



The Journey of A Life

Welcome to Lasting Legacy Online. We're glad you are here and excited for you to start sharing your story. Please print off our 75 question guide to help get you started. These questions correspond with prompted guides online or can be used simply as a guide to get you started writing your own story. If you get stuck or have questions, please reach out to us at Elaine@LastingLegacyOnline.com

Sincerely,



Elaine Schwartz, Co-Founder
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The Early Years of my Childhood

3. What was your birth date and what time were you born, if you know?
4. What building were you born in and its location?
5. What was your father's name?
6. What was your mother's name?
7. What were your maternal grandparent's names?
8. At the time of your birth, describe if they were alive and where they lived, or if they had both died, when, etc.
9. What were your paternal grandparent's names?
10. At the time of your birth, describe if your paternal grandparents were alive and where they lived. If they had both died, mention when.
11. Were you the first, second, third...or only child born to your parents?
12. If applicable, describe your siblings and share their birthdates. Describe any memory of each of your siblings when you were young.
13. What was the earliest memory of your childhood?



14. Describe what you remember about your parents or the persons who raised you. Examples: their ancestry, their appearance, their temperament, special words of encouragement they gave you, what their nicknames were, what talents they had, their occupations, their hobbies. What comes to mind first when you think of each one, i.e. this can be good or bad.

Tell a favorite memory about what you and your mother did together; and another one on what you and your father did together.

15. If you knew your grandparents, tell in a few paragraphs what you remember about them. Examples: visiting their home, going places together. Start at your youngest age. If your grandparents were not living, or you did not have contact with them, tell about other older adults you were close to who impacted your life. Describe what they did for a living, where they came from, and lived while you were growing up.
16. Did you have a favorite childhood story, nursery rhyme or poem? If so, describe it and why it was your favorite. Also, describe your favorite toy, or time you loved having with you and playing with.



My Adolescent and Early School Years

17. Describe where you went to school and how old you were.
18. How many children were in your class, what were some of your teacher's names, and what was your favorite subject?
19. What did you do when you came home from school and who would be there? What games did you play with your siblings or friends on weekends? Describe one of these events and name your best friends.
20. What do you remember about your childhood illnesses; who would take care of you, and what food did you eat to feel better?
21. Describe your grade school memories – include recess activities, drills, favorite places in the school, particular holidays, programs, athletic activities.
22. During the summers of your younger childhood years (before high school) describe your memories of specific vacations, summer jobs and working, visiting relatives, and relatives or friends coming to stay at your house.



My Coming of Age – My Teenage Years and early Twenties

This is when you came of age physically and spiritually, crossing through puberty can be gracious and joyous, but more often it is like crossing a minefield, and we do not know where the bombs are buried. In some ways, we recognize that we are merely passengers, passengers on a train, and we go where the track goes. We learn to see that the decisions we make and actions we take, at this stage of our lives, often influence our destination in life.

23. Describe when you felt like an adult for the first time.
What did you want to be when you were all grown up and on your own?
24. Tell about your closest friends in high school. What did you do together? How long did these friendships last?
25. What other activities at school were you involved with other than classes, like sports or clubs/ Tell about what you liked about them or disliked.
26. Did you have a “rites of passage” into adulthood with a special faith or family celebration? If so, describe what happened and where spirituality, it became important to you. Describe when it became significant and how you became more involved in your faith.
27. Do you remember a time when you got lost, on a road, in a building, etc.? Describe where you were and the incident around finding your way.
28. If you graduated from high school, describe the graduation, i.e. where, how many in your class, how you celebrated.



29. What do you remember was your first job “for pay” and how much did you make and what did you have to do?
30. Where did you live when you moved out of the home where you were raised?
31. If you attended college, tell where you went, and describe your college years, such as what you majored in, your relationships, other activities. If you didn’t attend college tell about the years of your life when you were ages 18 through 26.
32. If you found a significant other, (wife, husband, etc.); describe how you met, your courtship and how you proposed or were proposed to, your wedding, your honeymoon and where you lived, and any other memory about those early days with your mate. Describe what you like most about your mate then, and through the years.
33. Describe the little things you did for each other, the big things you did, and what you did with that fostered your relationship. If this marriage did not last, describe why, i.e. death, divorce, etc.



