have a car.

1:00:44.440,1:00:48.860
Before leaving the house to watch a movie

1:00:50.090,1:00:51.370
at the mall,

1:00:52.950,1:01:03.880
I told my aunt, "okay, we're going to the movie, I would rather live on my feet than die on my knees."

1:01:05.560,1:01:11.070
Going to the movie.. That was going to the movies.

1:01:11.920,1:01:14.500
We went. The Mall was empty.

1:01:15.280,1:01:28.030
The cinema, where we watched the movie, my friend and I were two out of four people at the cinema.

1:01:32.680,1:01:35.070
Yup. It's..

1:01:39.470,1:01:40.580

1:01:42.410,1:01:44.790
I left because

1:01:44.810,1:01:48.590
I didn't want to live in Israel.

1:01:49.160,1:01:51.520
And again, terror attacks and none to do with it.

1:01:52.140,1:01:54.960
I felt alienated from society.

1:01:55.000,1:01:56.450

1:01:58.670,1:02:01.670
And then moved to the U.S.

1:02:02.570,1:02:05.140
First of all, I say, "never say never."

1:02:06.140,1:02:07.170

1:02:07.220,1:02:16.400

So. I can't say I am never going back to Israel, but I can say, I have absolutely no desire nor a plan to ever go back to Israel.

1:02:19.320,1:02:26.040

In this way, I'm very different than most other Israeli immigrants I know.

1:02:26.920,1:02:29.740

Because a lot of

1:02:31.230,1:02:34.700

my immigrant peers..

1:02:38.730,1:02:43.100

they left Israel because,

1:02:44.640,1:02:51.280

job opportunities and financial prospects are much better here.

1:02:51.640,1:02:58.910

And also, yeah, wanting to live a little bit less stressful and more peaceful life.

1:03:00.800,1:03:01.930

1:03:03.730,1:03:04.560

1:03:05.820,1:03:10.190

But, they left Israel because life here is better,

1:03:10.970,1:03:18.460

not because they wanted to leave Israel. I moved to the U.S. because I wanted to leave Israel.

1:03:20.450,1:03:23.520

You understand the difference?

1:03:24.530,1:03:27.890

I see what you're saying.

1:03:27.960,1:03:32.340

It sounds like what you are describing, it reminds me

1:03:33.010,1:03:34.480

of a description..

1:03:34.630,1:03:40.410

It's almost like your heart was broken after the assassination. That's what it sounds like.

1:03:41.430,1:03:44.090

Yes.

1:03:45.720,1:03:46.640

1:03:46.860,1:03:49.930

That's a good description.

1:03:51.920,1:03:54.030

There is this

1:03:57.390,1:04:03.670

famous Israeli Author, I heard him say this expression I don't know if he

1:04:03.710,1:04:08.000

came up with it or not, but that's where I heard that from

1:04:08.710,1:04:11.860
a lecture by an author called Amos Oz.

1:04:12.520,1:04:17.680
He was talking in English about Israel, and he said,

1:04:19.210,1:04:21.990
"I love her, but I don't like her."

1:04:24.860,1:04:28.200
So, that's kind of my feeling.

1:04:28.470,1:04:31.100
Although, I must say,

1:04:31.690,1:04:37.990
with things that happened in recent years, I don't.. I'm not even sure I love her anymore.

1:04:38.870,1:04:43.130
I still, let's say this,

1:04:43.390,1:04:46.000
I still care passionately.

1:04:46.490,1:04:49.140
And I mean, yeah, we

1:04:49.340,1:04:50.120

1:04:50.170,1:04:57.880
use the feminine. Many languages you have masculine and feminine for objects. We use the feminine.

1:04:57.990,1:05:01.900
I'm saying, by now I don't even think I love her.

1:05:05.090,1:05:08.150
I still definitely care deeply.

1:05:09.350,1:05:20.930
However, it is so hard that I'm in complete escapism.

1:05:21.170,1:05:24.970
And by the way, that even goes to what's going on in the U.S.

