

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: July 15th, 1945. In order to describe everything that is going on inside me right now, I'd need many notebooks and a lot of time. Just why is my life so full of sorrow and disappointments time and again?

MANDY PATINKIN: As a teen, the Nazis left Karola Ruth Siegel - now famously known as Dr. Ruth - orphaned and stateless, with nowhere to go. For a long time, the pages of her diary were the only place to express her overflowing angst and grief.

DR. RUTH: The diary actually became my friend. It's like old and torn, but it has a key - very important that it gave me the assurance that even if I wrote something how unhappy I am or something like my doubting that there is a God because of all of the happenings around me. And I have the key and it really was a companion to me.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH What am I here for? I want to accomplish something! Nobody understands me.... Must I have only problems all my life, without sun, without love?

DR. RUTH: I did have that feeling of nobody understands me. I had that feeling of I'm the only one who is questioning...questioning what, what will I do? I was 17. Where can you go? Who will accept you? There's a song like that. Who will accept you?

MANDY PATINKIN: A song Dr. Ruth recited to herself in her youth. So much so that she still knows it today, line by line in German... Though she doesn't remember where it came from or where she learned it.

[CLIP - DR. RUTH RECITING SONG IN GERMAN]

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH:

Every person in the world
Has his own country,
And there he is at home.
Only one people in the world
Has no homeland of their own,
And every day there stands before them
The eternal Jewish question,
"Whither, Jew?
Who in the world will take you?
Where can you be safe?

Where do you need not be worried
About your next day?
The world is so large,
And for you it is small.
A door is still open,
But for you it is closed.
There is no place in the world.
You are a Jew."

MANDY PATINKIN: Now, at 94 years old, Dr. Ruth is firmly rooted. Not just in her position in the world as a celebrated psychosexual therapist. But also...geographically.

DR. RUTH: Die Welt ist so groß. The world is so big. Für dich ist sie klein. For you, it's so small.

MANDY PATINKIN: She's talking to us from her apartment in Washington Heights, New York, next to Fort Tryon Park, where she's on the board of the Ft. Tryon Park Trust. She's lived here for over half a century.

DR. RUTH: A long time.

MANDY PATINKIN: Emblems of her fascinating life surround her - numerous awards, photos with celebrities, and a lot of collectibles - like two thousand year old oil lamps engraved with sexual positions. She's also kept the diaries of her youth.

DR. RUTH: I kept it by going to the kibbutz in Israel after Palestine became Israel. I kept it through all my years in France. I kept it in the United States. Amazing!

MANDY PATINKIN: Scribbled in their weathered pages are clues to intimate thoughts and feelings she kept buried deep inside and didn't talk about for decades - not even to her kids. It's kind of surprising Dr. Ruth had her own taboo subjects back then...tragic secrets she wasn't ready to unearth. Her demeanor was always charming and chipper. And open communication was - and still is - her entire brand. She got us to talk about the hard stuff - the most intimate of things...like sex.

[CLIP - DR. RUTH'S RADIO SHOW: SEXUALLY SPEAKING]

DR. RUTH: Sexually Speaking. You are on the air.

MANDY PATINKIN: Sexually Speaking was Dr. Ruth's call-in radio show.

DR. RUTH: There is nothing wrong with masturbating and if your need is to masturbate two or three times a week, by all means do so.

MANDY PATINKIN: It was first broadcast in 1980. Dr. Ruth was 52. After midnight, her warm, yet no-nonsense German accent echoed in living rooms - or more likely bedrooms, with the door closed - throughout the New York Tri-State Area.

DR. RUTH: You're absolutely right. As long as you're a good lover. And as long as you receive pleasure.

MANDY PATINKIN: Sexually Speaking became a hit - one that catapulted Dr. Ruth to celebrity status.

DR. RUTH: This ability of having an erection or not having an erection should not be the main issue.

