



STORIED GIFTS

The Essential 20  
Questions You Must Ask  
For a Great Interview

Actionable First Steps  
For Writing a Family  
History

## A Legacy Book? What a gift For Your family!

You're interested in preserving your personal and family history. Kuddos for making it a goal to give this wonderful gift of stories that only you can provide.

By downloading this ebook you're taking a productive step to get started.

*"When an old man dies, a library is burned to the ground."*  
African Proverb

Your stories, and stories you know of other family, truly matter to those who share that history. Perhaps your family doesn't realize how much their present has been shaped by those stories of the past.

By preserving stories and images into a legacy book, you can highlight the connections with the stories of the past that make all the difference. The family history chronicled and crafted into a legacy book will be an ongoing source of joy, a testament to resilience, and the encouragement for your family today and tomorrow.

## The Essential 20 Questions You Must Ask For A Great Interview

1. Describe one person who has helped shape your life and why.
2. What is one thing you are proudest of?
3. How has your life been different than what you once imagined?
4. What plans have you remained steadfast to in your life?
5. What is something you used to believe you no longer do?
6. What is one thing you know for certain about yourself or your experiences?
7. What are the top three things that matter most to you and why?
8. Who are your best friends and why?
9. What do you wish you understood better?
10. Describe an astonishing moment in your life.



## Continued

11. What is something you've forgiven in life--of you or someone else?
12. What is the greatest emotional pain you've endured?
13. Who are some key people you're grateful for in your life?
14. What are some key events you're grateful for in your life?
15. If you described three small examples of beauty you always love to encounter again and again, what would they be?
16. What is your most vivid childhood memory?
17. What was your most driven moment?
18. What are some examples of art that speak to you, be it music, movies, paintings or theater?
19. What is your best secret power (or, what do you do best)?
20. What chapter do you have left to begin or complete in your life?



## Your Legacy Book--Which Format?

Before you answer the first and most important question, consider the distinctions of the three types of histories you could craft and share. They include:

### AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The history of an individual as told by the subject.

### BIOGRAPHY

The history of an individual as told by another.

### MEMOIRS

A story by the subject related to a particular event or theme in his or her life.

At Storied Gifts, we generally work with individuals who want to detail stories of their life, and those of others important to them. This combination of autobiography/biography and family history affords the the latitude to document stories in either a linear or thematic format.

## The #1 Question To Ask Before You Begin Your Legacy Book.

It happens. Sometimes people write a book that was meant for their family, but once it's complete they consider promoting and selling it to a larger audience. There's nothing wrong with this goal. However, the time to determine your audience is BEFORE the book is written.

Audience guides your storytelling voice, and the subjects you are most likely to cover throughout the book. Some of the things you'd say and how you share them will be different for those in the inner circle of family, but might not be of interest or appropriate for the public.

Creating a legacy book with family in mind, is a worthy ambition. And in terms of having a lasting impact, those are the people who will treasure and keep your gift. While most of the books on our shelves become donations down the road, a legacy book remains as the heirloom it is for your family.

## Why Capture And Document Stories?

These days people seem hungry to know their familial connections. They search for them in genealogy and willingly send off their DNA to find their people at the cellular level.

### WHY?

Perhaps they do it to find their tribe, and maybe they seek meaning--an understanding of the trajectory of their life as it is today.

With all this searching, have we lost the importance of understanding those relatives here now--or only a generation back? Those stories and people are the truly significant influencers of our life, impacting our path in the present. And yet, often we know far less about our grandparents even when they are still alive. If we don't document their stories, they will be lost to us, thereby making our story incomplete.

## Digital or Book? We Say Legacy Book, And Here Is Why.

Standard documentation of information has migrated to digital, but digital is fickle. Obits aren't printed in the newspaper as often anymore, and public records rely on technology. Even the photo images we create that capture our experience are mostly left as jpegs.

But what happens when platforms disappear, and the tech storage equipment becomes obsolete?

The book, however, has withstood the changes of technology and remains a constant. Since Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type in 1450, books have been plentiful and our primary tool for sharing knowledge. They are the cherished dispenser of our words and thoughts. The book is a stalwart tool. It stands at attention on the shelf, impervious to clicks and crashes.

Your Legacy Book is even more lasting BECAUSE of what it contains. Open the Legacy Book house in your library, and it's there waiting to bring people and events from your life back to the forefront. Turn the pages and be transported to the stories of your family history anytime you choose. The words and images catch your eye and memories flow from the pages. And they are sure to linger.

## First Step--Timeline

Before any writing or interviews begin, it's important to grasp the scope of the project by creating a timeline of the stories you want to document. Whether you write or team up with Storied Gifts, knowing where you'll begin and the points you'll cover is an essential first step. Grab some paper and a pencil and get started!

You might find it easier to narrow down dates of significant events if you divide your life into thirds. So, if you are 55, you would write 18, 36, and 55 with equal spacing between each along the top or side of your paper.

Peruse through the list of prompts below and determine the dates of those events that apply to your timeline. Mark them with a date, (or rough one!) and understand that some of these dates will change as you get more clarification.

Birth  
Start of school  
Birth of siblings  
Family moves  
Changes of schools  
Achievements  
Family vacations  
Jobs/career changes  
High school graduation

First date  
Engagement  
Marriage  
Birth of your children  
Birth of your grandchildren  
College education  
Deaths

## First Step--Timeline Continued

"First of" anything, including first solo trip, first home on your own, first pet, first...

As you write down the dates and events that apply, you will find that more memories surface. Be sure to write yourself a few words to note these memories, as you'll want to come back to them later for the writing phase of the Legacy Book.

Dig deeper as you mine for dates, and consider more unusual but important milestones. For you, it may be the discovery of a talent that has remained a passion all of your life. Also include the significant people and friends who have been an important part of your life.

List the losses and sorrows among your milestones, especially if you've learned life lessons from them.

Perhaps there have been significant changes of mind as you've gone along. Things you once believed but opinions which changed due to some event. Suss out dates as you can, but approximate until later when you go through the *clarifying* step.

Call a lifeline out to family and friends and ask them to consider some of those dates that they share with you. What do they remember, what dates would they add?

You'll find that this timeline will grow and change. Let it simmer for several days as you remember.



## **Bonus Tip--Ask Your Family What They Would Like To know.**

If your audience is family, be sure to ask them what they would like to know about you and other family stories. Dig a bit and ask why they're interested and what they recall of these people or events. You'll be amazed and pleased to find that asking family before Legacy Book writing begins will enrich the results and create an engaging finished book.

## **Make A Legacy Book, But Don't Do It Alone.**

We won't lie. A Family Legacy Book is an undertaking. We've worked with dozens of individuals, families, and companies to create pieces that have been celebrated and brought people together. Why? Because good stories turn facts into rich and meaningful context. And stories told well that are relevant and personal leave an impression to the reader that makes a difference. We hope you'll create a Legacy Book, and if you can't do it alone, we are here to help.