

- Claire Donnelly:* So this interview will include questions about a variety of themes that we've covered in our course so far, in existential and humanistic psychology, including freedom, authenticity, optimal experience, and issues associated with our awareness of mortality. Please know that if there are any questions that make you uncomfortable or which you prefer not to answer, you're free to skip them. Also, if at any time you feel that you would prefer to suspend or conclude the interview, please feel free to let me know.
- Rolf Muuss:* *[Laughs]*
- Claire Donnelly:* I know, it's right off the script. So, the interview will be digitally recorded, and then will be transcribed. And with the transcribed information, I'll present a ten-minute presentation that'll take place actually at Edenwald, in December. Only your Claire Donnelly and the course instructor, Brian Patrick, will have access to the transcribed interview. Once the interview has been transcribed, the digital recording that I'm making will be destroyed.
- Rolf Muuss:* Okay.
- Claire Donnelly:* And once the presentation has taken place, the transcription of the interview will also be destroyed, so once we present in December, all evidence of this happening will be destroyed. *[Laughs]*
- Rolf Muuss:* Hardly necessary.
- Claire Donnelly:* I know – trying to make it as ethical as possible.
- Rolf Muuss:* *[Laughs]*
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, so, if at any point there's parts that you don't want me to present on, or if you wanna see the material before I present on it at Edenwald, I can give you the access to that.
- Rolf Muuss:* It might be interesting – let's see what happens.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, okay, sounds great, all right. So our first question is, just for a way of getting started, what is your favorite place in the world?
- Rolf Muuss:* My favorite place in the world – for living or for visiting?
- Claire Donnelly:* How about for visiting?
- Rolf Muuss:* Okay – that would probably be Hawaii.

*Claire Donnelly:* Where?

*Rolf Muuss:* Hawaii

*Claire Donnelly:* Havai? How do you spell that?

*Rolf Muuss:* That's the islands of Hawaii.

*Claire Donnelly:* Oh Hawaii. Oh I am sorry I misheard you. Hawaii, yeah – how often have you gone to Hawaii?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, I made a cruise from one island to the other, all around, a seven-day cruise \_\_\_\_\_, and spent a couple of days on the main island.

*Claire Donnelly:* And why is it one of your favorite places?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, it's different, it's beautiful, it's way out, and it has a lot of variety of things – it's a volcano, and there was a Hawaiian exhibit that we visited, a cultural museum, and we visited the Honolulu ninth of December, or whatever the date was. I don't remember. The ship Arizona is still there – it's very impressive. I mean, it was a fun trip, and the ship went past the volcano, so we saw the lava come down the mountain, with the glowing and falling into the water; the steam – the hot lava got, of course, turned into steam when it hit the water. And then, in the night, it was very exciting view.

*Claire Donnelly:* In the night, you could see the steam?

*Rolf Muuss:* Yeah, the lava comes down glowing, and then as it hits the water, crssh, it goes up into steam.

*Claire Donnelly:* That sounds incredible.

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes, it is.

*Claire Donnelly:* A modern-day Pompeii, but a little less tragic.

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes. [Laughter]

*Claire Donnelly:* Also, what do you like to do with your free time?

*Rolf Muuss:* With my free time, what I like to do or what I do do? Well, there are limits, otherwise I would say travel is what I would like. But with my age and my health, I am not sure there is much travel for

me anymore, unless I find somebody who travels with me – the two together might work, but alone – I hate the airports, nowadays. But I would love to travel – that would be my favorite pastime.

*Claire Donnelly:* And why is traveling your favorite pastime?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, you see different countryside, you meet different people; I would visit relatives, and you can reminisce about past experience. And usually when I go traveling, I go to \_\_\_\_\_ visit my cousin. By the way, the picture up there, there's a sailboat in front of the building. Now, the building is the Naval Academy – that's my college that I went to after the war, the German did not have their own Navy, and that was a teacher's college. That's a view – one of the rooms there on the top was my room. *[Laughs]* So, I loved to go sailing with my cousin, in the Baltic. But those are dreams, and I'm not sure I will make it again.

*Claire Donnelly:* They sound incredible, though.