1:05:26.200,1:05:33.080
Let's say, since 2016 or so, if you know what I mean.

1:05:33.160,1:05:54.140
It's interesting that you bring that up, because, as you were describing the situation in Israel, you're describing a society that's divided in a lot of ways and different political beliefs. And you're describing terrorism. You're describing violence. Of course, as an American, I'm also thinking about those things. And you left one situation..

1:05:54.400,1:06:01.880
and of course this is not a paradise here, either. Right? So I'm curious if you've felt

1:06:02.390,1:06:06.490
any disappointment here, because we also have struggles here.

1:06:06.700,1:06:07.460

1:06:09.680,1:06:19.600
No, I don't feel disappointment. The way you said it, if I felt disappointment, because we also have struggles here.

1:06:20.210,1:06:30.260
because that would hint that I thought there are no troubles here or.. I never..

1:06:31.650,1:06:35.540
I'm a, would say, a realistic person,

1:06:37.340,1:06:40.000
and also used to be very cynical,

1:06:40.580,1:06:46.170
because literally you can't mentally survive in Israel if you're not cynical.

1:06:46.650,1:06:51.740
If you take things as they are, it's just too much.

1:06:52.320,1:06:56.840
But yeah..

1:06:57.730,1:07:12.920
I never had expectation that everything is good here, or that things are easy here, and you know, money rolls in the streets, and it grows on trees.

1:07:13.180,1:07:20.670
No. Israel is a very Americanized society, like the 51st state.

1:07:22.070,1:07:31.010
We have a quite a realistic view of the United States.

1:07:32.560,1:07:35.630
However, with all the ailments,

1:07:35.780,1:07:42.570
things have changed. I'm talking about when I came. It's still just a much better place to live.

1:07:42.890,1:07:44.810
Still..

1:07:45.040,1:07:45.960

1:07:47.740,1:07:49.030

1:07:52.260,1:07:56.930
I don't know.. things have changed. But I'm talking about 20

1:07:57.340,1:08:03.700
years ago, 22 years ago.

1:08:04.110,1:08:08.250
Still, comparing to Israel,

1:08:08.540,1:08:16.220
if you are a hard working person that has a decent job, especially if it's a married couple,

1:08:16.720,1:08:28.360
you still live better than people in Israel that are doing exactly the same. The financial situation here.

1:08:30.140,1:08:40.920
But also, still much less stressful here than in Israel. Another thing is that for me as an immigrant,

1:08:42.090,1:08:47.770
it doesn't even matter if it's much better here or not.

1:08:48.119,1:08:55.970
In Israel, my emotional attachment was so strong that I could never ignore the news.

1:08:56.060,1:09:08.340
And also it's so small that you physically can disconnect yourself. And I cared so much, I couldn't disconnect myself. When I came to the U.S.,

1:09:09.570,1:09:11.590

for quite a long time,

1:09:12.960,1:09:25.739

I was viewing things as an outsider. So, I cared less. So, you care less, it hurts less, and it disturbs you less.

1:09:26.090,1:09:30.980

What happened is, the longer I have been here,

1:09:31.070,1:09:35.170

I have become also more involved.

1:09:35.640,1:09:37.880

1:09:38.070,1:09:40.539

It started..

1:09:40.810,1:09:49.190

I left Israel, I was burnt out. As I said, I was a political activist since I was 12.

1:09:51.270,1:09:53.990

Right after Rabin's assassination,

1:09:55.450,1:10:02.580

I started working in the Israeli Knesset, the Parliament, as a parliamentary aid, literally during the rally,

1:10:03.670,1:10:15.090

I met.. I mean, a few days before the rally, I was interviewed for a job as a parliamentary assistant for a Member of the Knesset from the party I was a member of called "Meretz."

1:10:15.490,1:10:28.890

And during the rally, she told me that I got the job, and we were arranging that I will show up to work on Monday, okay?

