

Seeking - MarkSchonwetter.mp3

Intro [00:00:03] Seeking The extraordinary is sponsored by the Colony Group, a national wealth and business management company that seeks the extraordinary by pursuing an unrelenting mission of providing clients with peace of mind and empowering their visions of tomorrow. To learn more about how the Colony Group manages Beyond money, visit the Colony Group com.

Michael Nathanson [00:00:29] Welcome fellow seekers of the extraordinary. Welcome to our shared quest. A quest not for a thing, but for an idea, a quest not for a place, but into deep, inner, unexplored regions of ourselves. A quest to understand how we can achieve our fullest potential by learning from others who have done or are doing exactly that. Extraordinary stories of overcoming anguish. Every single one of them had lost somebody.

Intro [00:00:58] From their family. I will never give.

Michael Nathanson [00:01:00] Up on trying to lessen that conflict to people who have stood up to challenges with true courage.

Intro [00:01:06] Do something in life. If you have a passion for something that you.

Intro [00:01:09] Enjoy and you find fulfilling, that's where you'll have the greatest success.

Michael Nathanson [00:01:13] Stories that will enlighten and inspire.

Intro [00:01:16] What I said to them is absolutely a cliché, but the journey is more important than the end result.

Michael Nathanson [00:01:22] May we always have the courage and wisdom to learn from those who have something to teach? Join me now in seeking the extraordinary. I am Michael Makinson, your chief seeker of The Extraordinary. At the outset, let me say that today's show will be difficult for some of us to listen to. Our guest, like every guest on this show, is, of course, extraordinary. But his story is especially hard to hear. Hard but important and highly inspirational. Our guest is a Holocaust survivor and he's here to tell us his own story of a time of horrors that millions of others did not survive. He's also here to offer us lessons that he is uniquely qualified to teach us. Our guest was born in Poland to farm owners Israel and Salah. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, our guest was a young boy living happily with his younger sister, Sasha, on the farm his parents owned. Then the Gestapo came and forced them to find someplace else to live. Israel, being the head of the Jewish community, was regularly taken to the police station and questioned about the Jews and community. One night in 1942, he did not come home, and that night changed their lives forever. Knowing that the Gestapo would come for them. Next, our guest, his mother and his sister, escaped their hometown and walked 15 miles in the middle of the night to a ghetto where they thought they would be safer. After spending three months there, they escaped with the help of a friend. For the next three years. Our guest, his mother and his sister, survived the Holocaust by hiding in attics, barns, holes and even the ground below. A pigsty of kind polish people during the winters and in a forest during the warmer weather months. During the fall of 1944, they knew that they would no longer be safe hiding in the forest because the war was raging in that part of the country. The war front was getting closer and it was too dangerous with the artillery and all the fighting. They ended up joining other Polish people that were escaping the front lines and took on false identities to live as refugees for about five months until they were

liberated by the Russian army in February of 1945. After the war. Our guest, along with his mother and sister, stayed in Poland and lived under communist rule until 1957, when they had an opportunity to leave and emigrate to Israel. But making a living in Israel was difficult. So after four years, our guest reached out to his family in America to be sponsored to come to the United States, not knowing a single word of English and having only \$5 in his pocket, he boarded a ship and made his way across the ocean to start a new life. He found work at a jewelry factory sweeping floors, working hard. He went to school to learn English and started to learn the trade of the company. Within five years, he became a factory manager, and in 1971, our guest was able to purchase a wedding ring manufacturing company of his own. Over the next 40 years, Our guest grew that company, Lieber Farber Inc, into a successful nationally branded wedding ring and bridal band company. Now in retirement. Our guest dedicates his time to speaking with students and adults about his life's journey. He says that though he is small in stature, his huge smile and love for life shines through. Married to his wife Luba, for over 55 years and with \$2, two daughters and an Isabella. He says he has lived the American dream. His daughters have traveled to schools with their father to speak to students about his life as a child during the Holocaust. In their years of traveling and speaking with teachers. They realized there was a lack of funds available to schools to implement proper Holocaust education. So they founded the Mark Sean Wetter Holocaust Education Foundation, whose mission is to expand and support Holocaust education for students around the country and to provide funds necessary for educators to implement Holocaust curricula into their lesson plans. As of January 2023, they have reached almost 77,000 students across 28 states. The Marc Sean Witter Holocaust Education Foundation has been featured on today on NBC, as well as ABC seven, New York, WCBS 880 Radio and News 12 New Jersey, along with several other media outlets. The foundation's vision is to inspire students to create a world where all people are treated equally and with kindness and respect. Please welcome the extraordinary mark Sean Wetter. Welcome, Mark.