MANDY PATINKIN: She got her own TV shows. She wrote dozens of books. She had cameos in Hollywood movies throughout the 80s and 90s. She was a regular on late night talk shows - like Johnny Carson, David Letterman, Joan Rivers and Arsenio Hall. All the while bringing a new openness to conversations about sex.

DR. RUTH: A female asked me, can you destroy your virginity by putting your finger in the vagina? The answer is not very likely.

MANDY PATINKIN: Her charisma and small stature - she's 4 foot 7 - made talking about sex feel less risky, less intimidating. What isn't apparent from her rise to stardom or from her ease in connecting with strangers is that it rests on, or maybe even grew out of, great loss, great insecurity, and an even greater desire to make a mark.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: And I must, and I will succeed! I have to make it. First, becoming a human...then onward, helping others.

MANDY PATINKIN: But how does she succeed? How does an orphaned teen, dealt such an awful hand, eventually become the famed Dr. Ruth?

[OPENING THEME]

MANDY PATINKIN: Welcome to Exile - a podcast from LBI, the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. I'm Mandy Patinkin.

When everything is taken away, then what? From LBI's archives, untold stories of Jewish lives in the shadow of fascism.

Today - the making of Dr. Ruth. She's long since gotten to a place where she can talk about her painful past. But now, she's raising the stakes. She's opening the pages of her diary to the Leo Baeck Institute. Entries from 1945-47... Giving you unfiltered access to one of the most difficult times of her life. An intimate portrait of her teen years - full of uncertainty, loneliness, and the sexual awakening of adolescence - against the backdrop of one of the cruelest moments of history.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: On the ship, September 4th, 1945. We are traveling towards our destination (is it mine, too?).

MANDY PATINKIN: A young Karola Ruth Siegel is on a crowded ship. She's headed to Palestine. Her destination - kibbutz living.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: Now, along with my new life, I'm also starting a new diary. I'm all question marks inside!

DR. RUTH: First of all, I was excited. That clearly is the feeling. I said, I'm going to Palestine.

And there was a lot of dancing and a lot of singing. And dancing the hora, the typical Jewish dance on the ship.

Nobody knew that we were sailing into a war. Nobody knew that very shortly after, I would be carrying a sten gun and I would learn how to throw hand grenades.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: All that used to be is to be thrown into the water and... All that is not right is to stay here, in exile, at sea. Will it work out?

MANDY PATINKIN: What she wishes to bury at sea is World War II and its aftermath, including an unthinkable amount of loss.

Boarding this ship is the first major decision 17-year-old Karola makes about her life. The last time she took a trip this significant was from Germany - her home - to Switzerland. She was just a child. 10 years old. And leaving wasn't her choice.

Back then, she was on a train platform - one suitcase in hand, a doll in the other. She was waiting for a Kindertransport train - a rescue effort to get Jewish children out of Nazi Germany. Her mother and grandmother were crying beside her. Her father was in a labour camp.

DR. RUTH: I didn't want to leave. I had 10 dolls. I had friends. I had roller skates. I had a dollhouse. I had no choice. If I had not been with that Kindertransport to Switzerland, I would not be alive.

MANDY PATINKIN: Karola went to live in a Swiss children's home that became an orphanage in the picturesque village of Heiden.

DR. RUTH: We did not know that that Jewish children's home became our home for six years, throughout all of World War II and we did not know that we would become orphans.

MANDY PATINKIN: Homesick and scared - she started to keep a diary at the orphanage - her new constant companion.

DR. RUTH: I wrote when I got an opportunity to write because I had to have some little privacy. I wrote about my birthday. I wrote about how much I missed my parents.

MANDY PATINKIN: But there were also things she didn't write about back then.

