

# Write Powerful Family History Stories: One-Page Family History Stories

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Session: PH3547



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*“In each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again. To tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but, instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes. Those who have gone before us cry out to us: Tell our story. So, we do. In finding them, we somehow find ourselves.” ~Della M. Cummings Wright*

Intending to write your family history stories, but the sheer magnitude of the project has stopped you in your tracks? Find your stories and write them in one-day using this easy-to-use template.

## I. Find Your Story

Start with a simple story about yourself to help you get started. Choose a well-loved or often told story, like the time you got lost, or the time you did something silly, dumb or was brave a. Collect any pictures, memorabilia or documents that you have to help recall the details

## II. Decide Who is Your Audience

One-page story templates work great for children (elementary age and younger). When writing for children, keep the language and story simple. Every detail is not needed for the story to be well-told. For older audience, still keep the story simple, while using more complex language.

## III. Write the Story

Follow this simple story formula:

1. First paragraph: Introduce the person and subject the story is about
2. Second & third paragraph: Tell the story
3. Sum up the story and end with your personal testimony, and any quotes, thoughts and feelings about the lessons learned, or moral of the story in 2 or 3 sentences.

## IV. “The Rest of the Story” Stories

When there is a lot more to the story, and that story is for an audience of teens and above, take your one-page story, use it as the spine of a more complex story. Add more details and elaborate on the story but follow the same simple format as the one-page story. At the end of the story as endnotes, you can add photos, copies of memorabilia, and any documentation that adds to the story.

## V. Collect Your Stories

Bind and print all your stories in a book, or just put into protective sleeves in a binder and keep adding stories to it.

## VI. Organize Your Stories

Create an index by topics, like “Courage” and another index by ancestor’s name. This makes it easy to find just the right story, at just the right time. Create index in Excel or Google Sheets, store on Evernote.com, Dropbox.com or OneNote.com for easy accessibility.

**“A family story that teaches a lesson becomes a guiding beacon for your family and binds generations together.” ~ Eleanor C. Jensen**

### **TIPS:**

*Resist the urge to overtell. Leave them wanting more!  
Choose your best stories.  
Edit. Rewrite. Polish.*

### **Add Illustrations, Images and Photos to Your Stories**

- Add photos of the event or person in the story
- No photos? Draw an image or find an illustration
- Draw images over an iPad, using an *Apple Pencil*
- Use *Osmo Masterpiece* app to trace images
- Create a coloring page create from photos, find directions here:

<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-turn-any-picture-into-a-coloring-page/>

### **Add Your One-Page Story to FamilySearch.org Family Tree**

Go to the ancestor’s page that the story is about and upload the story to either “Memories” *or* to their “Life Sketch”.

### **Publish a Collection of Short Stories Rather Than a Huge Tome That No One Ever Reads**

Reasons: 1. It is faster to write and to read 2. Easy to start and to stop 3. Everyone will enjoy it more

### **How to Publish and Print Your Stories**

- Blurb.com
- Lulu.com

### **Where to Find Quotes:**

- LDS.org – quotes by leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Pinterest.com – type in subject followed by quotes (i.e. Courage quotes)
- Brainyquotes.com – well know quotes by famous people
- Goodreads.com/quotes – quotes by authors

### **Need Help?**

*How to Write Powerful Family History Stories* online e-course and step-by-step workbook, with examples, videos and feedback are available through FamilyCherished.com

**“Everyone deserves to be remembered.”**

~ Steve Rockwood, CEO of FamilySearch International

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# Write Powerful Family History Stories: HOW TO STORYBOARD YOUR TRUE TALES

Presenter: Rhonda Lauritzen

## WHY STORYBOARD?



Satisfying stories follow familiar patterns - patterns that mirror life.

True stories naturally hit the right beats, if you know what they are.

Your job is to highlight compelling moments, cut boring parts.

Structure gives you confidence and keeps your story on point.

Rather than feeling formulaic, the template sparks creativity.

## ALL STORIES NEED:



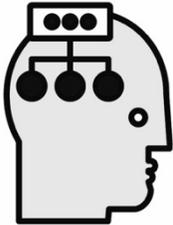
Hero - Who is the story about and how does the hero grow?

We have a problem – Central conflict/goal/problem.

External conflict represents a tangible goal, i.e., what the hero wants.

Internal conflict represents the hero's growth, i.e., what the hero needs.

## STORYBOARD STRUCTURE FOR FAMILY STORIES:



3 acts (beginning, middle & end). 12 beats

Beginning and End – Show hero's growth using mirror opposite images.

What it's all about: Introduce theme.

Between (midpoint) – an important moment in story, themes converge.

## STORYBOARDING - THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT BEATS:



Stay or go: Something big happens and the hero must change.

Darkest hour: All is lost and the hero is ready to give up.

Spark of the divine: Hero has a spiritual awakening, finds the answer.