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, yeah, it's fun, and of course there are a lot of, a lot of places in Germany to visit, cities, castles, churches, museums, countrysides, whatever. And, I mean, if you want to travel in Germany and want some advice, later on I'll be happy to provide you a famous castle on the Moselle River, called Eltz, which is one of the oldest, from 1200. And it's not out in the open very much; it's buried in the woods. You would love it. It's very, very far removed, and it's like stepping back a couple of hundred years.

*Claire Donnelly:* Stepping back into history – yeah, I'll definitely have to ask you more questions about travel destinations.

*Rolf Muuss:* Okay, well, happy to supply you with lots of answers.

*Claire Donnelly:* And how would you describe your attitude towards life, when you were our age in college? So, I'm 21.

*Rolf Muuss:* \_\_\_\_\_ *[laughs]* that was just at the end of the war. I guess life was difficult, and I didn't know what the future would bring. I mean, I just came out of prison camp, and by good fortune, in the prison camp, I met a member of the congregation of my father's church, who was a farmer and who hired me there, and I got out of prison earlier. And then, right after the war, actually, we worked on the farm, plowing the fields and that kind of stuff \_\_\_\_\_. And then, I mean, there were little opportunities, and I was lucky. I got a job as a, what's it called, a lay teacher, and I got a class of 70 children, in a 2-classroom school, with 1st, 2nd

and 3rd grade were my charges. And I had no training; I came off the pilot training, that's all I had, and tenth-grade high school, and that was a real challenge. But I had work, and I got good food because I could eat at one of the farmers' for dinner.

That was much better than most Germans at that time, because food was more sparse, and during the war, it was rationed, and everybody got not much, but got enough to eat to live and not go \_\_\_\_\_. And so, I got very well-fed, and I had a job and challenge. So what was my attitude to life? I don't know, just, take it the way it came. I mean, I did not have a preconceived notion of what life would bring me, but I would go – because I didn't even have high school diploma. I got out of \_\_\_\_\_ the army when I was tenth grade, and the German abitur, which allows you to enter university or college, is 13 grades, 1 more than in the United States. So, there are three grades missing in my school record, and so I could not enter into the university. So, I was contemplating going back to high school to get my abitur, as they call it in German. I don't know, do you speak any German? Did your grandmother speak German with you?

*Claire Donnelly:* She does a little bit – I took a semester in high school, but not much, yeah.

*Rolf Muuss:* But anyhow, so, after one year as a lay teacher, I had to go back to high school, and now they had some special courses for soldiers that were a little bit more condensed and \_\_\_\_\_, kind of. But alright when I was 21, I don't know that I had a really preconceived notion of what life could bring or would bring for me, because everything was up in the air, because Germany was in turmoil.

*Claire Donnelly:* So, how do you think your attitude towards life has changed to where you are now, and throughout the years?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, I mean, eventually, I did get my abitur, and I did get in a teacher's college, and that was a pretty good experience, and that gave me a lift and a goal. And I also, after I got the abitur, I got a job with in reconstruction, in Europe. It was for a British pastor \_\_\_\_\_, I think, later became bishop in London. He was a very, very smart man – he spoke English at least to the staff. And that was a delightful experience for me to get involved in kind of a camp-like experience, with Christian motive behind it. And that gave me the first push, and then I got in later to Sweden, and that's what changed everything for me.

- Claire Donnelly:* Would you describe your life as being an authentic life or inauthentic?
- Rolf Muuss:* How do you define "authentic"?
- Claire Donnelly:* How would you define "authentic," I guess is the better question?
- Rolf Muuss:* I don't know what you mean by "authentic" – how can it be unauthentic, my life?
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I agree, that's – I don't know how I feel about that question.
- Rolf Muuss:* That's a silly question, I think.
- Claire Donnelly:* I agree.
- Rolf Muuss:* I mean, I have no regrets; I have done well in my life, and I have accomplished things in my life. That bookshelf there are the books that I wrote.
- Claire Donnelly:* Wow.
- Rolf Muuss:* Yes, all of them.
- Claire Donnelly:* All this shelf?
- Rolf Muuss:* [Crosstalk] that shelf.
- Claire Donnelly:* Wow, that's incredible.
- Rolf Muuss:* Now, some of them are translations of my book, not my book itself, and some of them are duplicates, and some of them are second, and third, and fourth edition of the same book, but after the book changed, sitting there. My life was authentic, I think. [Laughs] But I'm not sure I like that question – it seems to be a little bit silly, or it needs definition.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I agree. Skipping to the next question, so, what do you think a genuine relationship is? Or what would you consider – I guess, so the question is, tell me about the most genuine relationship you've ever had.
- Rolf Muuss:* With a woman or with a friend? [Laughs]
- Claire Donnelly:* I guess either/or. Sorry, I guess – so, our professor made the questions, and –

