

“SCRATCH THE ITCH” TO BE REMEMBERED

Lasting Significance



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Your Family Vine



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INTRODUCTION

We're Hard-Wired to Be Remembered

We are all hard-wired to be remembered by our loved ones beyond our lifetime.

Do you desire to “scratch the itch” to be remembered?

If so, there is something you can do to satisfy it.



Recording your life story in your own voice is just what the doctor ordered.

- Jeff Jackson

CHAPTER I

“Scratch the Itch” to be Remembered

Gathering Identity

Telling your story verbally not only “scratches the itch” to be remembered, it also serves future generations as a frame within which they can gather identity-affirming knowledge for themselves.

The daughter of a “superhero”

After Estella heard her dad’s life story in his own voice—

which included the hardships his grandparents and parents faced and overcame trying to earn a living, she realized for the first time that she is the daughter of a “superhero”.

When finished, you’ll be a “hero” to your family and become a member of a small but growing community who have also experienced the unique satisfaction produced by “scratching the itch” to be remembered.

CHAPTER II

What You Need to Know and Do

FOUR reasons why we have a hard-wired desire to leave something beneficial to our descendants and “scratch the itch” to be remembered that we all long for.



1. We know we're not self-made.

Our existence was the result of our biological father and mother intermingling with each other at the deepest physical level possible.

Each of them was an individual branch sprouted from two distinct family vines. As was also the case with every other branch in our family vine that came before us.



CHAPTER II CONTINUED



2. We know identity has two facets.

Yes, we are a unique individual with our own finger prints and personality traits, but we are also a member of our family vine.

Knowing ourselves is impossible without having some knowledge of the roots and branches who each passed something to us through our family vine.



3. We want to know more about our ancestors than we currently do.

Some of us have found it helpful to obtain names, dates, and locations of our ancestors. But if we hear them relating those facts in their own voice as they tell their life story, they'll remain alive in our minds and hearts in a special way.

And it's very likely that it could improve our physical, spiritual, and emotional health.



4. We have learned that **love**—an action we choose to take that **is beneficial for the people we care about**, gives birth to a unique kind of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Passing on our knowledge of our ancestors and our own life story is the gift only we can give. It is an act of love and service to our children and grandchildren. And as Estella's experience demonstrates, it could enhance their development of a healthy identity.

CHAPTER III

4 Steps to Prepare the Inheritance

FOUR simple steps you can take to prepare the inheritance you'll pass on, and "scratch the itch" to be remembered.

Step 1. Begin gleaning from your early childhood Your life story has unfolded chronologically, and that is the most impactful way to tell it. Try to remember the answers to these questions about your parents and grandparents, which arise easily for most people:



CHAPTER III

4 Steps to Prepare the Inheritance

YOUR PARENTS:

Think about the things your children and grandchildren would like to know about your own PARENTS, even if you're sure they currently know them.

--Their names, where they were born, interesting things about their lives prior to them meeting each other, anything you know about how they met, and the things that led to you being born where you were.

--Their, personality types, mannerisms, and unique ways they interacted with one another, with you and your siblings, and their grandchildren.

--The holidays or other family traditions they created and you experienced, their hobbies/interests, what they did with their time after they retired, etc.

--Their vocations,



CHAPTER III CONTINUED

A Father's Responsibility

Contributing to the war effort

Barry's earliest memory was about his father's responsibility as a member of the Civil Air Guard in the Washington D.C. area during World War II. As soon as it was dark, he would watch his dad go out the front door to walk around the neighborhood, checking to be sure there was no visible light shining out of any house. He'd return home each night just in time to tuck Barry into bed. And he would fall asleep comforted by knowing his dad had done something helpful to keep the family and neighbors as safe as possible from being bombed by any enemy planes that may have penetrated U.S. airspace.



