

Imagine footage of
him as a young boy



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Imagine being stripped from everything you have ever had, including your identity.

Michael Bornstein lived in Nazi concentration camps for seven months which is very surprising because most children would only last two weeks there. Facing many obstacles at the concentration camp Michael Bornstein had to overcome the fact that his father and brother were murdered at Auschwitz. One day as Michael Bornstein was watching a film about the Holocaust - The Chosen - he noticed there was footage of him as a young boy at a Nazi concentration camp. Baffled and overwhelmed at this footage, he called the director of the movie, asking where this footage came from and how he managed to get a hold of it. Michael Bornstein then bought a video camera and went to the theater to capture and keep those moments recorded forever.

To the Jews' advantage, Michael Bornstein's father was president of the union rod, which worked with the Nazi Germans. When Michael Bornstein's father found out what was going on he tried to help and save as many Jewish people as he could, from sneaking them underground to bribing the guards. Being very sick, Michael Bornstein and his grandmother snuck into an infirmary, during a death march to avoid the fate of young, sick Michael Bornstein. It is so mind-blowing to think that such little decisions were the fate of their lives.

Living through the liberations, you would think the psychological effects would be depression or trauma, but it was in fact just the opposite. Michael Bornstein became a better person and a better parent for his children. He created a positive life because of his optimism and joy. Michael Bornstein

became very protective of his children and grandchildren, for obvious reasons. Michael Bornstein wanted to protect them, and he did not want them to know about the horrors and experiences of Auschwitz and the concentration camp that he went through. Realizing that what Michael Bornstein experienced was such an important piece in history, his daughter pushed for him to tell his story. One thing that really made me stop and think was “ It takes about sixty minutes to adjust and to accept that everything has just been stolen from you, even your name.

” (Survivors Club: The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz.)

Imagine having everything stripped and taken from you in an instant, including your name. Your name is now a number and that is how you will be identified by. Just like that, you are stripped from your individuality and any thing that makes you, you. Gone. Post liberation was a time when everyone in the family had to look out for each other. You could not afford to dwell on what had happened to you, optimism was a major factor. Positivity was the key.

In 2001 Michael Bornstein visited Auschwitz, upon visitation memories came flooding back and anticipation was the biggest thing. Michael Bornstein used the quote his grandmother would tell him in German, which translates to “ this too shall pass” when he would feel down or anything other than optimistic. Optimism was a major factor for Michael Bornstein’s outlook on life. After realizing people had it worse with no families, Michael Bornstein began to be more accepting and open towards other people. It’s important for people to be considerate of other minorities and other people of unfamiliar backgrounds to us. Listening to the podcast, I realize it’s a very

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good example to remind the world what can happen when bigotry goes unchecked.