Mark Schonwetter [00:06:39] Thank you so much. I really appreciated your introduction.

Michael Nathanson [00:06:44] Well, I have to admit, I feel emotion when I when I read, I read your daughter's book. Every time I think about your story, it's just it's very emotional for me. It's an honor to have you. And I usually like to start these interviews by giving my guests a chance to fill in the blanks around the biographical information that I offer at the beginning of the show. Now, in your case, I relied heavily on the information offered by your foundation. And I have to say that I felt uncomfortable veering too much from what I read there because I want to make sure that I get everything right. We're going to get into more of the details around your struggle surviving the Holocaust. But why don't we start with you telling us more about yourself in whatever form makes sense? What did I miss?

Mark Schonwetter [00:07:33] Well, I don't think you'll miss the lack. Maybe some details. How we survived during this period of time. I understand that. But otherwise I would really appreciate your saying whatever you said was great. Now as far as. My survival. Some more details in reference to my survival. Why are there works like. I think was the easy part of our life, but especially at the time, you had to be very careful. You'll have to obey by the rules and regulations which my mom put on us because we survived. Thanks. I went mad. He and I always say that she's probably the greatest woman in the world because a fuel. Think that the Wal-Mart would do all small kids hiding day and night. As in my dad. This was a summer. I guess this was the winter as spring or a fall. You have to always hide. Be careful. Every move that you made was a move that made that decision. Are you going to live? Are you going to be called by the Germans and yell.

Michael Nathanson [00:09:14] I'm going to give you an opportunity. I'm going to walk you through your story. Just that I took from from from N's. Great book. Before I do that, I want to ask you one initial question, which which is is simply that in the book you are not referred to as Mark. You referred to as monarch. So I just want to make sure that I understand is is Mark an Americanized version of your real name?

Mark Schonwetter [00:09:39] My my original name actually was, of course, being ... Joe Joy at a Jewish name. Mm hmm. But then the minute the war started and we start hiding, my mom changed my name.

Mark Schonwetter [00:09:58] I.

Mark Schonwetter [00:09:59] To my neck, which was kind of our name. And she took her because she called me and that they need MODERATOR Polish name Maria. But they were became like they're easier than better to say man it. And then when I came to the United States I was called Maria and Paul and later on like it. In everyday life. I was called the Marriott. However, when I get it, the United States by and. Tells me you have to change their name because Marian is a woman's name. I didn't know the difference. So she says you're going to be back at Globe C now managed by Maria and it's that in the beginning and that's why they kicked me out.

Michael Nathanson [00:10:54] Thank you. So let's get into your very important story, and let's start with your memory of life before the Germans invaded Poland. And maybe speak a little bit more about you mentioned your mother already, but maybe speak a little bit more about your mother, your father and your sister.

Mark Schonwetter [00:11:14] Well, and what I remember. Because after all, I was only five years old. Well, less old the way they were started it. So there are not many things actually, that I do remember. Unfortunately, there. But I do remember, for example, that I used to be all the time close to my father. He used to work in the fields. I used to always walk behind that dad and try just to be around when he work in the car, be outside where I was, where we lived. I try to help them call it just to be next to her. I like horses. So when the horses were outside or what I always say to the horses, go with them and be next to that. Yeah. My jaw bowed. My sister, I did. Now, she was about 2 to 3 years younger than rules, so. We want so much involved together there. But I do remember more a little bird being next to my father there that it took her.