CHAPTER III CONTINUED

YOUR GRANDPARENTS:

- Their names, dates of birth, and location of birth?
- Whether they were born in another country?
- If they were born in another country, which one?
- What year did they arrive in the U.S., and what were the circumstances that prompted them to make the journey?
- If you had personal interaction with them, what do you remember about:
 - *Their personality types, vocations, hobbies/interests, etc.
 - *Challenges they experienced during their lives.
 - *Unforgettable, specific memories or moments with them.

- The holidays or other family traditions they created and you experienced, their hobbies/interests, what they did with their time after they retired, etc. (See the Question Guide on page 16 below for an actual list of questions).



CHAPTER III CONTINUED

Step 2 Recruit the right family member or friend to interview you.

They should be the type of person that is good at asking questions. Who demonstrate visible interest in your answers by following up your answers with another question or two that flows logically from what you have said. And someone that can keep you from taking rabbit trails that drift and then break the chronological flow of your story. (See the Question Guide below for an actual list of questions).

Good things: Remembered

In trying to be as prepared as possible for their interview, Ken and Kathy looked afresh at old documents and other written memorabilia they had collected since their marriage began more than fifty years ago. Things both of them had totally forgotten popped back into their minds and they were ready to share them as their interviewer guided them in telling their story.



CHAPTER III CONTINUED

Step 3 Voice Memo

Either learn how to use a voice memo app on your phone, or ask your interviewer to do so.

For the best quality recording possible, it is highly recommended that you purchase two external microphones—one for the interviewer and one for you.

I use the Voice Memo app that came with my Iphone, and I purchased the DJI 2 microphones from Amazon. Although not essential, editing out any content that interrupts the flow of the interview is recommended.

Most voice memo applications have this function built-in.

**Step 4 Store Your Interview**

Upload the interview to a web-based storage platform from which the interview can be shared with your family members and/or downloaded. Google Drive and Dropbox are two of the most popular.

Tips & Principles for Telling Your Lifestory

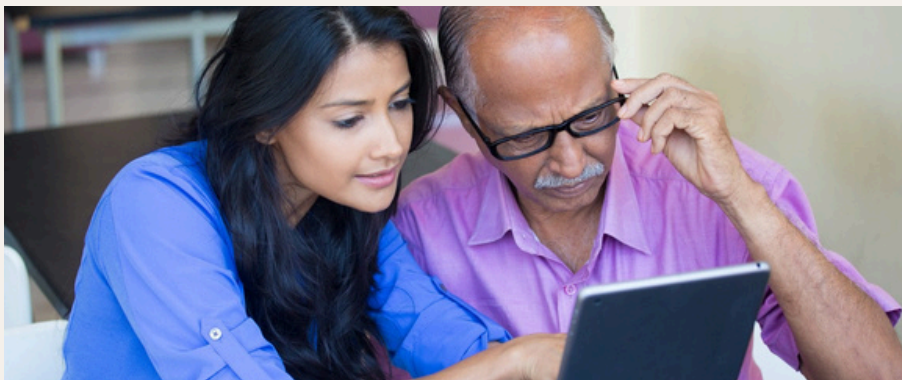
3 tips for the interviewer to follow as they help you remember and tell your story

- **Tip 1.**

If you go down rabbit trails, (answering the question and then adding on things connected to it that may not have taken place until later in time, etc.) have them ask a question to take you back to the chronological story line. Something like, “When was that?” Or, “What year was that?”. Restating the original question to you is a good way to get back to where you were.

- **Tip 2**

For major life decision questions, ask them what their thinking was at the time, and how they view it today.



- **Tip 3.**

If you're experiencing a difficult time remembering certain things, have your interviewer ask you to think about these memory triggers: songs, sounds, smells, tastes, time of day or year, or a specific location.

4 Key Principles for telling your life story

- **Principle 1.**

Although your life includes many specific incidents and achievements, always keep in mind it is a STORY. There was a prequel--the life and experiences of your parents and grandparents. Your life had a beginning, a middle, and now you're nearing the end.

