



**ELENA**

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STORIES OF MY LIFE



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## IMPRINT

„Stories of my life“  
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## STORIES

The years of my life have passed quickly. I still remember my first day at school, the milk and cocoa we were given at recess. I remember how I struggled to learn to ride a bicycle and how I begged my father again and again not to let me go - until I was able to do it and loved it.

I have gone through many stages in my life, and God knows they were not all beautiful ones. But they have all made me who I am today, and that is why I believe it has been good.

I am grateful for my children, for the grandchildren I am allowed to have, with whom I have been able to laugh and sometimes cry. For every trip I have made and thus seen the big world.

I would like to tell about all this in this book. Perhaps there is someone who would like to know "how life used to be", as my grandmother used to say - and now I have reached that age myself.

I wish - like almost every person, I think - to be remembered fondly.

I thank my children who gave me this gift and on the basis of which I was able to travel through my life for a whole year. Many memories I thought I had lost. Through the questions in this book I was reminded of them again and can now share them with others.

I therefore dedicate this book to my dear family and my descendants.

Thank you for the wonderful time with you!



## YOUTH TIME

### WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU TO LEARN TO DRIVE?

Very exciting, because I didn't learn to drive in driving school. We regularly grabbed the car keys of a friend's parents secretly around midnight on weekends after they had fallen asleep. We pushed the car as quietly as we could out of the garage and along the entire street, then started it up and drove around for 1-2 hours. There were four of us, all between the ages of 16 and 18, and we took turns teaching each other. Fortunately, we were never caught, even if the one or other oncoming police car drove our pulse up. Of course, my driving instructor knew right away in the first driving lesson and could only shake his head.





## **DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORIES OF YOUR TIME IN YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS?**

I can still remember the voluntary foreign missions organized by a Christian youth group, on which I went twice. The first time we went to Greece in a bus with almost sixty young people. During the first week, we had volunteered to renovate a rather run-down school center, that is, to paint the rooms and do some repairs, because the state was on the verge of bankruptcy and had no budget for it. At the end of the week, a man came to us, burst into tears and told us how much he basically hated Germans because they took everything away from him during World War II. He said that our action would change his mind about a whole nation and thanked us. The second week was more vacation and free time, which we spent partly on the beach. The second foreign assignment took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the civil war had visibly left its mark. There we built a large and colorful playground in a district where there was nothing but gray concrete.

## YESTERDAY & TODAY

### HOW WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SIBLINGS, DID YOU OFTEN FIGHT?

When we were kids, we had a lot of fights. I remember a situation on vacation when my mother bought my little brother and me a complete cowboy outfit including a toy rifle. My brother's gun lasted just three hours before he hit me on the head so hard that it broke in half. Once I went to school with a bruise on my ear because we had fought in the bathroom in the morning. I tried to hide this by pulling the hood of my sweater halfway over my head so that the ear was hidden. My English teacher noticed this and asked me what I was hiding there and since I couldn't admit to having taken a beating from my little brother, I said, "My little brother drew on my ear with a felt-tip pen this morning." Basically, I always had a strong sense of responsibility and therefore, as a big brother, I was never able to exert the kind of violence on my little brother that I would have been capable of physically. Of course, we also had many good and fun experiences together and the older we got, the less often we argued. Since I moved out for my studies, we never had a fight again, even though we later lived together in the same apartment for a year.



## WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES?

One of my fondest childhood memories has to do with my passion at the time, soccer. I had to leave the soccer club after six years because the games and tournaments always took place on Sundays and my parents felt that Sunday services were more important. My coach saw great potential in me, called home often and tried to dissuade my parents from signing me off. Seeing no hope in this, he asked if I could join the team one last time in a tournament. Not only did my parents allow it, they both came to watch. I gave it my all, scored a few goals, was allowed to shoot at the goal from the kickoff spot right at kickoff, and we scored 1st place and received (another) gold medal. That was a very nice day.



## JOB & CAREER

### DID YOU HAVE A PART-TIME JOB DURING SCHOOL?

Relatively early, at about eleven years old, I started helping my brothers deliver newspapers. I did this until I was 16 years old, because then I applied for a part-time job at McDonalds. I worked there for almost 4 years and was used in all areas, be it in the kitchen, at the cash register, at the DriveIn or cleaning in the restaurant. There I had the experience for the first time that the worst job could be more than bearable with the right employees. We had so much fun that I didn't mind when others made fun of me. I can still remember being late for class once and my teacher saying out loud, "Well, just got that last BigMac over the counter?" It's good that I could and can laugh at myself.

