

Daily Journaling: Recording Family History as It Happens

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Journal Jar (a sampling)

Courtesy of Janet McNaughton, Tempe Chapter, Family History Society of Arizona

Between the ages of 5 and 10, what was your favorite activity?

Describe a sound from your childhood. What was it? When did you hear it? What does it bring to mind?

Describe a childhood birthday.

Describe a childhood Christmas.

Describe a favorite childhood friend and some things you did with that friend.

Daily Journaling to Record Family History as It Happens

Principle: “Memory is always partial and selective.”

– C.K. Reisman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*

Purpose: To let your descendants know what your life/your family’s life was like.

Concern: What do you want descendants to know about your life?

Sample Questions for Daily Journaling:

1. Among your activities today, which ones are indicative of 2015?
2. What did you do today that reveals something about your personality?
3. What happened in the world today that made you pause to think?
4. What was the weather like today?

5. What television shows did you watch today? Why did you watch them? How did they make you feel? How did they make you think?
6. What did your children do today that shows their personalities?
7. What did your children do today that made you reflect on who they are?
8. What did your children do today that made you proud?
9. What cognitive, social, or language development did you see in one of your children/grandchildren today?
10. What did your children do today that caused you to reflect on your parenting?
11. What happened on this date in history? In the family? Locally? Regionally? Nationally? Internationally?
12. What well-known person died today?
13. What was it like at work today?
14. If you called a sibling or parent today, what did you talk about?
15. If you thought about something from your childhood today, what was it? How did it make you think or feel?
16. If you listened to an “oldies” (50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s) radio station today, which song made you think about your earlier years? What memories came back to you?
17. If you thought about an ancestor today, what memories came back to you?
18. If you emailed a family member today, what did you write?
19. If you received an email or letter from a family member today, what did that person write?
20. What piece of good news did you receive today?
21. What did you eat today?
22. What did you wear today?
23. What recreational activities did you do today?
24. What book did you read today? Summarize what you read.
25. What newspaper did you read today? Summarize the most memorable story.
26. What movies are popular this week? If you have seen any of them, give a brief synopsis.