

PERSONAL HISTORY OF

Compilation Dates:

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Family

You

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	

Mother

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Father

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Maternal Grandmother

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Maternal Grandfather

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Paternal Grandmother

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Paternal Grandfather

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Siblings:

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Full Name	
Birthday/Location	

Other Family Member (relationship):

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Other Family Member (relationship):

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Other Family Member (relationship):

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

Other Family Member (relationship):

Full Name	
Birthday/Location	
Death/Location	

1. What were your parent's occupations?

Father:

Mother:

2. Do you have any unique family situations like adoptions, stepparents/step kids, foster kids/families, divorces?

3. How many children were in your family? Where were you in the lineup?

4. Did/do you have any additional family members living with you?

5. Did you have any nicknames? Did other family members have nicknames?

6. Which parent would you talk to if you wanted the answer to any question to be “yes”?

7. Did you feel there was a “favorite” child?

8. How does your family tend to show their love for one another—through physical affection like hugs and kisses, gift giving, saying “I love you” or some other phrase, etc.?

9. Who is, or was, the family comedian? “Straight” man?

10. Which family member teased you the most?

11. Who was the trickster in your family?

12.What's the funniest family story you remember?

13.What's your favorite family story to recount around the dinner table?

14. What was the main form of entertainment in your family when you were a kid (cards, board games, listening to the radio, playing music/singing, reading books, putting on shows, etc.)?

15. If you had to create a family motto, what would it be?

16. What advice did your grandparents or parents give you that you remember best?

17.What do you remember or think of when you hear the word “family”?

18.Describe your pets. Names, type of pet, when you had them, any stories related to your pets.

Childhood

19. Do you have memories of what your parents said you were like as a baby?

20. What were you like as a child? Were you shy? Hyper? Smart?

21.What was your childhood like? Talk about family, friends, neighbors...

22.What was a typical day like in your family when you were little?

23.What activities did you do as a child? Which were your favorites?

24.Did you have an allowance?

25.What did you do when you were bored as a child?

26.What one or two stories do you remember most clearly about your childhood?

27. Did you take music lessons? What instruments?

28. Who were your best friends in grade school? Are they still a friend?

29. What were you like as a teenager?

30.Did you work as a teenager? Where? How often?

31.Did you have a car? A bike? How did you get around?

32. Did you play sports? Belong to any clubs?

33. Are there any particularly happy, funny, sad or instructive lessons you learned while growing up?

34.What were your family's favorite jokes or pranks?

35.Did anyone ever throw you a surprise party? What happened?

36.Who were your best friends as a teenager? Are you still friends?

37. Did you go to any summer camps?

38. Tell me about a time you were incredibly embarrassed.

39. Did you always make your bed? Do you now?

40. What do you remember or think of when you hear the word “childhood”?

41. Did you keep a diary?

School

42.What grade school(s) did you attend? (Names, locations, years attended)

43.Can you remember all your grade school teacher's names?

44.What are your earliest school day memories?

45.Did you ride the bus to school? Did you like that? Any bus stories you remember?

46.What middle school(s) did you attend? (Names, locations, years attended)

47.What was your favorite social activity in middle school?

48.What high school(s) did you attend? (Names, locations, years attended)

49. Did you ever run for school office?

50. Were you in the band? A cheerleader?

51. Are there any subjects you particularly liked or disliked?

52. Who were your favorite teacher(s)? Did they have an impact on your future?

53.Did you participate in any sports? Clubs? Organizations?

54.How did you feel about school? What type of student were you?

55.What are your favorite school related stories?

56.How did you decide where to go to college?

57.What colleges/universities did you attend? (Names, locations, years attended, areas of study)

58.Did you learn anything in school that you would like to pass along to the next generation?

Home

59. Describe the houses you grew up in. Can you remember all the addresses? Phone numbers? How long you lived in each location?

60. Can you draw a floor plan of your houses? Label where everyone slept?

61. Did you share a bedroom with your siblings? Did you get along?

62. Did you have chores to do around the house? What were your responsibilities?

63.What was your neighborhood like?

64.Did you ever sleep outside?

65. Who handled repairs around your house?

66. What do you remember or think of when you hear the word “home”?

Coming of Age

67.What do you recall about your first date?

68.What do you remember about falling in love for the first time?

69.How did you know you were really in love?

70.How did you “pop the question” or how it was popped to you?

71.How long did you date before marrying?

72.Describe your wedding ceremony. What year? Where was it? How many attended? Did you have a honeymoon?

73. How did you feel on your wedding day? What memories of that day stand out for you? Did everything go as planned?

74.How did you feel when you started your family?

75.Were you married more than once? How often?

76. Describe how you felt about becoming a parent? Grandparent?

Recreation, Leisure, Hobbies and Vacations

77. Did you play any sports? Did you play competitively or just for fun? Greatest accomplishments?

78. Do you play any musical instruments? Did you take lessons and for how long? Do you still play regularly?

79. Did you participate in any school plays? Community theater? Drama classes?

80. Are you a crafty person? What are your favorite crafts?

81.What is your favorite hobby?

82.Do/did you belong to any clubs?

83. Do you like to read? What are your favorite books? Are there any books that stand out as having special meaning for you?

84. Did you ever go camping?

85.Did you ever go hunting?

86.What are your favorite activities? Growing up? Now?

87.What were the most memorable family vacations or trips you can recall?

