

Guidelines for Please Get To Know Me Life Story Book

A *Life Story Book* written in a narrative style much like a novel is easy to read many times over. Sitting together while using quiet conversation to access memories is much less stressful for both the writer as well as for the elder than filling in a questionnaire. Memories are stored in many places in the brain, and may be triggered by many suggestions. So if at one time you had a blue Buick. That memory may be stored and accessed by thinking of a certain blue, a car, the garage- many different stored memories. If that memory had an emotional meaning for you such as *your first car*. That memory would be even more easily accessed because emotion reinforces a memory. When something happens that is emotionally memorable we tend to:

- Make a conscious decision to remember it
- Relive the event in our minds
- Tell others about it and in so doing, also hear ourselves tell the story and reinforce it in our minds
- Think about the event, analyze and cherish

This is why *your* wedding is so much more memorable than the many others you have attended. This is why memories of service in the military are so memorable, because of the many reasons it was so emotional.

Using props such as pictures and then posing questions or make statements about the object may trigger memories. When using a question, make sure the answer is in the question. Such as : Instead of – “Did you walk to school?” say “ I bet it was really cold in winter when you walked to school”. Whenever you give *cues* to the elder and help them remember, you present yourself as a safe person to reminisce with.

Find a quiet place, and pick a time when both the writer and elder are well rested and in a good mood.

Who I am: Nationality, family tree and relationship to elder. Who were your parents, have you been married, children, grandchildren. Are you an animal lover, a sports enthusiast, a volunteer, a nature lover, an artist? Are you a reader, what books do you enjoy? What are your very favorite foods?

Where I have Been: Places you have lived, where you grew up. Do you remember how the rooms looked, or the outside environment? How far was the grocery store, school or Church? Did you use public transportation or have a car. Have you traveled to other countries or stayed closer to home? Were you in the military, did you travel, what was that like?

What I have done Key life events graduations, awards, recognition, work history (at home and in the market place) what did you or didn't you like about your work. What did you do in retirement? Did you hold any positions of leadership in clubs, Church or organizations?

What I want to be remembered for: Personality; happy, joker, quiet. Accomplishments. Were you always known as a great cook, story teller, and religious affiliation? What advice do you have and what would you want future generations to know about you?

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