My Adulthood

34. Describe what you remember about the births of your children, raising them, and any other special memories of when they were little. If you did not have children, tell about children you were close to and felt a part of their growing up, or about your pets, if you had any, as an adult.
35. Describe your work life, what you did, where you worked, and how long you worked there, up until your retirement. Start with your first job before 30.
36. During these years, what were your hobbies, or what did you do in the hours you didn't work. What was your favorite thing to do with your family or friends?
37. Describe your favorite color, song, and special past-time? Describe the best place in the world you ever visited and what you liked about it.
38. If something happened to your first significant other and another significant other came into your life, tell how you met and what you remember about those early times together, and about any other significant other in your life. If these were the most significant loved ones in your life, go into great detail about these memories.
39. Describe special memories about each of your children or other special members of the family, such as a prized pet. Share a specific event for each one and what made them special.
40. Tell about a special place or a building you remember that no longer exists, or has changed significantly.



41. What do you feel the most proud of as an accomplishment in your personal life? Did you receive any medals or other commendations? What were they for and who gave them to you? Did you display them and where?
42. What do you feel the most proud of as an accomplishment in your career life?
43. If you made some type of positive impact on your community, your state, or nation, that you would like future generations to know about, describe what it was in detail. Even if it was a small compensation, describe what you felt was the most gratifying in giving to others, in the form of giving of yourself. Were you blessed with knowledge you shared, with creative talents you shared, with wealth you shared? Describe your contributions as small or as large as you want.



Other Life Memories

44. Did you have a green thumb or other “creative” talents like making things? What were they?
45. Name three to five people who made an impact on your life, how, and why it was important to you.
46. If you ever attended family reunions, tell where they were and what you remember about them. What were some of the last names other than yours at these reunions?
47. When you remember people coming to your house, describe who used the front door versus the back door, both as a child and as an adult.
48. Describe what chores you had to do at home as a youngster and as a teenager and if you had your children perform these chores.
49. Did you have any superstitions in your life, i.e. with sports, or ones handed down through the generations before you. Describe them in detail.
50. Did you read a daily newspaper, and if so, which one was it, and which part did you read first, or enjoy the most?
51. Over the years, what have been your favorite foods: meat dish, vegetable dish, bread, and dessert?
52. What did you feel was important to teach your children and were there lessons or traditions handed down from a previous generation?



53. Through your life what was your favorite holiday? How did you celebrate it?
54. Describe your most favorite place in the world that you visited.
55. When were the most satisfying times of your life, and when were the worst times of your life?
56. If you ever had a cause you worked for or a volunteer effort that was important to you, describe it.
57. Describe your political experiences or beliefs... What was your party affiliation, or did you not vote?
58. What has been your most significant “enlightenment” in life...what aspect of this enlightenment did you live through your life? Examples would be that “you didn’t need to prove anything to anyone, or one has to live every minute as if it were the last—to take risks, almost to the point of living recklessly”. If you could write your own epitaph (gravestone inscription about you) what would it be?
59. Tell something you admire about each of your children.
60. What did you feel was important to teach your children? Give examples. Also, tell of a time when you were frightened as a parent and worried about a child.
61. What activities did your children participate in that you either participated in or gave them encouragement?



