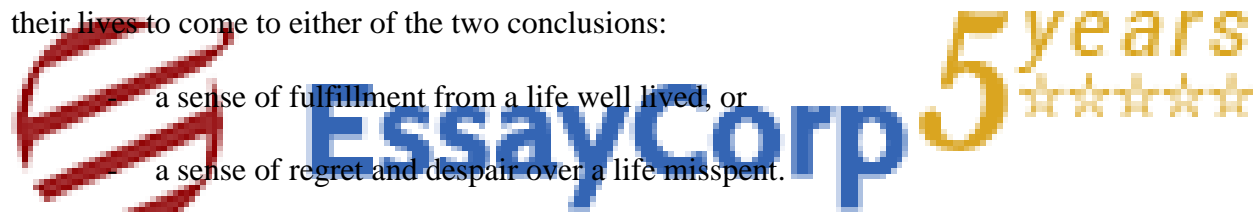


*Never Forget to Lie* consists of documentary filmmaker Marian Marzynski and several other Jews who have survived the infamous holocaust of the early 40s in Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany. These survivors return to the ghettos of their childhood in Warsaw, and recollect their memories of the "wartime hide and seek" where their lives got upended by their experiences during the war. The documentary showcases the harrowing past of the survivors, while exploring their conflicting feelings about national, cultural, and religious identity. The holocaust survivors in *Never Forget to Lie* demonstrated the characteristics of Erikson's Ego Integrity versus Despair Stage.

Integrity versus Despair is the final stage in the eight stages of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. During this stage, the individuals tackle the problems of morality; reflect back on their lives to come to either of the two conclusions:



a sense of fulfillment from a life well lived, or  
a sense of regret and despair over a life misspent.

The documentary exhibits a blend of both the outcomes among the holocaust survivors. For instance, an unidentified woman, who had been in the closet for over 50 years about surviving the holocaust, had only recently "come out of the closet" as it had only been a couple of years that she had started becoming "a "little freer of the fear". After being haunted by the war memories for half a century, she had felt a sense of liberation and had finally attained the ability to articulate her plight.

Couple Ed Herman and Halina Kramarz, who return to Poland for the first time after the war, are ideal instances for this case as they exhibit both the polar sides of the coin. Ed, who was forced to cross the mountains on the Polish-Slovak border at the age of 10, undergoes an utter sense of despair. He breaks down while recounting his experiences as a homeless child, where he was in

foreign territory without having knowledge of the language or another human being. He felt that he “had nothing”. He feels bitterness and despair, and is a party to the negative resolution to Erikson’s final stage. His wife, on the contrary, was “excited” to be back in her hometown. Despite facing equal trauma as other holocaust survivors, she was thrilled when she was acquainted with the good memories from her childhood. Returning back to Poland had not stirred negative emotions in her, but had, in contrast, made her feel not like an “orphan” and be connected to her “roots”. Halina has successfully completed the Integrity versus Despair stage, where she is left with a general feeling of satisfaction with fewer regrets.

Marian Marzynski himself is an instance who displays signs of development of ego integrity. Even though he considers his childhood his “psyche’s unfinished business”, he refers to this opportunity as the holocaust survivors’ time to speak about it. He repeatedly questions whether the need to return to such a past is a form of “self-inflicted pain”, but yet, however, turns the camera onto himself to liberate himself from it. He claims to have known the location of the forests his father had escaped to from the Nazis, but never had the “strength to enter” it. However, he found fortitude to do so by the end of the documentary. Additionally, Marzynski displayed the watch his father had given him, something he had done never done after the war. He feels gratitude towards his parents for saving his life, and writes a letter to his father where he accounts his achievements and accounts for the things in his life his father would have appreciated. Marzynski seems to have attained wisdom and looks back at his life with a sense of contentment, and has successfully treaded onto the positive path of Erikson’s Ego Integrity versus Despair. Most importantly, he has a feeling of being able to “go home” as he departs from the ghettos, a feeling quite distinct from his escapes during his childhood.

Thus, the holocaust survivors in *Never Forget to Lie* are poignant instances of Erikson's Ego Integrity versus Despair Stage. Being in late adulthood, most of them have resolved the crisis they have undergone to develop ego integrity, and have accepted death as an unavoidable reality. A few, however, have taken the arduous negative resolution of this stage, such as Ed Herman. Upon their return to Poland to visit the fragments of their childhood, all the survivors either experience an utter sense of despair for the lives they have lost and the struggles they have endured; or exhibit a sense of accomplishment and express gratitude to have been among the few to have survived the holocaust.

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