DR. RUTH: So I never wrote bad things about the home because I knew that I was an object of charity, that the Swiss Jewish population in Zurich supported us, fed us. Now I tell you a bad thing. One of the people who were responsible for us was herself a German-Jewish refugee. And she told us that they didn't ask for us to come to

Switzerland. She said our parents didn't love us. And she said if she had children, she would never have sent them away. That was awful. Instead of saying your parents did the superb sacrifice of sending you to safety in Switzerland, she turned that around. It was very bad.

MANDY PATINKIN: It was also completely untrue. While at the orphanage Karola exchanged letters with her family. Her father, her mother, and her grandmother were stuck in Nazi Germany but they wrote to her often.

DR. RUTH: I always wrote happy things. I did not write how miserable I was sometimes. I did not write how much I longed for them because I didn't want to make them even unhappier than they were.

MANDY PATINKIN: These letters were incredibly loving. She was an only child. Spoiled. And the apple of her father's eye. He wrote to her exclusively in verse.

Dear Karola,
A good report card is great fun.
It is a pleasure to show it to everyone.
It is the reward.
For working hard.
But one has to keep working
To get rid of all one's faults
And never go slack
For your marks will slide back.

DR. RUTH: The letters were very important to me and to my parents. They waited for it every week. I waited for it every week. And then it stopped. Like from one week to the next. First, I had letters and then nothing.

MANDY PATINKIN: The letters stopped coming after September 1941.

DR. RUTH: So I knew that something was happening, but I didn't know what. First I thought it's just a delay. But then it became clear that there were no more letters. It was very, very sad. Even in the diary, I didn't say much. It was too painful to talk about. It was too painful to talk about that uncertainty.

MANDY PATINKIN: It was also around this time that Zionist representatives would visit the orphanage, sharing stories about Palestine, and the idea of building a homeland for Jews. To Karola, it was a beautiful dream after years of instability - but the reality on the ground was complicated to say the least.

Palestine was run by the British at the time - who initially supported the creation of a Jewish homeland there. That raised the hopes of Zionist settlers, but it didn't land so well with Palestinian Arabs. Arab nationalists were also promised a united Arab country. And

though Zionists mostly bought land for settlements legally, it nevertheless led to the dispossession of many Palestinian peasants.

There was a lot of violence - ongoing fighting between Arabs and Jews, between Jews and the British, and between the British and Arabs. That led to the British backpedalling their Zionist support in 1939 and heavily restricting the number of Jews who could immigrate to Palestine - closing the door on refugees desperate to escape Nazi rule in Germany and Austria.

So when Zionists representatives visited Karola at the orphanage, what they asked her to do violated British colonial law. But the message of a Jewish homeland and the idea of communal life on something called a kibbutz deeply resonated with a teenaged Karola...or maybe the messengers had something to do with it.

DR. RUTH: Okay, first of all, how smart of the Jewish people. Listen carefully, all of you. They use good looking guys to be the emissaries for getting people to come to the kibbutz.

MANDY PATINKIN: In one of her diary entries around this time, she asked herself whether she's considering Palestine because she's attracted to Zionism or the emissary she's crushing on.

DR. RUTH: All of these guys were good looking. They were wonderful dancers. They knew how to look into a girl's eyes. And I thought that was brilliant. I'm going with them.

MANDY PATINKIN: But even though Karola was a sucker for a good-looking guy, leaving Switzerland for Palestine wasn't an easy decision. What if her family - her parents - were still alive?

After the war, Red Cross published weekly lists of the names of concentration camp survivors. In a grueling ritual, the orphanage gathered all of the kids each week.

DR. RUTH: The people who were responsible for us read the names of the people who survived. And my family was never among them.

MANDY PATINKIN: Week after week, she was crushed. But there was a part of her that held out hope... What if they were in Europe somewhere? Leaving Switzerland also meant sacrificing her dream of an education.

DR. RUTH: I had to make a decision. They had accepted me at a school in Switzerland to become a kindergarten teacher at the end of World War II.

MANDY PATINKIN: But even if she stayed, as a kindertransport kid, she wouldn't have been allowed to remain in the country after graduation. She was inching towards young adulthood now, and her options were increasingly limited.

