

Everyone has a story....

Somewhere inside of you is a story tucked away in your memory. Maybe it is about your “growing up” years, maybe it is about a lesson you’ve learned in life, maybe it is about your heritage, maybe it is about the most important event in your life that changed you or set your life in a different direction, maybe it is about special holiday traditions, or maybe it is about the various relationships in your life. Who are YOU? What would you like to pass on to your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren?

Almost all of us are not famous enough to warrant writing and then publishing an autobiography but we are important to our families and to the legacy of our families. Over the years my own children have asked me (the first time because they had an elementary school assignment about “the family tree”) about our family and I then realized how little I really knew. It prompted me to at least try to record the names of our ancestors as far back as my own parents and my husband’s parents could remember. I’ve asked college students to give me the names of their eight great grandparents and often they know none or just a few. And if I follow up and ask them if they can tell me anything, anything at all, about that person, that’s when the blank stare appears. It’s unfortunate because these very people lived, worked, cried, laughed and contemplated life, in most cases, less than 100 years ago. And as we get older, we start to realize how very short a time 100 years really is. Well, in just 100 years, that is going to be YOU (that someone is trying to reference) unless you do something about it now.

The memoir you don’t want to write is one that is nothing more than the mundane details or facts or information found in legal records. There are no set forms or templates to complete as there are probably as many ways to go about organizing your memories and events as there are people. First, you need to make the decision to begin. Second make a basic timeline with basic events in your life as this will trigger a flood of memories and thoughts. Consider trying these tips:

- Look through your photographs or home movies to dust off the cobwebs of your memories and take the opportunity to write on the back of photos dates, names of people in the pictures, etc.
- Talk with friends and family members about their perspective of your life (your children and parents almost certainly will have a different perspective)
- Make a list of who you consider to be the important people in your life.
- Start recording memories on index cards so later you can arrange these cards by topics, events, or chronologically, etc.
- Do an audio recording if writing is too difficult.

Sign up now for the “Write for Life” program at Delta College. At this series of three Tuesday afternoon seminars (November 4, 11 and 18 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm) you will learn how to effectively use journal writing to begin to write about your life stories or those of your family. You will also discuss the use of writing as therapy and exercise for the mind and soul and you will actually produce several pages of writing and finish with a discussion of what to do with it. You will leave with a fresh perspective! We invite you to learn, we invite you to join our new program for those of us 50+ in age.

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