

Quiet hero

People



Adel Torres Professor: De Palo December 8, 2012 Quiet Hero's Crisis Intervention & Trauma Treatment 3: 30pm - 5: 20pm Quiet Hero: Secrets from my Father's Past, written by Rita Cosby, is a story of war, a story of courage, and a story of a daughter finally getting to know her father. In this book, Rita speaks about her father's childhood as well as her own; the difficulties she faced growing up with a strict father whom she felt she barely knew. Rita grew up in Greenwich Connecticut, with her Danish mother and her Polish father; a father she had a distant and unemotional relationship with.

Growing up Rita knew very little about her father. She only knew that he had left Poland after WWII. When Rita was about eight years old, she saw that her father had scars on his back. When she built up the courage to ask what happened, her mother expressed to her that those were not questions she should be asking. Rita learned never to ask questions of her father's past. When Rita was a teenager her father left her and her mother to start a new life. She had not spoken to her father in years. Rita began to discover who her father was years after her mother's passing.

In 2008, when she finally got the courage to look through her mother's belongings, she came across a tattered, old suitcase. In the suitcase Rita found a worn Polish-resistance armband, a rusted tag with a prisoner number, and an identity card from ex-POW named Ryszard Kossobudzki. After doing research on what she had found, she contacted her father and was ready to hear the truth of the life he had lived. Having her father see the items in the suitcase instantly brought back many memories for her father which were visible in his eyes.

At the age of eighty- four he was finally giving Rita what she longed for, an opportunity to know who Richard Cosby or better yet who Ruzard Kossobudzki was. Little by little Rita's father began to disclose his life story and all the horrors he witnessed and endured while growing up. Rita's father spoke of the last time he saw hisfamilyand of the last words that his mother said to him. He also spoke of a chain that his mother gave him because she believed it would protect him. Ironically enough, that chain would end up saving his life from a bullet.

He left his family to join the Resistance during the Warsaw uprising, to fight for his country. The first time he fought for Poland was on August 1, 1944. Before joining the Resistance, Rita's father was involved in the Young Eagles. At this camp young boys were taught to fight and survive combat. Mr. Cosby was about 10 to 13 years old when he was a part of the Young Eagles. This is where Mr. Cosby met an important man and mentor in his life; Lieutenant Stan. At the age of thirteen he had seen his hometown destroyed by the Germans.

After being nearly fatally wounded by shrapnel, he was taken into captivity by the Germans and sent to a German POW camp near Dresden. This happened after he spent some time in a hospital. Once the rest of Poland was occupied, he was placed on a train and sent on his way to the German Camp. He was so injured that there was nothing he could do. After spending months in the camp and weighing in at about 90 pounds, he and a few prisoners decided to escape after planes started to drop bombs around the camp. The Germans were being attacked. Rita's father and some prisoners thought this was the best time to escape.

They escaped from the camp through the sewers. After a difficult journey they ended up near a camp that was set up by American Troops and they were rescued. When he arrived in America he met Rita's mother and began a new life. These events happened to him while he was still in his teenage years. After hearing her father's story Rita felt closer to her father. She came to understand the man she grew up with and understood his characteristics. Rita was able to arrange for her father to visit Poland and the camp where he was held prisoner. Through her journey with her father, Rita discovered that her father was a true hero.

This book touched me profoundly. I grew up without my father and met him when I was 20 years old. Meeting him was very challenging for me because I was consumed with so much anger and I blamed him for not being there for me. In reading this book I am able to realize that we do not always get to choose the path we walk down and sometimes life's circumstances shape the people we become, for better or worse. This book has made me want to give my own father a chance to explain to me what his life has been like, so that I might have a better understanding of who he is.

As I continue my journey through school, I am better able to assess individuals and situations and have a level of empathy without being judgmental. As children we often feel like we know who our parents are but there are so many unanswered questions and hidden lives that it makes it difficult for children to relate to their parents. Each of our paths has impacted us in both negative or positive ways and being able to understand that this affects the decisions that we make can make unpleasant situations a bit easier to digest.

Seeing how Rita felt closer to her father as an adult once she got to know him, makes me feel like there is still hope for my father and I. If Rita's father would have received help for the trauma he had gone through I believe he could have been a better father to Rita while she was growing up. Untreated trauma can affect a family on so many levels and negatively affect relationships with children, caregivers, partners, etc. , which in turn continues the cycle of trauma. If there is anything I take away the most from this text, it would be not to judge a book by its cover; one can never know the life that a person has lived.