Michael Nathanson [00:12:30] So you mentioned your your parents and to me, your parents, both of them were just extraordinary heroes. And and we're going to get more into their individual stories in a moment. But in Ann's book, she tells a story of when as a boy, you mention horses. You you you got into your parents wagon and and you accidentally ran into an SS officer and you'd sounds like you clipped him. You accidentally hit him. And and to me, this is the this was one of the hardest things that I read, at least toward the beginning of the book, because there are a lot of hard things to read in that book about your mother. Basically happened to become something that she was not just to save your life and how she basically had to I'll let you tell the story, but discipline you in a way that was not your mother. Can you tell us that story?

Mark Schonwetter [00:13:31] Well, I do remember this story a little bit. We were in the field with my father. And then for whatever reason, honestly, I don't remember. But I did credit the course with the wagon inside. Ronnie. Jerry Seinfeld. It's funny. Just for fun. I figured, this is so exciting to me. Go and have this. When then? I didn't know that. And

when I went on a roll, I didn't expect to see. A German motorcycle with three Germans. So I was going pretty fast and I almost headed. And then I quickly ran to our driveway when our staff jumped from it and ran away. However, the gentleman's ride away when the high me came through the house. And my mom noticed that. So she first thing what she did, she grabbed me. Instead of heading me all the night, those beck and screaming at me and yell at me. And they start talking to their mom, but she didn't care what she wore. They walked up and just they me finally. She looks all. What is it? What is? So they said, Where did you see what he did? So says, Why do you think I'm spanking? That's what he deserves. He didn't do it there thing. He has to be paid for it. He'll pay for. Thank you. Thank you. I'm so happy nothing happened to you. And they kind of sold that, then they just laughed.

Michael Nathanson [00:15:20] But the the book talks about how your mother was just heartbroken that she had to do that and that she actually had blood in her hand, which was not your blood, but hers. And she felt like that was the only way that she could save your life because she thought that they were going to kill you.

Mark Schonwetter [00:15:36] Exactly.

Michael Nathanson [00:15:40] You. You watched your Uncle David being taken away. Tell us a little bit about about your Uncle David.

Mark Schonwetter [00:15:46] My Uncle David, which was the brother of my mother. He used to live with us and the Germans. My dad was like every so often they asked my father to bring. Young people, Jewish people. Because they need them to take to work. The trucks game, they loaded the map and they took it to work. And while they way they came, he didn't do nothing wrong. And I was standing there outside with Dale looking, and the German went to him and started beating him up. I could not understand. Why is he coming here? He didn't do anything. Why are you beating him up? They just stuck and laid, then throw and it's wrong. And to get my way, I stopped crying. They were out to, ma'am. But. It was not the increase. Of course, I could do or anybody could do. It was so hard to me. Why did they do that? Couldn't understand that, I repeat.

Michael Nathanson [00:17:02] And you never saw him again?

Mark Schonwetter [00:17:04] never saw him again.

Michael Nathanson [00:17:06] That what happened to your father? Let's. Let's hear his story.

Mark Schonwetter [00:17:11] Without my father being the head of the Jewish community. And. Having the Gestapo constantly coming to our house. Second question about the Jewish population in power, and then they're in Gaza to telling people to take their family in and move out from that fire house. And they took all valid property, housing, everything. So what happened? They used to take and then do the. Call him and let's say to the headquarters of the Polish police and asking him questions then that you're still coming home. So one day he didn't show up. So I'm going to give you some story about this year. Yes. He did not show up. So, Sam, it's late in the evening. Somebody knocks on the door. When I'm opening the door, the wife of the police chief is there, and she tells my mom, Listen, I have to tell you something. I overheard a conversation between the Gestapo and my husband, and they told them that they they going to come one day and take all the Jews out from here in maybe a few days. I just want to let your mil tell the kids that ran

