

**High School Essay
First Place**

In Remembrance There Is Only Kindness

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Testimony of Ludmila Page

For three days and two nights, the women were hungry and thirsty inside crowded cattle cars. They could see the countryside from a small window, yet remained unaware of where they were heading. They arrived at the station and were greeted by towering chimneys. One of the women cried, "My God, they brought us here. Now they are going to gas us!" But Ludmila Page was quick to say, "They wouldn't have to take us for three days and two nights, they could have done the job in Auschwitz. We are going to Schindler, you'll see."

I have read books and seen movies of the Holocaust, but I had never heard a survivor tell their own story. Before I watched Ludmila Page's testimony, I pondered, "How can I save a memory?" I thought of books that will tell stories; movies that will reenact memories; paintings that will portray scenes. But what use are those things if people today no longer want to be reminded about infants thrown in the furnace, women gassed inside chambers or men forced to dig their own graves?

Does saving a memory necessarily mean we immerse ourselves with the horrible images of our past? Or could it be as simple as performing an act of kindness every day?

Listening to Ludmila Page, I felt transported back in time. I heard fear in her voice; yet she remained optimistic. It was her optimism that moved me to do something I have never done before.

On January 14, 2008, I called 411 and inquired if a Ludmila Page lived in Beverly Hills. The operator acknowledged one did and gave me her phone number. Two scenarios loomed: I will find her or I will not find her. I prayed repeatedly that the latter was not going to happen. Then, a miracle— I was talking to Mrs. Ludmila Page.

Our conversation was not long. I told her I was participating in Chapman's Holocaust Art and Writing Contest. She suggested I write to her and promised to answer all my questions. I immediately began composing my letter. Three days later, I realized I had only one question: How do you want me to keep your memories alive?

Twelve days after I mailed the letter, Mila answered, "... all of us should be tolerant and understanding of others regardless of our differences... tolerance and understanding are the best way of remembering, so that the tragic experiences of our lives will never happen again."

At the beginning of this assignment, I wanted to win in order to meet my survivor. But hearing Mila's voice transformed an assignment into a journey no words could describe. Elated and excited lost their meanings—what I felt was far stronger.

I have won. This experience is the prize I will carry the rest of my life. A prize that will be a constant reminder of what Mila's late husband Leopold said...

"It is so much easier to love than to hate."