1:10:29.710,1:10:31.800

And then,

1:10:33.310,1:10:37.120

the assassination happened and the Knesset was closed

1:10:37.590,1:10:49.370

for about a whole week. So I started working in the Knesset a week later. So a week after the assassination, I started working in the Israeli Knesset. I worked there for three years.

1:10:49.730,1:11:01.750

I was in the thick of things. And even after I stopped working in the Knesset, I still kept being active and stuff like that.

1:11:02.440,1:11:08.120

And I just, mentally, I reached my limit. I couldn't..

1:11:08.730,1:11:13.800

I didn't have the capacity to care anymore, but I also couldn't stop.

1:11:14.400,1:11:24.220

So I left. Because mentally, it was unsustainable for me. In the U.S.

1:11:25.390,1:11:37.690

I didn't care. Now, the more I lived here, you know, the more I did, as much as I tried not to you become more involved. And when Trump

1:11:37.720,1:11:39.510

ran for office,

1:11:42.120,1:11:43.700

that's when,

1:11:45.110,1:11:50.010

I guess not only for me, for many people, things started..

1:11:51.490,1:11:59.820

I started seeing the United States really differently, in a much more negative light.

1:12:02.390,1:12:10.510

And right after.. at that point, we lived in Montgomery County. My son was going to middle school in Gaithersburg.

1:12:12.590,1:12:14.560

Reach view,

1:12:14.570,1:12:16.510

you know, a good place.

1:12:18.010,1:12:31.960

It was 2016, he was in the 7th grader. Myself, I mean, my husband is not Jewish, and I'm atheist, secular, not religious at all.

1:12:33.140,1:12:46.930

I kind of celebrate some holidays in a very watered down version. But at that point we don't go to synagogue, we don't go to temple, or anything.

1:12:46.960,1:12:48.400

1:12:50.620,1:12:54.730

My son had a necklace

1:12:55.380,1:12:59.100

with "Magen David," the star of David,

1:13:00.320,1:13:14.880

and he was wearing it, and he was always even.. and again, even though really we barely practice any Judaism at home, but it's more like an Israeli identity, than Jewish.

1:13:15.010,1:13:20.080

He would wear it on top.. he would pull it out that it's on top of his shirt.

1:13:21.490,1:13:27.360

After the 2016 elections, immediately in November of 2016,

1:13:28.660,1:13:35.830

there were a bunch of anti-Semite incidents in Gaithersburg.

1:13:36.660,1:13:48.620

Like swastikas that were painted on Synagogues or in the stadium of Queens Orchard High School,

1:13:48.790,1:13:52.660

which is the high school my son would have went to if we stayed in.

1:13:53.270,1:13:58.370

And I had to talk to my 7th grader son

1:14:00.910,1:14:03.040

to tell him

1:14:03.300,1:14:09.950

what to do if something happens. What to do if someone verbally

1:14:10.680,1:14:12.520

bothered him.

1:14:12.760,1:14:17.090

What to do if someone tries to, physically,

1:14:17.100,1:14:18.740

assault him.

1:14:21.510,1:14:22.690

1:14:24.980,1:14:35.660
I mean, for me it's.. yeah, I live in the United States of America in Montgomery County,

1:14:35.780,1:14:36.790

1:14:38.180,1:14:44.130
a very high percentage of of Jews... Jewish population in Montgomery County.

1:14:44.210,1:14:45.000

1:14:45.610,1:14:50.630
With hundreds, if not thousands, of Israelis live in Montgomery County.

1:14:51.000,1:15:02.210
And I have to talk to my son about what to do if someone is attacking him because he's Jewish.

1:15:05.140,1:15:07.730
That does not sit well with me.

1:15:09.710,1:15:19.390
To be honest, though, talking about what's going on in the U.S. and Donald Trump and what happened since,

1:15:19.870,1:15:24.590
this is literally something I cannot talk to you about. I mean,

1:15:24.730,1:15:36.910
I spoke about Rabin's assassination. I spoke about the elections when we went to sleep with Peres and woke up with Netanyahu, and these are things that are emotionally

1:15:37.700,1:15:43.160
hard to talk about, but I did.