away from here. So. Mom didn't know what to do, but we went to our old house, to the Polish family. That night. Father gave them two rooms to live in our house. And she asked him for help. Well, he called there tomorrow morning. We talk about that. Let's go to sleep. She went to her cousin of crystal sleep, and I slept with his kids. And next morning, when a day, early morning, a door opens and the Gestapo walks into the room and they go straight to him and tell him that to show what? There's a hiding here. What are they? He says they're not here. So he told me, we're going to search and find him. He told his people to go and search for a. So they laugh. And he's walking out. He stops, looks and he says in one of the kids. Happen to be the oldest daughter. Then he said, Tell me, quick, how many brothers and sisters do you wear? And she says story. A. So he rolls, He counts. And really whatever she told them, it matches. So he walked out. And I can say that I was probably the. The luckiest kid in the world. That she was smart enough, though. He include me. In the count of her brothers and sisters so bad. What happened to my father? We didn't know. But then when we were hiding in the forest, this the pilot of his son in law used to come and give us a little piece of bread. One day Kazan Law came in. And my mother looks and she notice that he's during the Paris show and she's asking then wonder if he got the shoes. He didn't want to tell anybody. Go back and forth. Finally, he tells her. Few bars at the U.S. gate propound the German game. They took Polish young guy to work. I was one of them. They took us to a forest. They told us to dig what they call. After we'd been done, they took us back to town. Then they came back for us and we see we're going back to the same place. So we got exactly to the spot. This big crawl that we did before was full with dead bodies. So they told us to call that everything, make sure that this, like nothing is here after we finish work. They told us, you see all the items we have here on this side for the work that you guys did. They won. Hide that. So I was looking around, he says. And I came across the shores. And I know that those shows and I know those are shows of your husband because I work with them every day. Civil code for memory. So he told my binder. Now you know that your husband was killed and he's in this mess. Great. That's how we found out. What, At the. My father.

Michael Nathanson [00:22:09] My God. So you were kicked out of your house? You were just One day they showed up and said, Get out. And you. You learned, as you just said, that you had very little time to to leave. And and so when your mother was hearing that the you know, that that you're going to have to go to this ghetto, you you made this long trek to the ghetto. Tell us that story.

Mark Schonwetter [00:22:39] Well, after. We got together with my mom. So Mr. Black told mom, you know, I heard that there is in this town that beets, which was a larger town, that there is a ghetto. And he says, I think nobody will hear the police or the Germans that you're way that to live. So I think this will be the safest state for you to go that. So we walked from our town, though, just that to the beach, sir, which is about 15 miles. And we went down to the ghetto. We danced while we stopped living in this ghetto. For about three months. We laid. Now the conditions under which we live. Not only read old did people who lived Jewish people who lived and died, yet there were horrible. Different weather. We used to get twice a day. They gave us, which they called soap, which actually was one water with some color in that and nothing else. The. Then add sliced bread. Why? A day? Every day. So you can imagine you were constantly by the houses that really didn't have any running water or anything there. There was no toilets. So we will always. Danny Pagan in end showers together. We didn't know the showers, but we never watched. We never went to the toilet as a toilet, only outside somewhere. We were sick all the time. Mom cut hair because we had lice. No medicine, no doctors. People are dying on the street. In other words, if you couldn't survive your sickness, then your by what horrible conditions? Horrible.

Michael Nathanson [00:24:44] And. And then your mother heard that as horrible as it was, it was going to be worse because the Nazis were coming, too. I think the word used in the book is liquidate everybody, which is murder everybody. So what did your mother do? Well.

Mark Schonwetter [00:25:01] When she heard the rumors that they will liquidate the ghetto, but unfortunately, there was no way to get out from that because the Germans were there all the time. But then she heard that somebody is looking for her. So when this little body told that and she went to a good place and she looks Vista, Picard is there and he tells her, Bring your kids and I'll show you how to get out from here. So when she brought them, my sister. He tells my mom, Why don't you pick up working at a time crawling over the fence? If a mom says, I wish I could, I am weak. I don't have any strength. I cannot the up I don't have to pick up a kid and throw away. And he convincingly says, yes, you can. You can. You can do it. Do it fast. We don't have time. Time, no time. And besides, they could look at those two little kids and they skin in a bone either way, but do it anyway. She did it. Then she jumped ball that he told it to go, brother. He grabbed her and that's how we got out from the ghetto. It took us out from there.

Michael Nathanson [00:26:20] So this this man that you keep, you you pronouncing it p white. So it's.

Mark Schonwetter [00:26:25] Pilat.

Michael Nathanson [00:26:25] Pilat and his first. Yes. Anthony. Is that correct? Anthony Black. Anthony Yeah, he is. He is. He's a very important part of this.