Going back to Germany was out of the question. To get into another European country, you needed to have a relative who lived there. And America was still a pipe dream at this point.

Karola felt the tug of certainty and a sense, too, of purpose. She started to identify as a Zionist.

DR. RUTH: I decided, no, I'm not staying in Switzerland. I have to help build a country for Jews so that Jews will have a place to be and will not be ever persecuted, like in Germany and Austria. So I decided and it says it in the diary, you can all read that, that I decided to go to then-Palestine.

MANDY PATINKIN: And when the time came, she convinced others from the orphanage to join her - like her good friend Marga. Marga was one of Karola's closest friends at the orphanage. They used to go on so-called 'walks' to make out with boys.

DR. RUTH: Well, it was an Orthodox Jewish home. Therefore, boys and girls did not go together for walks. However, we were smart. We went to the office, two girls, Marga and me, two boys, Walter and Klaus. And we said, we're going for a walk and not together, separate. And then we met in some Hülle? And Hülle is like, like places that were like for hide-and-go-seek. Very very separate. So Walter and I went to one. Klaus and Marga went to the other one. We did a lot of hugging and kissing and touching. And then when we got back to the home, we separated again. And we went to the office saying, we are back. Two girls and two boys.

MANDY PATINKIN: A raging war couldn't stop teen hormones...or crushes.

DR. RUTH: I certainly had more than one. But some of the crushes were fruitful and developed into friendships like with Walter.

MANDY PATINKIN: Walter. Karola's first boyfriend. Her first love.

Walter arrived at the Swiss orphanage a year after Karola. He came from a foster family in Zurich. He was short - which was perfect for her - cute and smart. He and Karola immediately liked each other.

Late at night, when everyone else was sleeping, he'd sneak into her room with his school books.

DR. RUTH: We couldn't make any light in Switzerland during World War II. But we had kind of a little bit of light on the staircase. I took Walter's books because he was a boy. He could go to school. I took his books very often and read them at night. He went - listen carefully - he went under my bed. Then when I finished, we hugged and kissed and he went upstairs to his room with the other boys. We were never caught.

I think that the longing for love compels you to look for ways to combine the looking for friendship and love and hugging and kissing. No sex yet.

I was always grateful that I had these crushes. I think these crushes and these friendships helped me and helped us all to withstand this catastrophe of becoming orphans.

MANDY PATINKIN: Now, Karola's on her way towards a new life. For the voyage, she's packed light. The emissaries who organized this trip told her she wouldn't need anything. That everything will be provided for her once she gets to her kibbutz. Tucked away in her one bag are a few of her old belongings, and a few new ones.

Some of the women wanted new brassieres for their fresh start. And since Karola's the outspoken one - the unofficial leader - she told one of the young men organizing this journey to Palestine to buy them new bras before they set off to sea. It's kind of like at the orphanage, when she took it upon herself to educate younger girls about their period. Even as a kid, Karola wasn't embarrassed by this stuff.

Also in her bag is a stack of letters from her long lost parents...and her precious diary.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: All of this still seems like a dream to me, what will it be like when I awaken? Happy and finally content or disappointed yet again? For the time being I am glad, I am free and all problems are leaving me in peace and I them!

MANDY PATINKIN: Plus, there's a new boy she likes on the ship...Michael - one of the emissaries from the kibbutz Karola will soon call home.

Michael's in his early 20s. A Polish Jew who walked over the Alps by foot from Belgium to Switzerland during the war. He survived thanks to his Belgian papers and dyed blonde hair.

Karola has her eye on him.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: All my thoughts and endeavors aim at one point: a boyfriend. And this tells me: I'm superficial. Yes, sorry to say so, but I who thought myself to be of a deep and inward nature, am totally superficial and hollow. I fall in love with somebody...just "because of his looks," without looking at his inner qualities! I don't know him...and yet.

