

A FAMILY DIGITAL LEGACY STARTER

The archive you wish you had tomorrow must be built today.

This started with a wish: to ask Grandma how to make her pierogi — and have her answer. Not a recipe card. Her. By the time the project took shape, the window for recording her voice had closed. Her handwritten recipes survive; her telling of them doesn't. That lesson built this method.

One Thousand Stories is a repeatable way to capture a person's memories, voice, and wisdom before the window closes: a thousand distinct stories, answers, opinions, and pieces of advice, collected in recorded sessions and organized so your family — and, if you choose, an AI built on the archive — can keep accessing them forever. A good ninety-minute session yields 15–30 stories. Weekly sessions reach a thousand in under a year.

THE METHOD AT A GLANCE

- 1 Define the subject** — profile whoever matters most (worksheet on the next page). If they're alive and their memory is becoming inconsistent, they are first, full stop.
- 2 Collect** — weekly recorded sessions for living subjects (Track A); artifact digitization and family memory interviews when only artifacts remain (Track B).
- 3 Organize** — eight folders, one file-naming convention, four tags. Cloud upload the same day, every session.
- 4 Run sessions people love** — casual open, follow every tangent, never correct a memory, end warm. Page 3 gets you through the first one.
- 5 The AI layer — after the archive** — a rich archive can support voice, personality, and real conversation. But the archive is the deliverable; it stands alone even if you never build on it.

THIS WEEK

Fill in the profile. Make one phone call: "I want to record some of your stories — can I come by Sunday?" A phone on a stand is enough. Start before it's too late to start.

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STARTER WORKSHEET

Subject Profile

One page per subject. Fill it before the first session. The full kit adds the session log, story tracker, artifact catalog, and editable Word versions.

SUBJECT NAME

RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY

TRACK (A LIVING / B ARTIFACT)

URGENCY (IMMED. / MOD. / ARCHIVAL)

DATE STARTED

PRIMARY COLLECTOR

SUPPORTING COLLECTORS

KNOWN STRENGTHS OF ARCHIVE — WHAT RICH MATERIAL ALREADY EXISTS?

KNOWN GAPS — WHAT IS MISSING OR LIKELY UNRECOVERABLE?

PRIMARY USE CASE — "SOMEDAY, SOMEONE IN THIS FAMILY WILL WANT TO ASK THEM..."

TOPICS THE SUBJECT HAS ROPED OFF (RESPECT THESE)

CONSENT & SETUP CHECKLIST

- ☐ Subject's recorded yes captured (Track A) — including the AI layer, explained plainly
- ☐ Eight folders created in cloud storage · second backup location chosen
- ☐ Two recording devices tested · first session booked for: _____

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THE FIRST SESSION

One warm hour. Two devices recording.

No ambition beyond a good conversation, captured. Here is everything the first session needs.

BEFORE · DURING · AFTER

- ✓ **Before:** two recording devices tested (a phone on a stand + any second device) · a quiet room, no time pressure · 2–3 memory triggers ready: a photo, an object, a name
- ✓ **During:** ten minutes of casual talk first, recorders already running · open-ended questions · **follow every tangent** — the richest material lives off the planned path · never correct or redirect a memory · end on a laugh or a favorite memory
- ✓ **After, same day:** upload both recordings to cloud storage · note the stories covered and the follow-ups you owe next week · back up to a second location

TEN OPENERS THAT WORK

- | | |
|--|---|
| “ Tell me about the house you grew up in. | “ What was your first job? What did it pay? |
| “ What's your earliest memory? | “ What meal takes you straight back to childhood? |
| “ What were your parents like when you were small? | “ What's a story your family tells about you? |
| “ What did you love doing when you were ten? | “ Who was your best friend growing up? |
| “ Tell me about the day you met [spouse]. | “ What makes you laugh every time? |

WHY THESE TEN

Concrete, warm, zero-stakes — memory loves places, food, firsts, and people. The follow-up is the interview: "And then what?" · "Who else was there?" · "What did that smell like?" One planned question can carry twenty minutes.

WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR THE REST

The full One Thousand Stories kit is the complete method: the eight life periods and the full question bank, the archive and tagging system, the honest guide to the AI layer with its consent rules, and all five worksheets — including the thousand-box Story Wall — plus editable Word templates. At quirepaper.com/one-thousand-stories/.

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