88. Describe what family vacations were like, and if there were any destinations that you traveled to often?

89.What songs have held special meaning to you over the years?

90.Who were your favorite musicians? Groups? Albums?

91.Who are your favorite actors? What are your favorite movies? What was the first movie you saw? Most memorable?

92.Do you have any funny stories from your past?

Work and Volunteer

93. When you were little, what did you answer to the question: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

94. What was your first job, and how did you get it?

95. What was your first boss like? What did you learn from him/her? Did you leave? Quit? Get promoted? Fired?

96.How did you choose your career?

97.Can you list all the jobs you've ever had? Give details like years worked, title, responsibilities, etc.

98. Were you ever out of work for a long time? If so, how did you handle it?

99. What type of volunteer work have you done? Give details like years, responsibilities, etc.

Traditions

100. What holiday did you most look forward to while you were growing up?

101. What were some of the traditions your family observed related to holidays?

102. Do you have any family traditions that have been passed down for generations in your family?

103. What is the most memorable gift you have ever received? Given?

104. Are there any specific family heirlooms you inherited? Why do they hold meaning for you?

105. How are/were birthdays celebrated throughout your life?

106. In what ways have you/your family kept your culture alive (through language, foods, cultural traditions, for example)?

107. What do you remember when you hear the word “traditions”?

Spirituality

108. Do you follow any religious traditions? If so, which one and what is it like?

109. Have you ever changed faiths?

110. What role do your beliefs play in your life today?

111. What would you tell your children about your faith?

112. What were your religious milestones? i.e. baptism, confirmation (dates and locations)?

113. Can you relate any spiritual moments or stories that you feel impacted your life?

114. Can you describe events that affected your spirituality (either made it stronger or weakened it)?

Food Memories

115. Describe the kitchen of your childhood. What color were the walls? Was it small or big? Was there a window, and what was the view? What were the smells, the sounds? Were the pots and pans hung on hooks or hidden in a cabinet? What was the pantry filled with? Did you do anything other than cook there—gather with friends, do your homework, talk on the telephone?

116. What foods do you remember with holidays and special events?

117. How did you learn to cook? Or did you?

118. What meals would be in your family's cookbook—the foods that make you feel nostalgic for your childhood or for home?

119. What are some of your earliest/favorite/best/funniest food memories?

120. What are your oldest recipes and where did they come from?

121. What smells transport you to this day right back to your childhood?

122. Who are/were the best cooks in the family? Tell me about them.

123. What cooking triumphs (or disasters) stand out in your memory?

124. What are some of your family's unique food traditions?

125. What is your favorite dish?

126. What is your favorite dessert?

127. What is your favorite fruit and vegetable?

128. What flavor of cake or dessert would you ask for on your birthday?

Military, Social Movements and Politics

129. Were you in the military?

- Were you a volunteer, drafted or a conscientious objector?
- What key moments do you recall about your service?

- What were your ranks? Where did you serve?

130. If you didn't serve, what do you recall about being on the home front while others served?

131. Did you participate in any social movements? Civil rights? Human Rights? Women's Liberation? Hippie? Gay Rights? Me Too? Tea Party? Black Lives Matter?

132. Were you politically active? Do you always vote? Have you campaigned for someone? Run for political office?

Philosophical Questions, Decisions and Lessons

133. What have you learned over your lifetime that you'd like to share with the younger generation?

134. What is the best decision you ever made?

135. What is a memorable time you have failed, and how did you recover from that experience?

136. Can you share about any hardships (in history, such as the Depression or a war, or in their personal life, such as a divorce or unemployment) that you experienced in your life, and how you survived/thrived/coped?

137. Tell me about a significant time you said “no.”

138. Do you have any regrets?

139. What can you tell me about the first time you experienced loss? *Who died? Did you go to the funeral? How old were you? How did it effect your outlook on life?*

140. What were the most joyous, fulfilling times of your life?

141. Any sad, tragic or difficult times you'd care to share such as losing a loved one, a job, or something you cared about?

142. Were there any moments you recall as true breakthroughs in any area of your life?

143. If you could do one thing differently in your life, what would that be?

144. What values would you like to pass down to the younger generations of your family?

145. What would you tell your 20-year-old self?

146. What would you like your legacy to be?

147. Are there any questions you wish you had asked your own parents?

148. What things are most important to you now? Why?

149. What do you remember about your 20s? 30s? 40s? 50s? 60s? What events stand out in your mind? How was each age different from the one before it?

150. There are some ages we don't look forward to. What birthday were you least enthusiastic about? Why?

151. If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?

152. How do you feel now about growing old? What's the hardest thing about growing older? The best thing?

153. What were your parents like when they got older?

154. What's your happiest or proudest moment?

155. What do you feel have been the important successes in your life? The frustrations?

156. What's the most difficult thing that ever happened to you? How did you deal with it?

157. Are there times of your life that you remember more vividly than others? Why?

158. What have been the most influential experiences in your life?

159. Describe a person or situation from your childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life.

160. If you were writing the story of your life, how would you divide it into chapters?

161. What, if anything, would you have done differently in your life?

162. What have you thrown away in your life that you wish you hadn't? What have you held on to that is important and why is it important? What "junk" have you held on to and why?

163. What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?

164. If you could write a message to each of your children and grandchildren and put it in a time capsule for them to read 20 years from now, what would you write to each?

Extra Pages