MANDY PATINKIN: Will Michael be her next boyfriend? Will he finally fill that longing she has to be loved? What will her new life bring?

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH:-The water, this wide, vast expanse, sparkling, sizzling and then again lying there in total calm, is something so magnificently beautiful that one cannot describe it, one has to absorb it with all one's strength and with all the feelings given to man. One wave gets intertwined with another...and a new one emerges.

MANDY PATINKIN: After almost a week at sea, the ship arrives in Palestine, where Karola has to leave one more thing behind.

DR. RUTH: When I got to then-Palestine, they said, you cannot be called Karola here. That's too German. You have to choose a Hebrew name. I chose my middle name, Ruth. Luckily that I did that because I don't think that Dr. Karola would have given such good advice.

MANDY PATINKIN: With a new name, and a new home, Karola, or Ruth, settles into kibbutz life.

At this point, there are about 150 kibbutzim scattered across the country. The goal is to start a new egalitarian society. One of the cornerstones of Zionism at this time is communal, socialist living. It's a return to working the land and manual labour - where no one goes without and everyone contributes according to their abilities. At least in theory.

Ruth's kibbutz is an older one that started around the 1920s. It's a community of about 300 - with shared accommodations, shared childcare, and - until the age of 18 - shared showers.

Housing consists of buildings, shacks and tents that aren't segregated by gender either. Ruth sleeps in a tent with several boys as roommates. Like everyone else, she's given two outfits - a white shirt and pants for Saturday. And a shirt and shorts for the work week.

Before arriving at the kibbutz, Ruth had second thoughts. She questioned whether she could do communal living...*again*. She just came from an orphanage - where she had little privacy or agency for 6 years.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: July 13th, 1945. Am I really a Zionist? Am I really giving up on my personal life to live in a collective?

MANDY PATINKIN: Despite her initial reservations, she dives in. With zeal. She's fully committed. In her diaries, her desire for a nation, for a home, and for her mother are all messily conflated.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: I so long for a...my mother! But in spite of it all I feel that I love the land and that by and large I'm not disappointed. In spite of my idealism, will it become a homeland to me? I need a home.

MANDY PATINKIN: At the kibbutz, she's put to work - first in the fields picking olives and tomatoes. The farmland and cows remind her of her grandparents' farm back in Germany. But because she's so industrious, she ends up going where she's needed - in the kitchen or cleaning toilets, or wherever. For eight hours a day.

DR. RUTH: It was a very difficult physical life.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: January 16th, 1946. Ugh, everything, everything is so terribly hard and it hurts so much to struggle through it all on your own! I want to be young, happy like the others, am I at a disadvantage only because I am short and ugly? But there has to be something more beautiful in this world? Where on earth is it? Where does one have to look for it? Love? I'm longing for it so much.

MANDY PATINKIN: Though the work is hard and the days long, it's not all a struggle. There are dances, a lot of folk dances. Never a waltz or anything like that - too bourgeois. And of course, there are boys to dance with. And the promise of love.

Ruth is very far from the orthodox orphanage in Switzerland. On the kibbutz, ideas about sex are more liberal than she's ever experienced. The names of several men appear in Ruth's diary - and in her life - around this time. Like Dror and Michael and Shaul and Kalman.

Dror works as a cowhand on the kibbutz. He really likes Ruth. She flirts back but isn't sure how serious she is about him. One day Dror walks into the tent he shares with Michael - Ruth's big crush. Dror finds Ruth there too, sitting beside Michael, her hand on his knee. They might have been kissing. Dror storms out. He's hurt. But Ruth really likes Michael. And Michael really likes...someone else.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: I ask myself, what for and what about are you still writing a diary? Do you want to write that you are longing for Michael with all your "being," even though you know full well that he loves Henni and not you?

"Life (so it appears to me now) is like a ladder in a chicken coop, you can't get ahead because of all that poop!"