- Rolf Muuss:* I know right, but tell him, that that's a crucial difference, whether you define your relationship with a lover, or your wife, or with your best friend – I mean, it's all the difference in the world.
- Claire Donnelly:* How about, I guess I'm curious as to what do you think is the most genuine friendship you've ever had, or a genuine friendship, or – I don't like the questions that are, like, "most" or "the best" kind of thing. So, what would you say would be a particularly genuine relationship that you've valued in your life, or friendship?
- Rolf Muuss:* There are many good friends I've had – some of them have died and some of them still live. I don't know what is the characteristic, I mean; the basic idea is a great deal of mutuality in terms of communicating and understanding each other. And we're seeing eye-to-eye on \_\_\_\_\_ major issue and not disagreeing on some, but on major issues seeing eye-to-eye. But, see, there are so many wonderful relationships that it's difficult to pinpoint one. Because there even were fantastic teachers I had in Teacher College – one of my professors was very good. I had a lecture on Kierkegaard, and I was his only student so that was very *[Laughs]* And he was a wonderful person – he actually came to our wedding and gave a little speech, and later on he became president of the college. But he visited me, once, even in America, so, I mean, that was a wonderful relationship on a teacher-student basis.
- Claire Donnelly:* So, what would you say makes those relationships more genuine than other friendships that you've experienced?
- Rolf Muuss:* Oh, that the issue was not a material advantage one, but a personal enrichment and personal support, and respect, and even respect for different opinions.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I think that definitely is crucial to a genuine relationship.
- Rolf Muuss:* Yes, yes, yes.
- Claire Donnelly:* The next one is asking about if you could talk to me about the relationship between freedom and happiness, in your life.
- Rolf Muuss:* I think "freedom" is a strange term to begin with, because even in Nazi Germany, we were taught we had freedom. Now, that was not freedom as you define it in America, but neither do you have as much freedom in America as you think. So, now, what was the other term, freedom and –?

- Claire Donnelly:* So, the relationship between freedom and happiness.
- Rolf Muuss:* Oh, the more freedom you have the happier you are, kind of. [Laughs] But I'm not sure that happiness demands freedom – you can be happy even if you're not free. And, I mean, you can think you are free, like we were in Nazi Germany, but really we're not free if you look back at it from your perspective 60 years later. We were not so free, after all, but we didn't know that, and we were quite happy. [Laughs] So I'm not sure the two necessarily hang together – I don't think freedom is a precondition for happiness. Now, obviously, you have to be able to live and not to be tortured, but, I mean, I lived for 12 years in a country where we now afterwards think of it as \_\_\_\_ we did not have freedom. And even in the army, I mean, there was no freedom there, it was very regulated, but still there were some happy moments. And I was happy in my flight training, and I learned to fly – that was happiness, for me. [Laughs]
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I think I interpreted this question as the regard of, like, existentialists talking about how much freedom we have in choosing everything in our life, in relation to our essence not being predetermined, but in our freedom to choose who we are. But then there is the relationship of that freedom to despair.
- Rolf Muuss:* Freedom and what?
- Claire Donnelly:* Despair
- Rolf Muuss:* And despair, yeah, okay – I'm not sure; I have to think about that one. Freedom and despair – obviously, the despair, you are not so free, I guess, or you don't feel free. How did you first start out, freedom and –?
- Claire Donnelly:* Oh, and happiness?
- Rolf Muuss:* Happiness – I don't see a relationship between the two, except in the extreme.
- Claire Donnelly:* I think that makes sense.
- Rolf Muuss:* Well, I mean, freedom – I don't know how much freedom you have, because you're born in a certain family, you're born in a certain country, you take on a job and that restricts your freedom, you cannot do as you please.

- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I think part of that conversation with existentialism that we've been having with freedom is the amount of responsibility that comes with it, too.
- Rolf Muuss:* Yes.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, so it's an interesting almost contradiction of freedom, in the sense that you're not really liberated to do these things, but –
- Rolf Muuss:* "Freedom" is a very vague term that people use for their own ideology. The minister in the church speaks of freedom in relationship to God, and the communists speak of freedom even so you don't have it, the Nazis spoke of freedom all the time and you didn't have it. And you very much are influenced by the thing that's around you; you certainly follow a pattern, whether you are – as a college professor, you have freedom, but on the other hand, you are in that role, and that role is defined for you, and you can't move out, you have no free time unless you get vacation time or a Saturday and a Sunday. *[Laughter]* So, I'm not so sold on the idea of freedom as a useful concept – I think it is abused; everybody talks about freedom, even our candidates that come up and we have to vote for, tomorrow.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, so I'm hearing, is it kind of a very subjective term?
- Rolf Muuss:* It is, it is, and every ideology, every philosophy, determines what freedom is in its own concepts.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, I think that definitely makes sense: it's very contextual.
- Rolf Muuss:* And, I mean, it even depends on whether you believe in determinism in your life or freedom, and I think there's a little bit of both. I mean, you can't jump out of where you were born, what you learned, what you did. So, I don't know whether I answered your question, but –
- Claire Donnelly:* I think you did a good job of it, yeah. *[Laughter]* And I think a lot of these questions are really up to your interpretation, 'cause there are more vague things in the class that I think we're trying to get at. But I think they're intentionally vague but it makes it hard to respond to. But I think the next one is a little less, it's – and you had actually spoken that you don't feel like you've had many regrets in your life.
- Rolf Muuss:* No, \_\_\_\_.



- Claire Donnelly:* So the question is: Have you ever regretted a choice you made?
- Rolf Muuss:* Have I regretted choices I made – I will have to think about it – I remember one choice I had as a soldier, after I finished my basic training, a major, or whatever it was, called me in and said, "You can now go either to pilot school or to officer's school – where do you wanna go?" I said, "Pilot school – damn this officer's school," [laughs] I've never regretted it. Never regretted it.
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, so it was definitely a positive choice in the –
- Rolf Muuss:* No, I mean, other choices – I don't know that I have made any regrets. I think in interpersonal relationship with women there have been some times when I have regretted not to respond to invitations. [Laughs] But in my professional life, no – I don't know if I have any real regrets.
- Claire Donnelly:* That's great; that's wonderful.
- Rolf Muuss:* I would really have to think about that, I mean, even my coming to Goucher, that was a big choice, 'cause I was at University of Iowa in a research appointment, and the research appointment was with what's called – I don't know whether you know the concept – soft money. In other words, the money came from, I think, the Kresge Foundation, to sponsor our research. So it was not a fulltime university appointment, and the university didn't pay me, but I was at the university and had the university rank of professor. But I know if the money one day would go out, I did not have a job, in other words, it was dependent on Kresge, I think it was, sponsoring that preventive \_\_\_\_\_ psychiatry research, which I was in. So I got, yeah, I got \_\_\_\_\_, there, and I at the same time got an invitation from Goucher for an interview. I thought, "Okay, I'm here east anyhow, why don't I go for the interview." And apparently they liked me, and I got a feeling that they liked me, and they at the finals asked – the woman asked me, the chairman – "What will it take to get you here?" I said, "If you give me the rank of associate professor, I will come," and they did. [Laughs]
- Claire Donnelly:* Excellent, that's good negotiating. [Laughs]
- Rolf Muuss:* So, I became associate professor two years after I got my Ph.D.
- Claire Donnelly:* Wow, that's impressive.
- Rolf Muuss:* And of course, then they gave me full professor a couple of years later – I was a full professor before I was 40. So that was a great

choice, but I don't have any regrets about it, and circumstances were. Because, actually, the research project at the University of Iowa eventually did go to some other place and was moved, so I did the right thing, in retrospect, I think.

*Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, no, it sounds like it. So this one's an interesting question: In regards to the theme of living for yourself versus being for others, what kind of compromises have you made in your life when it comes to being for yourself versus making others happy with you?