- **Principle 2.**

Remembering and telling your life story in chronological order is crucial for your loved ones to understand who you are. Hearing the decisions you made at any specific moment as being influenced by whatever took place before, provides both an explanation, and sometimes even a justification for why you made that choice.



Principle 3.

Think about some of the decisions and actions you initiated, and also the decisions and actions others took that impacted you.

Principle 4.

If someone saw your whole life story, in order, would there be any “themes” for them to discover?



CHAPTER V

QUESTION GUIDE

BIRTH, FAMILY, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD:**Birth, family, and early childhood:**

1--What's your full name, what day and year were you born, and in what city?

2--What was the name of your parents, including mother's maiden name if you know it?

3--How would you describe the personality of each parent?

4--What are the names of your grandparents or great grandparents on each side?

5--Do you know where they were born and raised? If not in the U.S. what country?

6--Are there any specific stories you remember that your GGP's or GP's passed on to you? Or that you remember being a part of with them?

7--How many siblings do you have and where are you in birth order?

8--What kind of work did your parents do while you were growing up?

QUESTION GUIDE

HIGH SCHOOL YEARS:

High School years:

1--What city or cities did you live in prior to graduation from high school? What prompted the relocation? What was the name of the high school you attended?

2--What year did you either quit school or graduate? How old were you at the time?

3--How old were you when you started working and what did you do on your first job?

4--How would you describe the kind of student you were in high school?

5--If you hung out with a "group" in high school, which one was it? (Serious students, athletes, rebels, etc.)

6--What did you do to goof around during high school?

7--What were some of your favorite TV shows, songs, or movies?

8--What was the hardest/most crushing thing you experienced prior to finishing high school?

9--What patterns composed your childhood? (Meals around the table, church-going, monthly or annual events/gatherings, evening/after dinner family routines, Saturday or Sunday routines, etc.)

QUESTION GUIDE

POST-HIGH SCHOOL, FAMILY-RELATED:

Post-high school, FAMILY-related:

- 1—What year did you meet the mother or father of your children?
- 2—How did it happen, and what day and year were you married and/or welcomed your first child?
- 3—What jobs were you working at the time?
- 4—What songs or movies were popular at the time, and which ones take you back there even today?
- 5—What are your fondest memories of your children prior to them moving out of your house?

Post-high school, Life-related:

- 1—What is your vocation story? How did you end up doing what you did for a living?
- 2—What kind of vacations did you take while your children were at home, and after? Favorite?
- 3—What hobbies or recreational things did you do regularly over the years?
- 4—If you were asked to summarize your life in just a few sentences, how would you do it?

QUESTION GUIDE

POST-HIGH SCHOOL, FAMILY-RELATED:

Memory moment-capturing events

- A. World War II D-day
- B. Korean War
- C. Kennedy being shot (Nov 22, 1963)
- D. Moon landing (July 16, 1969)
- E. Movie star or celebrity deaths--if they were sports fans or movie or singer/band fans
- F. If they turned 18 between 1964-1973, ask the men about their experience with the military draft
- G. 9-11

Rites of passage for most Americans

- 1—First serious girl or boyfriend
- 2—First job
- 3—First car
- 4—First death of a loved one
- 5—Finishing High School—graduating or quitting
- 6—First residence after moving out
- 7—Marriage
- 8—First child
- 9—Career/Recreation/Hobbies
- 10—Retirement

CONCLUSION

A father and a wife: Missed opportunities

Jim's Plan

Jim's plan was to schedule an interview with his dad to record his life story.

Unexpectedly, his father's health quickly took a turn for the worse and he passed away. Even though Jim is only in his mid-fifties, missing out on capturing his dad's story prompted him to tell his own story now.

A few months after recording his life story—which included how he met his wife and their married life together, she passed away suddenly, her life story unrecorded.

CONCLUDING QUESTION:

If you could pass on to your descendants two or three truths that you've become convinced are essential for living a successful life, what would they be?



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