MANDY PATINKIN: And then there's Shaul - her roommate - who, like Dror, also pines for Ruth. And Ruth likes flirting back.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: Yesterday with Dror, "our" problem reemerged through Shaul. I don't know what to do! Shaul in bed, high fever: typhus! For the time being, I'm nursing him.

MANDY PATINKIN: But things with Shaul soon end when his brother Kalman arrives. Kalman is a part of a Jewish paramilitary group. And Ruth can't resist a uniform. It's love at first sight.

Shaul accepts the news well enough and tells his brother to take care of her. Kalman visits Ruth every Friday. He gives her a gold bracelet with her name engraved on it as an expression of his love. He's the one she has sex with for the first time. They walk hand in hand towards a hay barn in the kibbutz. And there, under the stars...

DR. RUTH: Never mind the first night. None of your business.

MANDY PATINKIN: Though she doesn't really talk about it, her crushes, her overwhelming desire for love are all rooted in grief. Inside, Ruth is a vast crater that no boy can patch up. She admits as much in this rare candid, yet crushing, diary entry.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: My God, what is death? I can't get the image out of my mind. Darkness, stars, wind, lanterns, people, pit, corpse...in and done. Is that life? What higher power is in charge of it? Why have my parents died? Where do they lie? Were they gassed all alone, without people, without love? They didn't deserve that, just as others didn't deserve it. Mommy, why are you no more?

MANDY PATINKIN: Ruth's doubts about communal living start bubbling up again.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: I don't know, everything is bleak, grey and empty. Eat, sleep, work, eat, sleep, work, and then it starts all over again.

MANDY PATINKIN: Turns out the kibbutz isn't as egalitarian as it proposes to be. Not everyone pulls their weight. Men are still mainly the leaders. And women mostly relegated to the kitchen. Plus, Ruth's tired of having others dictate her life telling her what she can and can't do - especially about school.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: Why I'm not feeling happy (other than the work-related problems), I don't know! Could it still just be those feelings of inferiority? But look, I don't know anything about music, I can't sing either. It's a riddle to me how I will be a kindergarten teacher, not a clue about art, very little literature, so, how am I going to occupy a place, I mean, socially, in life; how can I be anything to a person, even to a boyfriend to build something (except sexually, and that isn't enough for me), I will bore him or them to death!

MANDY PATINKIN: It's that longstanding itch that won't go away. The thing her dad once told her no one can take away from you...An education.

But there's an anti-intellectualism to kibbutz living. Physical work is glorified. Cultural and intellectual activities are looked down on as bourgeois leftovers.

DR. RUTH: I think that basically I realized that I didn't want to be part of a community where they decide if I can study or not...That wasn't for me.

I had enough of that coming out of Nazi Germany where they decided what will be my life. I needed now to take my life and the decisions for my life into my own hands.

MANDY PATINKIN: So, in 1946 - about a year after arriving - she leaves the kibbutz. She goes to another one, but not as a member this time, as a paid worker. Ruth strikes a deal to work half of the time and study the other half. It's another new beginning. And it's the first time in her life that she makes her own money.

But her joy's short-lived. Because Kalman - her boyfriend - dumps her. He's scared she'll be a financial burden now that she's on her own. According to Ruth's biography, he tells her, he can't carry a stone around his neck.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: Today for the first time I'm feeling a bit of energy and courage again. Is it perhaps the right path after all? I long for him so much. Ugh, I want to be happy someday.

MANDY PATINKIN: Little does Kalman know about the path she's on. About her longing to do something in the world. And that she isn't going to give up.

After a year, Ruth ends up leaving that kibbutz too because it's taking too long to get what she wants - a degree. She moves to Jerusalem and eventually finds a way to study full time through the help of a generous couple. She's finally realizing her dream.

DR. RUTH: A family, Goldberg, said if I come to Jerusalem, they'll help me get into the seminary for kindergarten teachers and they'd have to find me a place that was a girl's residence and they did. And I was good friends with them for my whole life.

