

Shame and Guilt Healed Through Story: A Personal Testimony

by Dvora Shurman

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TEL AVIV, Israel -- I am a storyteller. Writing and telling stories of my life have brought me to understanding, healing and reconciliation with the past. Born in 1925, I was a many-faceted child: of history and society, of Depression times, of the silent world of my deaf parents, and of Jewish immigrants to the United States.

My deaf mother was treated as a child by her family and society, which considered deaf people as retarded, unable to think or function on their own. Mother's older sister, who wanted to blend in and not be regarded as an immigrant felt her deaf younger sibling was a burden. So she passed her burden onto me, telling me, "You are not like your cousins, your friends. You are the child of grownups who can't take care of themselves, or you. You are a shame."

When I was four, my aunt burdened me with total responsibility for my parents and the baby that would soon be born: "Your mother is growing a baby in her stomach. Your mother lived with us when you **[SNIP – End of preview.]**