

Reasons to write your life's memories (From your Heart)



I began the book, *Kind of Heart* in 1999, and it was published in 2000. This “revised edition” is the fourth printing and first revision, having come out in 2007.

It is very important to me to always recall the fond memories of days gone by. I would encourage everyone to grab pen and paper and begin **TODAY** to write your life's memories as you remember them. Don't worry about being historically accurate; just be emotionally accurate with your heart and mind as you recall the things that made you who you are today.

All of your life's experiences and adventures, whether good or bad, have gone into the making of your character. Those thoughts need to be put to the page for generations to read and learn to know you.

As you write, you will notice that one memory leads to another, and oftentimes, you will also notice that something you had long forgotten will surface. The image that returns to your mind may be a happy one, or it may be a sorrowful one. It doesn't matter; you need to record it. *Happiness comes with writing if there are memories to share, and healing comes with writing if there are fences to mend.* Either way, you are the recipient of the joy that follows. It's just an added "perk" to know that you have blessed others as well.

Be sure to put "heart" into all you write, for it is *there* that the healing, loving, and blessings begin.

And it is there that you will find a *"peace that passes all understanding."*

MEMORIES FOR STORY PROMPTS

DESCRIBE THE SCARS, CALLOUSES, ETC ON YOUR FATHER'S HANDS (how received, doing what work? Are his hands tan? Like Leather? Describe his hands in general and what reflection of his life does it give you?)

WHAT IS THE HARDEST WORK YOU REMEMBER YOUR MOTHER EVER DOING? (Describe in detail the job, what you remember about it; how it affected your mother, did you help her? Was she alone in this task or was it accomplished with help from others? Was it a physical task or an emotional one? Explain.)

DESCRIBE THE FIRST TIME YOU WITNESSED BIRTH (Either of domestic pets, farm animals, or the birth of your first child. Just the feelings and emotions you felt at such a miraculous sight. Go into detail of what you thought about, and how it affected you.)

IF YOU RECALL THE "OUTHOUSE" DAYS, DESCRIBE HOW IT WAS INSIDE THAT LITTLE HOUSE WITH THE CRESCENT SHAPE ON THE DOOR. (How many holes, were there cracks in the door letting in cold air, were there magazines to read or tear up, and corn cobs for hygiene, and were they ever turned over for pranks at Halloween, etc.) Was it ever your job to put in the lime and clean it? If you are too young to remember these little houses, then relate a memory of *hearing* about them.

DESCRIBE AN ECCENTRIC NEIGHBOR OR RELATIVE (Write about his/her personality and ways that are different from the norm. Write how this affected you, what you thought about it and how you treated this person as a result...did he/she make you laugh when you thought about him/her, or did it aggravate you to the point you didn't want to be around the person, or did you feel sorry for him/her? Explain.)

DESCRIBE THE FOOD IN YOUR SCHOOL'S CAFETERIA (This can be at any age; just talk about the food of schools in general. Was it good but you griped because the other kids did, or was it really awful? Did you take your lunch? If so, what did your mother pack in your lunch pail? Describe that, too. What feelings and emotion swell within you when you smell "school smells" today upon entering a school?)

TALK ABOUT YOUR FIRST REMEMBRANCES OF SEGREGATION (If you can remember segregation, tell of the feelings it gave you when you first learned of it. The back of the bus, the two separate restroom facilities, the restaurants that served only whites. If you are too young to remember this, then write about the way you felt when you read of it and sometimes still see it in action today. Recall all of the emotions you felt and tell of incidents of it that you saw/see.)

WRITE A MEMORY OF RECEIVING YOUR FIRST ALLOWANCE (Write of how you spent it, how much it was. Did you think it fair? Did you have earn it? Were you required to spend it as you were told? Or was it yours to do with as you wished?) All details required her to make reader 'see' your childhood through the way you spent your money, when you got it and your attitude about it.)

GIVEN ONE WORD: VICKS: AND WHAT MEMORY COMES TO YOUR MIND?

(Describe in detail this popular home health remedy. How did you react to it? Did you squirm and fuss, relent and relax? Explain all of the emotions tied up in this one remedy. If Vicks isn't a memory in your childhood, then write what is. Mentholatum? Cod Liver Oil? Castor Oil, orange juice and crackers? Phillips Milk of Magnesia? Write all about your mom's home "cures.")

DESCRIBE YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE ON A FEATHER BED MATTRESS. (Did you sink or slide? Did you rest well? Was it a good, fun, or educational experience (if your mom or grandmother made it?)

If it had been hand made, describe the process and loving care that went into the making of it. If you do not have memories as a child of feather mattresses, write of what you thought of them or were told of them.

DID YOU EVER STEAL WATERMELONS FROM A NEIGHBORING PATCH, OR PICK A FRUIT FROM AN OVERHANGING TREE THAT WAS NOT ON YOUR PROPERTY?

(Describe in detail the feeling you had in doing this, and if you were with friends, were you caught? Did it matter? Did you feel guilty? Did you tell anyone? What happened afterwards? If you can't relate to this question, pick a time that you told your first lie and elaborate on it and the consequences.

WRITE ABOUT A TRIP TO THE STORM CELLAR WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD (If you didn't have a cellars, tell of storms and how you felt and what you would do.)

WRITE OF A TEACHER WHO HAD A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON YOUR LIFE, (OR ANY ADULT THROUGHOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD WHO INFLUENCED YOU, EITHER POSITIVELY, OR NEGATIVELY.) Looking back, the first time you recall meeting this person, how she/he affected you, your life, and your decisions. How long did you stay in contact? Did you ever let him/her know of their effect?