*Rolf Muuss:* Mm – I'd have to sink in, first. *[Laughs]* That's a difficult question. What kind of compromises I have made living for others and living for myself – *[brief silence]* I don't know that I made any compromises. I think the situation, if there was a need to help others or do for others, I did it. And I don't think I compromised my own wellbeing in the process. On the other hand, I hope at least I have not put my own wellbeing before the wellbeing of other people. Obviously, in a marriage, you have to make compromises sometimes, and that's inevitable, it's part of life. And I'm not sure whether I have bent over one way or the other, but I think I have tried to do both. I mean, I would have to think – *[brief silence]* yeah, I don't know that I recollect of having put myself ahead of others, or put others totally ahead of myself, at least consciously. Now, I think indirectly I probably have done some of those things, on both sides.

*Claire Donnelly:* Do you think you have struck a good balance between living for yourself and others?

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes, I think so. I think so.

*Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, it sounded like you were saying that bent over both ways, and kept it.

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes, I think it has gone both ways and in different situations might be different.

*Claire Donnelly:* How do you think that balance has affected the quality of your life?

*Rolf Muuss:* How that affects the quality of my life? I think it was a good compromise. *[Laughs]* I don't have many regrets in my life, so, I'm not complaining or concerned about the quality of my life. I mean, there have been times when I wish I would be back in Germany, but then I was married and my wife did not want to come to Germany, so, that was not an option. But, you know, I visited

Germany quite frequently, in the '80s and '90s, because I was invited as a speaker to present material to the German-speaking pediatrician in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, and northern Italy. Now did that mean I put myself ahead of my wife \_\_\_\_\_ that to some extent, I think, because she had a child here that needed to be taken care of, and she couldn't come along. So, did I put myself ahead – but I thought that was something that was needed for the – at least what they claimed the doctor they didn't have psychology and didn't have any adolescent.

And at that time, I don't know what I told you, the German pediatrician and the medical training did not include psychology. And so, when the pediatrician were confronted with family problems, in the '70s and '80s, of disobedience, smoking, drugs, sex, you name it, the whole gamut, they were somewhat at a loss. And so they felt a great need to have somebody who specializes in adolescent development come and talk to them, and I did that for ten years. So again, did I put my own desire ahead of my wife, or ahead of, it was simply kind of decisions we make. I'm not sure whether that was a conscious decision one way or another, but it was an opportunity that came my way, and I took it.

*Claire Donnelly:* So, this is a big question, I guess – this one is: How do you experience the passing of time?

*Rolf Muuss:* It goes too fast.

*Claire Donnelly:* Goes too fast, yeah.

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes, yes, all the time. I have no quarrel with time, but particularly here, I am slower in everything I do, so time goes too fast, for me. I don't know boredom, from personal experience, because I always have something to do – I read, I watch TV, I participate in some of the activities that are offered here. So again, how was the question?

*Claire Donnelly:* How do you experience the passing of time?

*Rolf Muuss:* It is, yes, one of the features of life that you accept the way it is: I can't change it, I can't speed it up. It's one thing in which I have no freedom, so, if you have no freedom, you'd better accept it and be happy with it. So, I cannot complain about time, and like I said, I wish it would go slower sometimes, but it certainly doesn't, and I have no control over time.

*Claire Donnelly:* Has that always been your experience with time?

