

Record One Story

A 20-minute interview script for a family elder — before the window to ask it closes.

Set a phone or recorder between you. Ask one question, then listen. Follow the tangents — they are usually the best part.

Before you begin

Ask permission and explain you'd love to keep their story.

Pick a quiet room; set the recorder where it can hear both of you.

Have water nearby. Plan for about 20 minutes, but let it run long.

The questions

1. Where and when were you born, and what was home like?

2. What is your earliest happy memory?

3. Who shaped you most when you were young, and how?

4. How did you meet someone you loved?

5. What was the hardest season you came through — and what got you through it?

6. What work are you proudest of?

7. What did you believe at my age that you no longer believe?

8. What advice did you ignore that you wish you had taken?

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The questions (continued)

9. What do you hope we remember about our family?

10. What is one thing you want to make sure gets passed on?

Afterward: label the recording with their name and the date, and save a copy somewhere safe. That file is now a piece of family wealth.