Michael Nathanson [00:26:36] Very important.

Michael Nathanson [00:26:37] Yes. So from there. Why don't you tell us now about where this all led? Because now you went to living in attics and haystacks and holes in the ground, one of which I think was you called it a grave. And even with with pigs during the winters. And you lived in the forest during the summers. Tell us a bit about all of that.

Mark Schonwetter [00:27:04] Well, when we started, when he brought us into a farm, we started in a farmhouse, had to be dead fall when we got there and the people were nice enough, they cost. And put us on it and it and we lived on this decided. And they made sure that they told my mother that could the kids have to be quiet? No crying, no laughing, no talking. Neither were really sitting on this day and night. We're not going down. We're not going anywhere. And she'll bring us some food and that's it. And that's how we survive. Nobody really pays that. But then we had to leave because she would call us any longer and she told us to go and live in it for us. There. Their only place you could recommend. So we start living in the forest while living in the forest, not having done it for but mom dying, knowing no life and a fire. Does she know? She knew that in forest you have mackerels, berries, all kinds of wild things growing that you can eat. So she took us, we walked around, we found them, and she was teaching us. Which ones are the ones that we can eat? And which ones are the ones that boys that we shouldn't torture and whatever it was growing either. Both she was kidnaped and that's how we basically have the food to eat. Cause was much, you know, we were hounded down of those. We did find some things back. Whatever it was was good. And we live right there. Yes, there were days that there was, you know, summertime was raining. We got where? And that's again, my mom. She always looked positive. Five everything she always explained to us stakes. So they

had her We were where she we cried that Reese with Google ads when. So her answer was with a smile on her face. The motto is going to be, I can see it's going to be sunny. You'll take you close. Hang on. There. Three that would dry you out and you'll have fresh clothes. And I think that's how she was. And that's what we were doing, that that's what we are. Well, they ended for us.

Michael Nathanson [00:29:42] Yeah. I'm going to come back to your mother in a moment. Yeah. The stories just go on and on. And I really can't recommend the book enough to get a real feel for everything that happened. Stories about how at one point you were hiding under a haystack and there was a German with a pitchfork, and he was thrusting it through the hay and he pierced your mother's, your mother's leg, and how you all had to stay quiet and just reading about you living in a grave for a while or in a pigsty. It's very difficult. And I can only imagine what it was like for you. You've written about. About the pigsty. You said it was horrible. We stepped in and laid down in the dirt, and he brought would put over us. And then hay. And then the pigs. Mark, given your age, I don't need to ask whether that is something that can be forgotten. Clearly, it cannot. Do you think about these horrors every day? Do you. Do you dream about them? Are they always with you?

Mark Schonwetter [00:30:49] Well, honestly, saying I don't. I don't dream about them. I don't have horrible your dreams. And I don't talk that much about that. And I guarantee I bring my bomber because after the war and everything, she was staring at us. Let's not talk about it. Let's live and think about the future. We went through so much in our life. I don't want you to think about that all the time and keep this on your mind. You're young. We live a different life right now. I see. We will be okay now. So think the positive way. Think about today's line. Later on, we see what's going to happen. Maybe we will come back and talk a little better. But right now, I don't want shore. So sad at how we got here, Stuart. Stay away. Not to talk about that so much.

Michael Nathanson [00:31:54] I listened to a recent interview in which you spoke about your mother's unrelenting strength and optimism. Truly an extraordinary human being. And it seems clear that that is, as you just said, a source of your own strength and optimism. I think it's also a difficult irony to reflect on exactly where she learned those survival skills. You just spoke earlier about how she knew which mushrooms and which kind of berries you could eat. Most people don't know that. I don't know that. And what I learned from from your story is that her parents had to teach her to survive when the Russians invaded, when she was a child. And that's how she learned these survival skills. Mark, did she keep her faith in God throughout throughout all of this?

