



Dr. Tom Schwarz

Volunteer Workshop Leader

I was born in Paris in February 1947 – the child of Holocaust survivors Eva and Oscar Schwarz – where they were at that time stateless people awaiting for papers that would allow them to flee the horrors they had just experienced in Europe. I arrived in Australia/Sydney in late 1947 – and I have a sister Miriam (Suzanne) some eight years younger than me - born in Bondi Sydney.

My father (Oscar) had been forced to serve in, and escaped from – several forced labour camps around Hungary – where he endured much privations - little food, working at manual labour in European mountains during winter with summer clothing, little medical care or medicines. During this period he later found out his father had been taken from his home and shot for the crime of being Jewish. His mother and sister were deported to Concentration camps where they perished - he never heard from them again.

My mother (Eva) together with her sister and mother were survivors of Auschwitz. Her father perished in the camps. Together my parents rebuilt a life in Australia from scratch – with no language, assets or training – so my formative framework was that life is hard, you need to be resilient and self-sufficient – survival is the key imperative.

My parents worked hard at various small businesses – I was able to go to University (Ph.D in Chemistry) - then I moved onto various careers - in Science/academia-industry and then IT (yes I was 'bitten' by the computer bug early ..) – & now I work as a professional Facilitator/transformation agent and trainer - working globally.

I have had the good fortune to live in China/Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong, and work in many parts of the Asia Pacific region for over 30 years – and experience the full meaning of diversity, cultural frameworks, stereotyping and discrimination. I have three children (Simon, Lisa and Ben) all born and living in Sydney - and currently six grandchildren.

My work with Courage to Care is a legacy to my parents – and allows me to transform the truly appalling experience and story that is the Holocaust into a forward looking opportunity for positive change – contributing to a world that I'd like my grandchildren and their children's children to live in.