## RULES TO REMEMBER:



Every great story is about transformation.

Think small: a story is told in moments. Write short vignettes.

Just write! Don't think about anyone reading the first draft.

Do it now, and it will be enough.

*Write Powerful Family History Stories:*  
HOW TO STORYBOARD YOUR TRUE TALES – Rhonda Lauritzen

Page Two – Additional Resources

**Curated resources for memoir and family history writers:** <http://evalogue.life/writing>

**How to Storyboard:**

- Article on storyboarding: [www.evalogue.life/storyboard](http://www.evalogue.life/storyboard)
- *How to Storyboard*, full-color reference guide: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1938111109>
- Storyboard posters: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1938111133>
- Storyboard booklet + posters (combo pack): <https://www.amazon.com//dp/1938111141>

**Oral history interview questions and resources:** <http://evalogue.life/interview>

**Procrastination busters for writers, and anyone:** <http://evalogue.life/procrastination>

**Help! My story is stuck – Why writing a memoir is possible:** <http://evalogue.life/possible>

**Tips and resources for telling family stories with video:** <http://evalogue.life/video-resources>

**My favorite books on writing and creativity:** <http://evalogue.life/books>

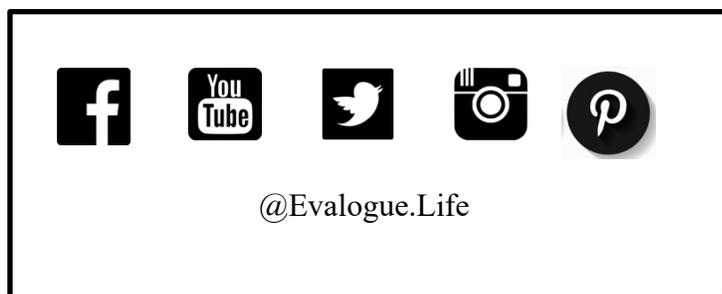
**Life Story Services – get help with your story:** <http://evalogue.life/story>

We would love to connect with you!

[www.Evalogue.Life](http://www.Evalogue.Life) - Tell Your Story

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# Write Powerful Family History Stories: CONDUCT ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS LIKE A PRO

Presenter: Rachel J. Trotter

## WHY ORAL HISTORY?



- Hearing a voice is a classic way to remember.
- People are more comfortable with a voice recorder than a video camera.
- It's easy to save and upload audio files to FamilySearch or the cloud.
- Oral history is the easiest way to gather family stories.

## HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?



- Preparation is key.
- Pick a quiet place.
- Make sure you have a back-up recording device.
- Take good notes – write down the poignant moments.
- Give your interviewee questions in advance.

## ONCE YOU'RE PREPARED, WHAT'S NEXT?



- Break the ice with a little small talk, but not too much.
- Don't make the interview about you. Ask questions but stay quiet.
- Don't worry if answers take a different turn than you planned.
- Ideally, start a new audio file every 30 minutes.
- Ask for specific anecdotes or stories – not just the facts.

## WRAPPING UP



- Don't wear out your interviewee. Break up your interview into parts.
- Leave the recorder on. The best moments come at the end.
- Don't forget about it when you get home.
- Upload your interview to the cloud or your computer right away.
- Do it now and it will be enough.

*Write Powerful Family History Stories:*  
**CONDUCT ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS LIKE A PRO**

Presenter: Rachel J. Trotter

**Favorite interview questions:**

- How did you fall in love?
- Tell me about your hometown?
- When is a time you didn't think you would make it?
- What is your favorite family recipe?
- Who was the most influential person in your life?
- Ten universal interview questions: <http://evalogue.life/TenQuestions>

**Resources for oral history, audio and transcribing:**

- Free interviewing mini-course: <http://evalogue.life/mini-course>
- Great interview questions, tools and resources: <http://evalogue.life/interview>
- Record voice – edit, save and transcribe audio: <http://evalogue.life/record-voice>
- Transcription tools and reviews: <http://evalogue.life/transcription>

**Recording devices:**

- Our favorite digital recorder: <http://evalogue.life/Olympus852>
- Free recording apps <http://evalogue.life/free-recorder-apps>
- Paid recording apps: <http://evalogue.life/paid-recorder-apps>

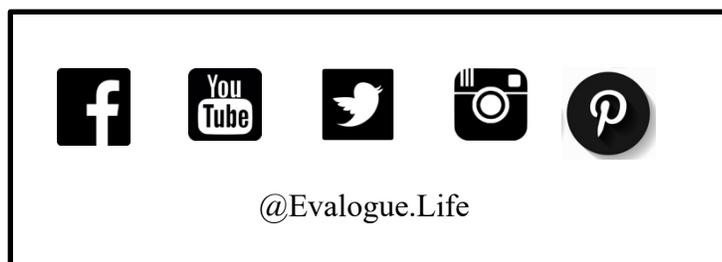
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