Mark Schonwetter [00:32:46] Well, probably. For legal say if she did or that I cannot say it because I'm the subject while we were aiding. Now they came out. We never talk about religion or anything. We were so occupied. Read Client Obey. A our rules to live, to behave ourselves, to be careful. To make sure that we're not making noise, that we're not going to any place that some why we were hiding in the forest far away, that maybe somebody can notice us, that when we step on it, it and it and it leaves. That we actually tried not to step too much on them because it says, Son, we never put that fire on in the forest. Because mom says never pull the fire because you're going to have smoke. And somebody may see it. So all those things going on every day, I would lie that this subject was never brought up. So I. I cannot make a statement here.

Michael Nathanson [00:34:08] Thank you for that. You. You. You were almost killed. Your whole family was on was killed many times. And, of course, some of your family was.

Maybe say a few words, Mark, about the the righteous Gentiles who saved your lives so many times.

Mark Schonwetter [00:34:25] Well, I have to give all the credit in the world and respect to the people who helped us. There were a few families. They jeopardize their life to help our life. And there is no words to say. Thank you. Because as much as your say thank you, it's still not enough. It's not enough. Because it's today. If you said that, you think, oh, he felt pure. But it's different when you live under those circumstances. That she'll have the Gestapo. All the time close. And I have to say, with all due respect for some other people, was not giving him much respect, that there were also people who went in detail, police that just hiding here. But this happens in any society. You're a different type of people. So if those people dead don't stay, they go there and their family lives in their own homes. So whatever you say. Thank you. I'll do anything. It's still not enough.

Michael Nathanson [00:35:42] Yeah. And some of them did pay with their lives. And again, I would encourage people to read the full story. When someone speaks to you about this experience, is it appropriate to say I'm sorry for what happened to you and your family? How should people speak to you and others who survived the unthinkable?

Mark Schonwetter [00:36:03] Well, it's nice to say I'm sorry. It's nice to say, but I don't know if this is proper to say I'm sorry because, yeah, you're doing you're spending a little while there on somebody or a little pure coffee on milk. So I'm sorry I spilled that on you. I'll be back to say I'm sorry that you said the way you said by. Yes, your analogy. Maybe you are. You're crediting that the person survived. But a test to say this, I don't think it makes me really feel that the person is really. Is, is is feeling what I feel. Because you'll feel what your way through. And you're out of your way through. And I don't know what is the proper word even to say here.

Michael Nathanson [00:36:57] Yeah.

Mark Schonwetter [00:36:58] I think maybe the best thing is just give you a hug. Yeah. Not to say anything. It Just the show. I hold you. I have your next to me. It's a sign that you're here.

Michael Nathanson [00:37:16] Thank you. I understand. I would give you a hug if you and I were in the same studio. Thank you for that. Do you ever wonder what life would have been like if all these horrors had not occurred, if the Holocaust never happened?

Mark Schonwetter [00:37:30] Well, I imagine. That the delight would be. The sides call it no rule. Growing up, going to school. Maybe go and study something. But I'll be on a farm or be the kind of professional some guy. Never. And then air. And a credit from this short period of time that you live on this planet, that you accomplish something new and have a satisfaction from leaving. Neil, enjoy your living. I imagine that that's what would be.

Michael Nathanson [00:38:12] Every November, your foundation hosts an annual fundraiser fundraiser called The Journey for the Living. And that's a 15 mile fitness challenge. And I understand that people walk, run or ride 15 miles during the month to raise awareness and money to support the foundation, and that the 15 miles represents the 15 mile walk that you, as a very young boy, along with your mother and sister, had to take that one night to escape the Nazis. Anything to add about about the event?

Mark Schonwetter [00:38:43] Well, I just want to say that maybe for some people, yes, maybe for some people now that 15 miles. It's not such a big far away, so much back. It's that symbol. I consider this as a symbol, as a memory. That doesn't mean that this would be won by 100 miles and that 58 Jackson similar. Just to remember that. Me and my sister, we walk that 15 miles. It's the we went with that hall that this is a place that we can lay it and we can survive because it's a safe place. But unfortunately not. But again. It's a memory. What people? Try to do a this period of time to survive. I hope that they will survive this. That's the only I consider this. As symbol of this.

Michael Nathanson [00:39:54] I understand. I read that you live by the saying, quote, Live every day with love, not hatred, and you will accomplish so much more in life. End quote. My question for you is how can you not feel hatred for what the Nazis did while.