- Rolf Muuss:* Oh, I always have accepted time as being a natural given that is beyond my control. Have I used it wisely, always? I don't know – that's a different question, I think, and probably there have been times when I could have used it better. Often, I used it wisely – I accomplished a lot in the time I had. But, no, I have no quarrel with time – it's one of the things about which we have no freedom, at all, and if you quarrel against time, that increases unhappiness. So, I am happy because I can live this time. I just got a letter from a young woman who turned 50 and is very unhappy about being 50. And I told her, "There's nothing you can do – it's water under the dam, and just be happy of the 50 years you have ahead of yourself, rather than the 50 years behind."
- Claire Donnelly:* That's a good perspective. So, sometimes you hear people talk about "living in the moment" – what does that expression mean to you?
- Rolf Muuss:* Hm, living in the moment – I guess we all live in the moment, because we can't live in the past, and we can't live in the future. That's the whole idea of Schopenhauer, and we are living at the moment. This one quote we used to pick out of the book – I'm not sure that I find it at the moment. But I will have to look it up for you, because it's very powerful, and I'm a writer, and it made sense to me that, sure, you can think of the past and reminisce and enjoy the experience you have had, but you can't go back into the past. So, you have to live with what happened in the past, so you live at the moment, and what brings tomorrow, I don't know. Like I have a heart attack and I don't know what happens. There are things that happen all the time, but you don't know. Let's see if I can find that quote from Schopenhauer – very appropriate with the questions, and I just thought about it, last night. Have another one of these.
- Claire Donnelly:* Oh, thank you. *[Brief silence]*
- [Side conversation] [Brief silence]*
- And what book is this? Is this the same author?
- Rolf Muuss:* Yes, same author – *Schopenhauer's Cure*. *[Brief silence]* Okay, here it is. Now this is one woman, and the group therapy group goes to India, and – of that we must not think \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the Indian guys – teach us that it is only the present we must inhabit. Yesterday and tomorrow do not exist. Past remembrances, future longings, only produce disquiet. The past equanimity lies in the observing of the present, and allowing it to float undisturbed on the river of our awareness.

- Claire Donnelly:* That's a good quote. That's perfect for what –
- Rolf Muuss:* Right there by my little check of the last paragraph. I'm glad I found it. *[Laughs]*
- Claire Donnelly:* Yeah, do you mind if I take a picture of it?
- Rolf Muuss:* No, I don't mind.
- Claire Donnelly:* That way, I can remember it. *[Brief silence]*
- Rolf Muuss:* Yes, I will put in my collection of nice quotes, and I have quite a few on different topics.
- Claire Donnelly:* So do you think living in the moment is a good way to live?
- Rolf Muuss:* It's the only way. You can't live in the past, and you can't live in the future. Because the past is gone, and you can play it back like a movie and enjoy it or dread it, whatever happened to you, but you cannot go back. The future you don't know. Again, you can make plans and you can anticipate what you want to do, or what you'd like to do, or what you should do, but often it doesn't work out that way. So you're better off being aware enough today, and live, like he said, let that be your awareness, and to take things as they come.
- Claire Donnelly:* So, for the 11th question, this one is an interesting question in the regards of mortality. So, the question is, would you say that you are at odds or at peace with your own mortality?
- Rolf Muuss:* Oh, I'm at peace with my own mortality. I live on borrowed time, as I always claim, because I have had so many near-death experiences in the war and before. I mean, once, a bullet flew past my ear – I could feel the wind, but it didn't hit me. *[Laughter]* And another time, I was guarding at an airport at the airplanes, or, ammunition, \_\_\_\_\_, I guess it was, we were guarding. And we had those high boots, the German army, and, you know, the German hand grenade is different from the American. It has a long wooden shaft, and then the detonation tab on there, and it has a screw chip on it. And we put that in the –
- Claire Donnelly:* In your boot, to hold onto it?
- Rolf Muuss:* In boots, yes. And when I pulled it out, the thing had come loose, and the activating thing got pulled off, but it didn't explode. I mean, in the first moment, I didn't know, of course, what

happened, but when they later told me, *[laughs]* it would've exploded right in my face. And I've had a number of experiences like that. I mean, at one point, I was a messenger from the troops on the ground to the battalion headquarter. And I was running down the street, and then the American pilot came and bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, shooting me, and I threw myself over into the ditch, and at that moment it passed me. So, if I had been on the street for two-three seconds longer, I would've been hit right. There are lots of things like that, that happened. And, I mean, even car accidents sometimes are scary, and how close you come to injury or death.

*Claire Donnelly:* So, the additional follow-up question is, like, how did you come to be that way of how you feel about coming to peace with your mortality? And I know you've explained that having the perspective of living on borrowed time has kind of helped to keep you at peace with your mortality. But has anything else helped you to get that peace?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, I guess death always was part of life. Well, there's another nice quote, there: It is strange we give so much thought to death, when we turn into something we don't know. We don't turn any thought to what happened to us before birth, *[laughs]* because we don't know. But I guess growing up in Nazi Germany, as a soldier in particular, I mean, death was not so scary because it happened all the time all around you. I mean, 8 million people were killed in Germany alone, and 50 million in the world. And, I mean, many, many of my friends got killed in World War II, so it always was part of the pattern. Mortality is part of life; now, it becomes a problem, and a very terrible trauma that happened so early. My son – the picture there – Mike, he got killed when he was not even 50. That's when it becomes very, very painful.