WHAT WAS YOUR PUNISHMENT WHEN YOU DISOBEYED? (Describe the punishment, how rendered, and how you felt afterwards? What feelings welled up inside you? How did you express them? What lessons were learned? Did you ever repeat the offenses? How did your experiences with being punished effect your future in punishing your own children? Did you resent it at the time? How did you respond to it? Did you better understand it after you were grown?)

DESCRIBE A CHILDHOOD GAME (Include neighborhood games if it were in the before TV; what you played, and how you played them. Talk about your feelings when you were "IT" and when you got "CAUGHT"---talk about any board games you played, made up games, and all the rules of said games. How long you played without anyone getting mad, how many played, and if your siblings played, too.)

MY PARENTS CHOSE MY NAME BECAUSE: (Give a detailed account of how your name was chosen. Named after? For whom? Was it a name you liked? Describe some incident regarding your name. Did it turn into a nickname? What? If not, did you ever try to change it? What did you like/dislike about it?)

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN TV CAME OUT? (What did you think of it? What was your favorite show? Did it affect neighborhood, outside games? What changed in

your home when it became a household item? Did your favorite program influence your fashion styles, your ideas, and your values?) If you just have always known of TV being around, tell how its effect was felt in your home and what you enjoyed about it? Or **disliked about it? If too young to remember TV's debut, what are your first memories of watching it?**

WRITE OF YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT AS A CHILD. (This can cover any incident(s) in your life in which you found you couldn't cope momentarily. Describe your feelings during the moment and write how you handled it. Did you run and hide? Did you make it a joke? Did you cover your embarrassment in any way? Be detailed and complete in your descriptions.

WRITE THE ONE THING IN YOUR LIFE THAT MOST DISAPPOINTED YOU. (How did you handle the disappointment? Did you get over it? Do you carry it with you today? What was the disappointment? How would you change it if you could do it over? Have you told anyone of it? Talk about how you felt and the effect it had on you throughout your life, if any.)

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL SUNDAY AFTERNOON WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP (How did you spend them? Was anything open? Did you go for Sunday drives, listen to The Shadow on the radio, did church bells peel out over the air? What about ice cream parlors? What about neighborhood games? What about wash on the line? Mowing with the push mowers? Were those things allowed? Elaborate. If you are too young to recall these things mentioned, tell of a typical Sunday afternoon at your house growing up. (You are building on memories here, and writing history as well for future generations.)

WHAT IS THE EARLIEST MEMORY YOU CAN RECALL? What do you think made it so memorable? How did it affect you? How old were you? What were you wearing? Where were you and what were you doing? Was it a pleasant memory, or is it one you recall with sadness?

DESCRIBE YOUR FIRST LOVE: What grade were you in, describe him/her. What caught your fancy? The way he/she looked, her/his honesty and kindness, or both? How long did it last? Does your heart twinge even today as you think of him/her? What made him/her so special? How did it end? Or DID it?

WRITE ABOUT MEMORIES OF YOUR GRANDPARENTS Describe their home. Did they live in the city or the country? Were there trees to climb? Ponds in which to swim and fish? Were there tree houses? Tire swings? Orchards? Or were there malls to be shopped, restaurants to try, or new fashions to put on? Were they old fashioned in your eyes? Or were they modern and 'cool'?

DESCRIBE YOUR FIRST BICYCLE. Color? Did it have a basket on the bars? Describe it and what you carried in it. Did it have a fender on which you "toted" your best friend? Did your sox ever get hung in the chain? Grease on your legs? Tell of memories on that bike.

WRITING LIFE'S MEMORIES
(From the Heart)

A RECAP OF THIS WORKSHOP

1. Over all purpose:

The time to start your memories is NOW (YOU COULD AIM FOR PUBLISHING OR YOU CAN KEEP IT PRIVATE FOR FAMILY; THE BEST IS A COMBO OF BOTH: TO WRITE AS THOUGH SOMEDAY THEY WILL BE PUBLISHED.)

- a. Keep stories to one or two pages
- b. Do not laminate—they deteriorate within the plastic
- c. Regular paper will survive around 20 years; therefore, acid-free is acceptable
- d. Keep all entries separated by date and in chronological order
- e. Leave space to add comments as they are remembered
- f. Keep a pen and pad by your nightstand; ideas that come in the night will not be remembered at daylight.
- g. Get organized (invent your own form—overlaps with style)
- h. Find your special style.
- i. Use all five senses in telling your memories. (The POWER of sensory images)
- j. Remember the personal touch (marriage, love, children).
- k. Add present touches to the past
- l. Tell memories of sadness as well as of happiness; it is therapeutic
- m. Your memories written into stories can mend families and broken hearts
- n. Make you entries colorful; avoid clichés.
- o. Use descriptions and plenty of dialogue. (Use metaphors and similes)
- p. Give older readers something to which they can relate
- q. Give younger readers a “history” of the “way you were.”
- r. Recall eras as you write—each era has its own “personality.”
- s. Write as much as possible of your parents and grandparents.
- t. Draw on memories written from childhood stories listened to while in the porch swing or on grandma’s porch.
- u. Train your mind to “pick up memories” though the five senses.
- v. Remember, well written memories of your life, written from the heart, can be enjoyed for generations to come. If you don’t write them down, a part of you is gone forever. It is your legacy and generations yet unborn need to know life as you lived it, for it will never be that way again.
- w. No holds barred, reveal yourself, your emotions and your very inner soul; give your family the joy of knowing you through *WRITING LIFE'S MEMORIES (FROM YOUR HEART.)* Not only will you give them joy, but also you will be giving them a peek into their own identities as well, giving them a keen sense of belonging. This is a priceless gift to pass on for generations yet to come.

If interested, contact me for further information, rate card and availability:
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