My Golden Late Life Years

62. If you still have a mate, what have you learned about him/her over the years that you didn't know when you were first united?
63. Think about all the places you lived and describe the floor plan and other features of your favorite one. Where was it that you felt the strongest and most sense of "home"?
64. If you retired from an occupation, tell about how you spent your days and evenings, in retirement. Describe what you like about retirement, and what you don't like.
65. If grandchildren came into your life, describe memories of the first one and each one thereafter. Tell how you spent time with them.
66. Describe the loss of friends or family members, if they died. If they were the ones you turned to in tough times, describe those times, and then who became a confidant after they were gone.
67. What would you say is more satisfying in life than in the days when your parents were living? What is less satisfying?
68. What were some of the things you longed to do in the past and never did (everyone has at least one unfilled little dream that maybe a descendent will be able to do)? What was at least one thing you longed to do and did? If you can, describe in detail the first memories of your aspiration and how you pursued fulfilling that dream.



The Final Chapter

69. If you are in the final stage of your life due to an illness, describe how it came about, how you reacted, and any other aspect of looking at life and realizing your existence as you and others know it, will end.
70. If you are not terminally ill but you are in the years considered as “old age”, what are your hopes for the future? Is there anything in life you still want to do?
71. As you look back on your life, what got you in trouble, with your elders, your peers, your family, your colleagues, and how would you advise others about what you learned.
72. What advice or favorite sayings would you give male members of your family, your female heirs, or everyone in general?
- (Below are some examples. Or, you can make up your own.)*
- “Sometimes you have to take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth.”
- “You don’t drown from falling in the water, you drown from staying there.” “Celebrate when times are hard, because the good times take care of themselves.” “There’s nobody better than you in the world, and you are no better than anybody else.” “If you have a special talent, try to share it with others, but above all exploit it yourself as far as you can go.” “If you must choose between getting a job done, and getting credit for it, get the job done.” “Be a weight to none, and a buoy to all.” “You have to be forgiving of others as well as forgiving of yourself. Believe in God, whether you find him in a house of worship or the great outdoors.” “Above all, learn to laugh, and laugh at yourselves.”



National and World Event Memories

73. Many of us remember exactly what we were doing when an event occurred that “shook the world”. Examples may be when man first stepped on the moon, when the World Trade Centers in New York were struck by terrorists, when hurricanes hit many countries, when national leaders were killed. Think of the thoughts you had when any one of these events occurred and put in writing your feelings. Try to describe how old you were, where you were living, and who you were with.

The Family Tree of Names

74. What’s in a name? When we are born our names are created on a bracelet around our wrist. When we die, it is carved in stone and claims a place to dwell forever. The first words we utter as infants are mama and dada. The first words we learn to write are our names. We design and define our names even though they were chosen not by us. When we sign our correspondence, or a binding legal document, we sign our names. We could be lost in a crowd of hundreds, and found, when we hear our own name. If you were named after someone and they were alive, did you get close to that person, or feel pressured to because of your name? If you were not named after someone, do you know why you were named your name? Did you have a nickname and how did you come by it? Names are also part of our “Family Tree”. Using the far recesses of your memory list first the grandparents as far back as you can remember, or have been told about, and then list their children and their children and so on. Names also sometimes give indications of our racial heritage, which may be important to future generations. List the ones you know: My paternal grandmother was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. My paternal grandfather was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. My maternal grandmother was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. My maternal grandfather was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. My (biological) mother was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. My (biological) father was white, black, Hispanic, Asian, etc.



My Medical History

(useful for generations to come)

75. Another important personal history to generations to come may be the medical history of yourself and your family. My grandparents' major diseases and causes of death: My parents' major diseases and causes of death (if applicable): My siblings' major diseases/illnesses and causes of death, (if applicable): My Childhood Diseases: Major Illnesses: Hospitalizations: Allergies: Average life Height and Weight, Eyes and Hair Color: List any other pertinent information you would like to pass on to future generations about yourself or your ancestors.

The Epilogue

Finish your document with a final paragraph or paragraphs that relate to your closing thoughts about writing your life story. You can summarize your insights, your aspirations, and your feelings about life, about living, or about an endeavor you will continue to pursue. You can make it sound like your final thoughts, or just the beginning of another venture to your life, knowing you will have many more chapters to write. Every story has a beginning and an ending, make yours as personal as you want it to be.