

parents actually got married in '45, shortly after my mother found out that these people had been killed and my father found out these people had been killed. They were two Polish Jews in Los Angeles and they met. I know therefore that they look—there's this thing in Jewish culture—toward the "kinder" for your "nachus" in life. So I think it's like in the sense that their happiness is dependent on how well you do, so then of course you get back to this issue of anything you do is affecting them. If you decide you don't want to go to college, my God! Then why did they spend all of these years working so hard? So they've really got you nailed into this relationship, and again I think it causes a lot of pressure. A lot of nervousness. It did for me.

Interviewer: What led each of you to become involved with other children of survivors—to get together? Was there something that was going on in your life that made you want to connect with other children, especially if you didn't grow up with them?

Sarah: I saw an ad in the *Jewish Bulletin*—how many years ago? About seven years ago. And I just read it and I said, "Oh! They want me!" And I just called up that second. I just didn't think. . . . It wasn't, is it going to be hard? Because I had known so many children of survivors always, so I knew that they were just like other people. I mean, we had never scratched the surface; they were just playmates, but I knew that they had grown up somehow similarly. I must say, in a way, I saw them as being happier than I was, but they might have seen me as being happier than they were. Because my parents would talk about their parents sometimes and how weird they were because of the war, so certainly the reverse could have been true. So when I saw that ad, it was—they were calling me.

Roslyn: I never felt like a child of a survivor. It wasn't defined until ten years ago. But I did feel comfortable sharing experiences with other children of survivors—not all, but some who had the same experiences I had. And the more I learned about myself, I found that we had a lot of similar experiences and feelings, in being angry. I felt a lot of anger toward my parents—and I could discuss some of the same issues openly and they understood what I was talking about.

Jodi: For me it really took quite a long time. I remember I was about 20 and a cousin of mine gave me the book *Children of the Holocaust*. I was in a hospital at the time and I was trying to read this thing. . . . I read about 50 pages and I really couldn't understand why people were so emotional about it. Part of that had to do with the fact that my family was sort of unemotional about it. And a couple of years later I remember talking to some woman at a party and she was also a child of survivors, and I said, "You know, I can't understand all these feelings." Like in this one part it said that this person couldn't even speak

about what had happened during the war, and she said, "Yeah, I can't really talk about it either." And I just—it didn't really quite strike me. And then for a long time. . . . I was really trying to get away from it all. I was really trying to deal with my issues in life and trying to sort of fit into the mainstream and really didn't want to have any strong association with people who were from my same background. I figured, well, I just want to shovel that aside. As I got to know myself better I felt, this is something I really am staying away from and I'm really avoiding it. So I read that book again, and could relate to it a lot more. I knew because it had affected me in so many ways, and my relationship with my parents. I also live 2,000 miles away from my folks, and really don't communicate with them all that well. I have a real resistance to it. I share some of that anger that you spoke of. I finally came around to wanting to go to one of these meetings, and when I finally did, I kind of had that sudden realization. I really resisted going. I really didn't want to go. I felt like I was taking an unsteady medicine, but I was going to take it and experience it and see. When I went, I really was taken aback by how much people could relate about all these different topics.

Nina: That's interesting, because I was actually in therapy at the time that I got involved in this whole thing, and my therapist kept commenting, "Boy, you really sound like the child of a Holocaust survivor" and I kept saying to her, "God, you're really off base. You don't understand. My parents aren't even religious and my dad wasn't even in a camp. It's no biggie and you just don't get it." I really thought that she was off base. She said, "Well, I think you ought to try to see if there are any issues there." So I went, "Okay, I'll do that," and I went to something called the "Shabbaton," which is a weekend designed for people who are children of Holocaust survivors to talk about that. And it was really weird 'cause it was kind of like coming home. And all during the meeting—it was all weekend long, it was very intense—I kept relating these things that had a great deal in common with what everybody else was saying and I kept saying to everyone, "But I'm really an imposter because I don't really belong here." Since then I've joined a group, an ongoing support group, and I still feel that way. I feel like an imposter now, except that I know that being a part of the group has been an incredible experience for me, and it was really like coming home. It was amazing to me how many things I shared with other people and I, for the first time in my life, can understand some of my conflicts without hating myself for them. And it's been a real amazing thing. And a real contribution to me.

Miriam: For so long in a way I also was being an imposter. . . . In my relationships with men, I felt very stereotyped. I had a boyfriend