Now, with my wife, she was sick for three years before, and in the end, it was a blessing, because she suffered pain and discomfort, and I had to tube feed her, and all kinds of problems. And there was no quality to life anymore, in the last couple of months; even in the last year, it was basically sitting by her side and holding her hand, kind of – very difficult. So I've been in touch with death, and, I mean, there are many, many other experiences like that, where if – I mean, once I had one of my first night flights alone; it was a two-engine airplane, one of the German bombers. I was flying from Prague, and we had a certain target to reach, and then we turned around and flew back. And I asked the navigator to get location, since I lost contact with the ground.

So, we were up in the air – Czechoslovakia is surrounded by a whole ring of mountains which are 3-4,000 feet high, and that was higher than we were supposed to fly. So, we were flying basically blind, without knowing where we were going, and I had no idea what would happen. But again, I don't think I experienced fear; I was in charge of the plane. And finally, I saw the big flames of the city, and the Czechoslovakia Pilsen where they had big army factories and big furnaces. And I recognized that, and then I said, "I know where we are, now," and I turned around, and pretty soon afterwards I saw the airport. But again, one other group of pro pilots of mine must've had the same experience: they flew on and hit the mountains and all dead. So, I mean, if I had not come to the one location on the ground that I could recognize 3,000 feet up, I might've been dead. So there are many experiences like that. And as a soldier, you simply live with it and take it as a matter of fact.

*Claire Donnelly:* So sometimes in life people feel things deeply and powerfully, and other times they feel more detached or numb. Can you tell me about a time when you felt like you were living in a very intense and vivid and clear mentality, where things were just especially lively for you?

*Rolf Muuss:* Oh, in retrospect, there were certainly – the time in Sweden was one of those times. And my lecture trips to Germany, in the late '70s-'80s, every year, they were high-intense, because I was a keynote speaker, and I gave a seminar on rational emotive therapy, and those were intense experiences. Yes, they were, and, I mean, even as a soldier flying was intense. So, yes, I have had some – what was the question, again?

*Claire Donnelly:* It was a long-worded question, but it was basically if you could share a time where you felt that intense and lively experience.

*Rolf Muuss:* Yes, yes, yes. And, I mean, many of the vacation trips – in other words, things that are, in retrospect, very alive; and sea voyages – I mean, I took one trip through the Baltic, with my cousins, and the ship was resigned to stop at every major harbor and capitals on the Baltic: Stockholm, Copenhagen, Helsinki, \_\_\_\_\_, and then in the **Dansk** all the way we had a stoppage day. And that was very intense, and we travelled in the cities by boat or by bus. So those things that are in memory \_\_\_\_\_ the trip, and the trips in Germany, they are certainly the more intense, in retrospect, because that's what you remember. While, the 50 years at Goucher, yes, I can recall certain individual events and happenings, but that was what you were supposed to do and kind of run-of-the-mill, but the in-between are the highlights.

*Claire Donnelly:* Yes, yeah, that makes sense. So my last question is if you could tell me about a time, or event, where you felt especially meaningful or filled with meaning.

*Rolf Muuss:* *[Brief silence]* My life has been meaningful all along. *[Laughs]* Sweden was meaningful; the research I did in Iowa was a very meaningful project, called preventive psychiatry for children. And I did the research for it, and that was very meaningful and I did a lot of application on that. But even the flying and the air force, to me, I mean, in retrospect, I know I was fighting for the wrong side, but then I didn't know that. *[Laughs]* I thought the other guys were on the wrong side. So, yes, I have had very intense and meaningful events, and like I said, the lectures in northern Italy that I gave for ten years were like that.

*Claire Donnelly:* Is there anything else you wanted to add, before we conclude?

*Rolf Muuss:* No. Do you have any questions you want to ask?

*Claire Donnelly:* I think that's good. Thank you so much for sharing all these very intimate stories.

*Rolf Muuss:* Have some more of these.

*Claire Donnelly:* Oh, thanks, I'll take one more – thank you very much. Yeah, and I think that is all we have, so, thank you, and we'll conclude.

*[End of Audio]*