1:15:43.840,1:15:46.730
But, what's going.. How..

1:15:47.180,1:15:54.310
You know, talk in details about how I feel about what's going on in the U.S. since Trump's election,

1:15:55.550,1:15:58.350
I cannot bring myself to do it.

1:15:59.960,1:16:01.230
I do..

1:16:01.530,1:16:12.580
If you don't mind, I don't have a lot of time left. I have to interview someone else later. But I do want to ask you a question that I think would be maybe a good way to conclude.

1:16:14.060,1:16:26.510
And I want to say thank you for talking about these really difficult subjects with such eloquence and insight. It's really powerful the way you share your experience, and I know this isn't easy to talk about.

1:16:26.750,1:16:30.260
In your poem, you talked about the concept of home.

1:16:30.520,1:16:39.610
Do you feel at home now? You have a family here, you're raising a son here. Tell me about how you are feeling now about home and about family.

1:16:39.980,1:16:41.070

1:16:41.640,1:16:49.040
So, this poem is literally.. This is what I feel.

1:16:49.380,1:17:02.120

I have a beautiful house in Myersville, Maryland. I have a view of the Appalachian Mountains from my front window.

1:17:03.130,1:17:10.530

I have mountain views from both sides. The house is beautiful. The neighborhood is beautiful.

1:17:11.380,1:17:12.360

But..

1:17:15.830,1:17:19.500

Myersville is not home.

1:17:20.870,1:17:26.400

My beautiful house is not a home.

1:17:27.240,1:17:30.560

The U.S is not home, and Israel is not home.

1:17:31.540,1:17:32.750

I have a home.

1:17:33.530,1:17:36.650

My home is with my husband.

1:17:37.300,1:17:42.150

And currently with my son, but when my son goes to call it still..

1:17:44.100,1:17:46.010

So..

1:17:47.540,1:17:49.710

I'm saying it's..

1:17:50.780,1:17:56.200

yeah, I guess, maybe that would be a good way to conclude. This is literally it.

1:17:56.510,1:17:57.420

1:17:59.150,1:18:05.740

"My home is not of brick and mortar, it has no walls or limits.

1:18:06.180,1:18:21.030

My house is not a worthy home without my true love in it. My home is sweet-and-sour borsch, to chase away the winter chill. My son's singing in the shower makes my soul rejoice and heal.

1:18:21.430,1:18:27.530

My home is clarity of thought, a blessing from above--my home is love."

1:18:29.000,1:18:35.460

Same home. My son is clapping. Do you want to show your face? here..

1:18:36.220,1:18:37.690

This side.

1:18:40.100,1:18:41.610

Yes, I..

1:18:41.640,1:18:42.510

Hello!

1:18:42.690,1:18:49.700

My home is not a geographical location. Home is

1:18:51.770,1:18:55.350

emotional and like mental

1:18:56.280,1:19:06.550

concept. And yes, a lot of people do feel at home in a place or a structure. I don't.

1:19:06.840,1:19:14.430

My home is my people, and it's two people, my husband and my son.

1:19:17.460,1:19:18.170

1:19:18.240,1:19:19.720

I wish,

1:19:20.530,1:19:31.800

you know, I really, I do wish that I could feel at home somewhere. It hasn't happened yet. Maybe it will never happen.

1:19:31.840,1:19:36.540

But it is what it is, you know. So, yes.

1:19:36.700,1:19:52.420

Thank you so much for speaking with so much courage today about really tough topics. Reading your poetry today and sharing your story has meant so much to me. I know it's going to mean a lot to a lot of other people, too, so I'm going to stop the recording now and then we'll

1:19:52.430,1:19:57.780

wrap up. Thank you so much, and it's so lovely to meet your son. Do you want to tell me his name?

1:19:58.320,1:19:59.460

Introduce yourself.

1:20:00.520,1:20:01.520

Larry.

1:20:01.860,1:20:10.380

So nice to meet you. I'm glad you came in at the end. It was a lovely way to end our our sessions today. Let me press stop right now.