

Life History Outline: Writing Your Personal History

Writing one's personal life history can be a daunting task. Some want perfection, absolute accuracy, and utter completeness.

Give yourself a break! Approach this as a process and know that *it will not be perfect*.

The best approach for most people is creating an outline and chipping away at it, one year at a time. Work with bullet points—spelling, grammar, punctuation, and complete sentences DO NOT MATTER.

The questions have been grouped into a set of sections that are a combination of both chronological grouping and theme-based grouping. Follow the outline for each year of your life. The topics given are just starting points. If a topic does not pertain to you, don't mention it. If other items come to mind or have been important in your life, then include them.

Many people find that as they write, they remember things from another time or age. If that happens to you, go to that age and be sure to capture it. Few people actually work through the timeline from start to finish without looping forward or back many times as new memories bubble to the top. One memory often triggers others and things branch out: go with it. Do this process over many days, a little bit at a time.

Since we will be doing trauma work, be sure to ask yourself what things happened and who was involved in all traumas, both big and small. For our purposes, the only “small” trauma is one that happens to someone else.

1. Growing Up

- What do you know of your birth and beginnings?
- In family stories, what important things happened before you were born?
- Birth dates and deaths of siblings/parents/grandparents/important people in your life
- Notable childhood games/toys/pets/books/activities
- Clothes or outfits liked/disliked
- Scouts or other clubs organizations
- Notable playmates, best friends, or enemies
- Songs/music liked/disliked
- Holidays - Thanksgiving/Christmas/July 4th/etc.
- Birthday traditions
- Trips taken
- Yard or house work/chores
- Anniversaries, celebrations
- Home/places/cities you lived in
- Early romances

2. Education

- Schools attended
- Notable teachers
- Subjects taken/Major in college
- School activities such as drama, speech, sports, band, etc.
- Special high school, college, or graduate school memories or events

3. Employment

- Job history
- Military service
- People that have impacted you in your job
- Special memories

4. Church

- Religious practices as a child
- Religious practices as an adult
- Major events associated with church / religion / God
- Important people in your life associated with church

5. Medicine and Health

- Illnesses/surgery you have had
- Illnesses/surgery that important people in your life have had

6. Spouse and Family

- Major relationships
- When/how did you meet current spouse
- Dates of marriage(s)
- Births and deaths