Mark Schonwetter [00:40:13] How can we forget how well the Nazis that. Well, I say that here an issue that we share. I consider that wherever we live in this world, we have these shows and they show is number one, that we did not learn this story. Because if you would learn that this story, you will notice that those instances. Happen many times in the past. You'll have to remember the Crusaders. You'll have to remember the Inquisition. You'll have to remember what happened today. Barring Armenians. You'll have to leave every nun there during the second war. That there were Japanese taken without an approval. Anything. Other side. Your ten. Because they thought maybe that they may be dangerous. Now, we had. When the Uganda. So it shows you that. Thanks. At the end we have the letter. We had to know. And B, if we want to say that we are intelligent, knowledgeable, so we should be. Knowledgeable that there were things fair there and make sure that there would not happen again.

Michael Nathanson [00:41:40] Yeah.

Mark Schonwetter [00:41:41] Well, has to come to a point that we should say enough is enough of guys that said, yeah.

Michael Nathanson [00:41:49] I want to talk a little bit about your foundation. I remember learning extensively about the Holocaust in religious school. But I don't remember spending too much time on it as part of my secular education. And I imagine, as you just said, that's the gap you're trying to fill, that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. But the task is so large, and I've read that many members of Generation Z, you know, the younger people do not know much about the Holocaust. And of course, there are now entire nations that are spreading lies that it didn't happen or that it was exaggerated. Are we moving in the right direction?

Mark Schonwetter [00:42:32] Well, I have to say that unfortunately, we are not leading in the right direction because let's not go all over the world. We lived in United States. Let's talk about the United States. That's our place to have only 22 or 23 states. They're teaching you Holocaust. What about the rest? How can we expect this thought through to not to happen or not to try to create something like that? We were talking and hoping people should know about forced labor here. Alcohol. What? What we had there. It's slavery. It's. It's not being told the proper way I feel.

Michael Nathanson [00:43:23] Mark, you're likely familiar with Pastor Martin Niemöller is famous saying. Yeah, it's it's a it's a longer one, but I'm going to read it and then I have a question. They came first for the communists. And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews. And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics. And I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me. And by that time, no one was left to speak up. Now, that's actually a true story about the pastor. Many people don't know that. It's not just poetry. It's a true story about him. And he at one point said some pretty terrible things about the Jews and he supported the rise of Hitler, though he ultimately repented and was himself sent to a concentration camp before being liberated. I look around the world and see so many wonders, but also still sees so many horrors. And so you just said a moment ago that we're not going in the right direction. Now, I have a related question. How hopeful are you today that we can eventually learn to speak up for and even love each other?

Mark Schonwetter [00:44:46] Well, you have to be hopeful. You have to hope because you feel that maybe, maybe one day your door. What do you share with other people about this subject? That this will be heard by more and more people? And you hope that those people. My spend spending that air somehow. Teach the ones who are discussed, Let's put this sort of force where they want. That denying back although the live in or create trouble so you live and your hope but is it they. No I don't think so yeah I think they it think he should be there like our elect that people could have much more influence. The need for the need for grocery will stand up and try to enforce the rules. I don't say to pay that. Put those people to jail. But teacher. Get together with and sit down with. Explain to Dad trying that. Why do you do that? If you know the reason. Then you can take steps to prevent this. But if you don't look for the reasons, then you're done. Now you're just stuck empty. So that's hope.

Michael Nathanson [00:46:14] Thank you, Mark. Okay. We're now going to move into our extraordinary teaching segment. Seeking the extraordinary presents, extraordinary teachings, a deeper look at the qualities that allow people to do extraordinary things. Mark. What's been your most satisfying accomplishment in life so far?

Mark Schonwetter [00:46:40] Well. I would say the most satisfying thing in my life. Still have my family with me. I would put this number one, my wife and my two kids.

Michael Nathanson [00:46:57] Yeah.

Mark Schonwetter [00:46:59] That's the most satisfying thing that I found that I survived. I am a lie. A Take a look at my family.