MANDY PATINKIN In one of her last diary entries during this time, she writes...

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG DR. RUTH: June 4th, 1947, 19 years! Nobody is congratulating me, nobody knows it's my birthday. All the congratulations I'm reciting to myself! It's rather sad, but one gets used to everything! One day it will be different. I know that I need so much love, but I will reach my goal!

MANDY PATINKIN: Ruth *does* reach her goals. In fact, she surpasses them.

For a few more years, she stays in Jerusalem and joins a Zionist militia. She doesn't go into battle - though she's seriously wounded during a mortar attack.

In 1951, she leaves the country - three years after Israel declares itself a nation and the Arab-Israeli War begins.

DR. RUTH: The decision to leave Israel came only because I fell in love with a good looking Israeli who wanted to study medicine in Paris, so I go to Paris. Wonderful years. I managed to get to the Sorbonne. Because there was a law. Interesting for all of you. After World War II, there was a law in France that people like myself who did not have formal education, if they could pass the exam for année préparatoire, they could enter the Sorbonne. And the university was almost free. I passed that exam and studied hard. Then I came to the United States. They accepted my credits from the Sorbonne in Psychology at the New School for Social Research.

MANDY PATINKIN: And the rest - as they say - is history. Ruth becomes an educator. She gets tons of degrees. She hosts a radio show. She becomes famous. She makes a lasting impact in the world - like she always wanted to as a teen.

[CLIP - DR. RUTH'S RADIO SHOW: SEXUALLY SPEAKING]

DR. RUTH: Sexually Speaking. You are on the air.

MANDY PATINKIN: But maybe, most importantly, Ruth also finds love. Lots of it.

She marries three times. The third time ends up being the charm.

She meets Fred Westheimer after she gets her degree from the New School in New York. They eventually settle into the Washington Heights apartment Ruth still lives in today. The one she's talking to us from - crammed with mementos of a full life. They live happily together - with two kids and a marriage of almost 40 years - until Fred's death in 1997.

Her family helped heal a little girl's deep, cavernous yearning for love. So did the millions of people around the world who trusted her with their intimate secrets. They gave her purpose. And her pain, meaning.

DR. RUTH: No question that all of my experiences of having grown up without parents, being an orphan of the Holocaust, having been in different countries, had an influence on my being a very good therapist.

I think that it shaped me to that extent where I'm very attuned to people's problems...that I'm understanding how difficult it is for some people to form relationships because of their past experience, of having been torn away from their families. So I think that helped shape my ability to be a good therapist.

MANDY PATINKIN: It also helped shape the making of Dr Ruth.

DR. RUTH: That young Karola Siegel wouldn't have believed it that she would become that Dr. Ruth that gets greeted by former President Clinton and that gets honorary doctorates. She would not have believed it.

I sometimes pinch myself to know that all of you are listening to me. And I'm sure that you're taking away from this some knowledge and some way of life. To have a joie de vivre, to have that zest for life. That's what I wish all of you. Thank you! Toda raba! Merci beaucoup!

ARCHIVE THROW: Dr. Ruth shared her diary for the first time with the Leo Baeck Institute – and with all of you – for this episode of *Exile*. We are grateful for her generosity with her time and her story – and for the decades of sound advice. Learn more at www.lbi.org/westheimer.

CREDITS: Exile is a production of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York and Antica Productions.

It's narrated by Mandy Patinkin.

Executive Producers include Katrina Onstad, Stuart Coxe and Bernie Blum. Senior Producer is Debbie Pacheco. Produced by Brian Rice. Associate Producers are Hailey Choi and Emily Morantz. Research and translation by Isabella Kempf. Sound design and audio mix by Philip Wilson, with help from Cameron McIver. Additional sound by Violet Lucca. Theme music by Oliver Wickham. Voice acting by Lucy Hill.

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