

Richard Weinstein



This is a picture of my dad Richard Weinstein. The photo was taken in Prague in the 1930s.

My dad was born in 1896 in Ceske Budejovice and came from a German-speaking family.

At home he spoke German and Czech with my mother, but because my brother and I went to Czech schools, we spoke only Czech at home.

My father studied medicine and worked all his life as a doctor. He was a person with a great sense of humor. A lot of his patients were children; when necessary he would remove their tonsils or polyps and so forth.

He was great with them, for he joked around, did magic tricks and knew how to amuse them. His humor came out mainly when he was with the family and among friends, but otherwise he was quite a withdrawn person. He was not very tall; he had a lot of hair. He was a Jew and felt like he was a Jew.

They went to the synagogue on traditional Jewish holidays, but I think that this was mainly in keeping with tradition rather than being religious.

My parents got married in 1921 and then moved to the town of Most.

I wouldn't want to say how my dad was as a doctor, but children loved him and he would always have a chat with his adult patients. I can remember two incidents that he used to mention.

One of his patients was an elderly gentleman who had lost most of his hearing. There weren't the facilities in those days and there was little else my dad could do for him. So all he did was to blow through his ears and give them a clean.

He then asked him to make an appointment for a checkup so he could see how things were shaping up. As the gentleman couldn't hear very well, my dad pointed to the calendar to show him when he was supposed to come back.

The patient said to him: 'Doctor, my eyes are ok; it's my ears that aren't so good!' Then there was another patient who couldn't hear well and found it so unpleasant that he couldn't hear what was being said around him that it drove him to despair.

My dad turned to him and said: 'How old are you?', and he replied: 'Seventy-five,' and to that my dad said: 'Well, you must have heard enough things by now, it's always the same stuff anyway.'

In his old age, my dad, too, couldn't hear very well. He had a hearing aid but he didn't wear it, for he followed his own advice.