



# REMINISCENCE WRITING:

## CREATING YOUR WRITTEN LEGACY FOR YOURSELF AND THE NEXT GENERATION

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Did you know that, according to medical researchers, the immune system actually grows stronger when you write about true events that you discover in your memory? However, the task of writing your life story may seem overwhelming for even experienced writers. One of the measures of a life well lived must surely be the stories that flow from memories across a lifetime of both the incredible and the simple experiences each of us hold in our mind and our hearts. Be sure that the beauty and uniqueness of your own life is documented for generations to come!



### Health Benefits to Writing Your Own Story:

1. Improved mood disorders
2. Improved health after a heart attack
3. Decreased doctor visits
4. Boost in memory
5. Stronger immune system
6. Help reduce symptoms among cancer patients





### 3 Paths for the Purpose of Writing Your Own Story

1. **Write your own story for yourself;** taking time to write your memories and the stories from your life can help you to develop a better understanding of who you are today and how you got where you are. Often times in our lives we are unable to process events as they are happening; we are just getting through the days. By recalling and writing about these events later, we are able to better understand the things that we did or did not do and why those choices are the ones we made.
2. **Write to Leave a Legacy;** we live in a busy world today. The days of lingering Sunday dinners and long evenings spent chatting on the porch are a rarity for many of us. Do your children, grandchildren, and other loved ones of the next generations know the story of your life? Take time to write about your childhood and the stories that come with it, as well as early rites of passage experiences, careers or romances. Gifting your family a book of you own stories of who you are and the events that made you the person you are today may be the most cherished story they ever read for generations to come.
3. **Write to Preserve Family History;** the times are constantly changing! How did you experience the events of the history of your time? Large events such as wars, depressions, and technologies are things to consider. But also small memories such as dress codes at school, phones with party lines and favorite music of earlier days are great things to consider in your writing.



## **Getting Started!**

### **Determine your method of writing**

Do you feel most comfortable using a computer? Typewriter? Or pen and paper? Not able to use any of those due to eyesight or other medical conditions? Consider using a handheld voice recorder and then enlist the help of a loved one to transcribe onto paper.

### **Create a Schedule**

Establish a daily or weekly schedule, whatever works best for you, then stick to it! Examples would include 10 minutes a day or 1 page a day.

### **Determine your organization**

What is the easiest way for you to organize your life story?

**Chronological:** Determine an increment range. For example 0-5 years old, 5-10 years old, etc.

**Life Experiences:** Consider themes such as Childhood family, Romance, Education, Religion, Career, Cooking/Food, Holidays/Traditions, etc. Use this to guide writing your memories.

**Milestones:** Using life altering events can also be a good way to organize your life story. Milestone may include events such as births, deaths, marriage and moving. You may also consider using 'firsts' to get your writing flowing: first date, first meal cooked, first childbirth, etc.



35 Prompts to get you started. . . .

1. What life lesson did you learn the hard way?
2. Describe a time when your life took an unpredictable turn?
3. Tell about a friend from each major stage of your life.
4. What do you wish you could have asked your parents?
5. What message would you like to send to your Mother? Father?
6. What one thing did you save that belonged to your parents? As you look at it, what do you think/feel?
7. What is the best gift you ever received? Explain the circumstances around receiving it.
8. What is the most enjoyable gift you ever gave to someone else? Explain.
9. Write about several qualities of you grandparents that you would most like you own grandchildren to possess.
10. Write about how your family handled the bad times during your early years: divorce, death, arguments, estrangements, etc.
11. Were there any cautionary tales when you were growing up? Write about one.
12. When you were a child who could you always go to for honest answers? Explain who, explain why.
13. Write about a time when you struggled with your identity and self-worth. (This may be helpful to a grandchild!)
14. What is your faith and how do you experience it? Do you recall any specific memories/events of baptism, confirmation, communion, etc.?
15. List 5 things you like about yourself and write a 50 word paragraph on each of them.
16. Write about something you have learned from forgiveness.
17. Write about something you have learned from discipline.



18. Write about a time your family experiences a flood or drought. Describe it and the impact on your family.
19. Describe the coldest and harshest winter you can remember.
20. How did your family heat your home when you were growing up? How did you keep warm?
21. Write about a time when your Father knew best.
22. Write about a time you were amazed by your Mother's abilities.
23. Write about a time when you and your spouse were wild, spontaneous, and fun.
24. Make a list for your grandchildren of some of the things you consider to be romantic.
25. What kinds of make-believe do you remember playing as a child?
26. Name and describe the pets you had when you were in grade school. Write about them.
27. What do you remember about the first day of school? Write about it.
28. What did you see going on around you at meal time when you were a child?
29. What is your favorite meal and why?
30. Did you have a memorable babysitting experience when you were a teenager? Explain.
31. Write about a time you remember being a very powerful experiences with you parents, grandparents or children.
32. Write about you most romantic experience ever.
33. Describe the house your family lives in in the first years of your life.
34. Describe all of the nicknames of your siblings, and friends and the reason for them
35. Who is the one person you really miss during the holidays? Why?



### **Still Struggling with getting started or organization?**

*There are multiple workbooks to help you get started! Here are a few suggestions:*

**Book of Myself: A Do-It Yourself Autobiography in 20 Questions**

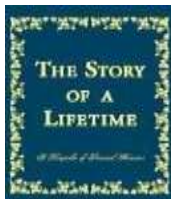


[Carl Marshall](#), [David Marshall](#)

A keepsake fill-in book contains more than two hundred prompts divided into three life phases--Early, Middle, and Later Years--and separates each phase into five subject categories--Family, Friends, Education, Work/Responsibilities

**The Story of a Lifetime: A Keepsake of Personal Memoirs (Green)**

[Stephen Pavuk](#); [Pamela Pavuk](#)



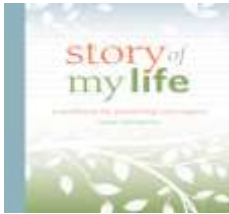
Uniquely personal gift book that expresses to the recipient the elegant sentiment: "Your life is important to me. I value where you've been, what you've done and who you are. Please tell me more." Enables the recipient to write his or her life story and perspective with ease by answering almost 500 thought-provoking questions right in the book.

Passes along a legacy of wisdom and knowledge gained from experience. Preserves special memories and instills appreciation for family history. Enhances personal growth and strengthens bonds with loved ones.



### **Story of My Life**

Sunny Jane Morton



Record the stories of your life--or a loved one's--for posterity! The *Story of My Life* workbook makes it easy: Simply follow the prompts to preserve memories from your entire life. The book includes sections on parents, siblings, childhood, high school, career and adulthood. There's also space to note vital statistics about yourself and immediate family members as a genealogical

record. A great gift for your children to learn about their parents' lives or the jumping-off point for writing a memoir, the *Story of My Life* workbook will help you preserve your memories for generations to come.

### **Memories for My Grandchild: A Keepsake to Remember**

[Suzanne Zenkel](#) (Author), [Margaret Rubiano](#) (Illustrator)



Guided questions and prompts will help you tell your grandchildren (and great-grandchildren to come) all about your childhood and teen years; your education, love, and marriage; work, community, religion, military service; parenthood and family life; and, of course, grandparenthood!

### ***Grandparent's Memory Book: Did you really walk 5 miles to school?***

Grandparent Company



Gift book for grandparents includes questions asked by grandchildren of all ages for grandparents to answer with lined space to fill in answers. Topics include family history, school years, life as a grandparent, and many more. Share memories and cherish for years to come.