Michael Nathanson [00:47:09] Great answer. I usually ask my guests whether they have any regrets, but it seems inappropriate to ask you that question. So I probably will pass on that question, unless you'd like to answer that question.

Michael Nathanson [00:47:22] I get that.

Michael Nathanson [00:47:23] Yeah, because your experience, I don't think it's appropriate for you. So I'll just move on and just say. If you could offer a single tip that has helped you be the extraordinary person you are, what would you offer? What What single tip would you offer?

Mark Schonwetter [00:47:40] I think there's one single thing I would say Live. Enjoy your life. And don't create hatreds between people. Starting with the France. Let's be closer with your family, with your friends, and with your strange, as if you don't know. Be respect for the people. Be friendly to people. Because if you're going to go in this direction. And

more people go in this direction. We have so much more opportunity to live in peace and harmony between each other.

Michael Nathanson [00:48:22] Yeah. Again, my question is asking a Holocaust survivor, They're they're they're hard to ask. You've had just such a different and terrible experience, though you have remained incredibly positive, which is just amazing. Mark, what have been your best learning opportunities?

Mark Schonwetter [00:48:41] Well, in my opinion, the best opportunities of learning is the latter day story.

Michael Nathanson [00:48:47] Yeah. My next question is who we are key role models and mentors. Is it safe to say that your parents are your key role models and mentors given your story?

Mark Schonwetter [00:48:59] I would say my mom.

Michael Nathanson [00:49:01] Your mom? Yeah. Yeah, she does sound like an extraordinary person. Amazing. She really is just a hero. And that's it. Just to read her story that the story of what she did and the horrors that she saw and protected you from. I don't blame you for that answer. That's a great answer. I have two more questions for you. They're related, but slightly different. Do you have a personal mission?

Mark Schonwetter [00:49:31] I wish I could say that I do. Maybe if I would say that, maybe I would have a bigger influence on the subject that I'm trying to make people aware of. But I feel that whatever I do. And whoever I talk to, and I am not. Hopefully, though, they agreed that I reach everybody that I would talk to. But in each situation, I get to you people that they will finally understand that it's not right to have hatred against anybody. Against anybody. Just be friendly in good. In respect for to everybody recognize everybody that we are all the same human beings.

Michael Nathanson [00:50:23] Yeah.

Mark Schonwetter [00:50:24] We not different. That would be the best thing.

Michael Nathanson [00:50:29] And is that how you would describe your your preferred legacy, how you will be remembered?

Mark Schonwetter [00:50:36] Well, what would be nice if I would remember that this guy. What's stopping Guy listening to her today? We can enjoy a light week and not worry about anything happening to me, that I can walk the streets and say free, that I can go away someplace and enjoy myself. And this is because I listened and learned. Not to hate people, but to love people and lick together. As Wagner as Wagner.

Michael Nathanson [00:51:12] Marc, I think, went in the show with some words from Ann's book. They appear at the very end of the book. Those of you who feel that you are not affected are affected the most. Those of you who feel that it did not happen to you will experience it the most. Those of you who do not remember will have the most terrifying nightmares. Those of you who think it never happened will live through it again. And that is the extraordinary Mark Schoen sweater. Thank you, Mark.

Mark Schonwetter [00:51:52] Thank you.

Michael Nathanson [00:51:53] You can learn more about Mark and the Mark Sean, whether Holocaust Education Foundation at MSH Foundation Board, and by reading his daughter and Arnold's book together, A Journey for Survival, which you can find out together. A journey for survival. Dcoms. You can also find it on Amazon. You can also join me in following the mark shown whether Holocaust Education Foundation on Twitter at MSH Foundation and on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. And thank you to our sponsor, the Colony Group. The Colony Group is a national wealth and business management company with offices across the country that itself seeks to extraordinary as it pursues its unrelenting mission of providing clients with peace of mind and empowering their visions of tomorrow. To learn more about the Colony Group and how it manages Beyond money, visit the Colony Group icon. You can also follow the Colony Group on LinkedIn and on Twitter at Colony Group. For seeking the extraordinary. I'm Michael Nathanson. Follow me on LinkedIn and Twitter at Northeastern underscore MJ. To learn more about my ongoing search for the extraordinary.