



*My
Living Legacy*

A Training Aid for Recording Video Life Histories

My Living Legacy

Welcome

How often have you wondered about the lives of earlier family members, friends, or interesting people you know? How often have you listened to an older relative reminisce about days gone by? Have you looked at yellowing family albums trying to guess what those long-gone people were really like? Now there's a convenient, economical way to share precious memories with future generations building a living genealogy of your family or a special individual. A living video history can be recorded using a video camera or cell phone. With Living Legacy video recordings, you can build a library of family memories to be passed on to younger members, either for sentimental reasons, or simply to do research of the family history. Your legacy video can be as simple as one person's remembrances, or it can be a living family tree growing in historical richness as new generations are recorded and added to the Living Legacy. You may be able to store the video on DVD's or other electronic means at your local library, in a safety deposit box, at a lawyer's office, in your home, or any other location that you desire.

This in-depth training aid encourages individuals to look at their personal decisions such as a will, health care issues, financial arrangements, or anything that is important to be made known and saved. It may be a good opportunity to settle legal issues, such as "who gets what" and where the items are located. It is, also, an ideal time to make a record of a person's possessions by cataloging them on video. My Living Legacy may include many other interesting tidbits, including a true confession, the location of an individual's money or will, or even personal dreams never shared with anyone. Here is an opportunity to showcase one's hobbies, collections, sporting interests, and talents. No matter what age you are, now is the time to record your life's journey.

Now is the time to begin preserving your family history and genealogy. As we age, life seems to pass by very rapidly. "Time is the subtle thief of youth," is the way the author Milton put it. Today is the day to begin planning your video recording of your family's history, so you can keep the memories alive for tomorrow. Preserve those precious memories before they fade away.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to supply you with all you need to record a "Living Legacy". However, all potential situations may not have been covered. Some references to DVD, CD, may be over looked since downloading is now the current trend. Who knows what the future brings in recording and transferring information. There may be a need for adjustments. We apologize for any inconvenience. The information on the CD's or download produced by My Living Legacy (LLC) is intended as a tutor, entertainment, and for the encouragement for people to record their life history, genealogy, and other related matters. The information is for the purchaser/user to look up related subjects when any legal direction is required, and not intended as a legal guide. It would be suggested that legal counsel be employed when making legal, financial, and health decisions, especially when written signatures and witnesses are required. There are many changes in the laws so not all information may be current. My Living Legacy (LLC) is not responsible for safety concerns in the process of making of a life history, and those involved should have safety as his or her main concern. This is especially important when working with electricity, wires of all kinds, supports, and other related material. My Living Legacy (LLC) is not responsible for computer concerns, damage to the computer hard drive, or related software. My Living Legacy (LLC) is not responsible for information gathered, or disseminated, and that is the sole responsibility of those involved in their project. The material on the CD and download for My Living Legacy (LLC) is copyrighted and is protected by federal law. Copying or duplicating of this material for sale is forbidden except with the written permission of My Living Legacy (LLC). My Living Legacy (LLC) is not responsible for the material collected, stored, or disseminated, in any form, to any location. The CD, download serves as a training media only, and questions on the forms are to be added or removed at the agreement of the parties involved. The recorded images and content are property of those making the recording. My Living Legacy (LLC) is not responsible for the contents of the written or electronically recorded material in any way or form. My Living Legacy (LLC) shall not be responsible for the disposition of the recorded and written material, which is the sole responsibility of those involved. My Living Legacy does not sell information to a third party.

Table of Contents

1. The Production

1.1	Getting Ready	p.1
1.3	Lighting	p.6
1.4	Sound Design	p.10
1.5	Editing	p.13
1.6	The Interview	p.16

2. Video Life History

2.1	Family Reunions	p.18
2.2	The Wedding	p.19
2.3	The Funeral	p.20
2.4	Me, Myself, and I	p.21
2.5	Pets – Our Special Friends	p.23
2.6	True Confessions	p.24
2.7	Mountains to Climb	p.25
2.8	Fresh Air	p.26
2.9	My Ride – A Personal Experience	p.27
2.10	Class Project	p.28
2.11	My Religion	p.29
2.12	The Traveler	p.30

3. Video Genealogy

3.1	Getting Started	p.31
3.2	Protecting Your Investment	p.32

Table of Contents continued

4. Legal and Health

4.1	Personal & Legal Information	p.33
4.2	Wills	p.35
4.3	Power of Attorney	p.38
4.4	Healthcare Directive	p.39
4.5	Trusts	p.40
4.6	Financial Concerns	p.40
4.7	My Inventory	p.41
4.8	Safety Deposit Box	p.43
4.9	A Time to Review	p.44

5. Personal and Miscellaneous Information

5.1	Personal & Misc. Information	p.45
5.2	The Ethical Will	p.46
5.3	When All Else Fails	p.46
5.4	Conclusion	p.47

6. Resources

6.1	Production Worksheets	p.49
6.2	Short Form Questionnaire	p.50
6.3	Self-Description Worksheet	p.52
6.4	Activities Worksheet	p.53
6.5	Activities Questionnaire	p.54
6.6	Military History	p.60
6.7	General Questionnaire	p.61
6.8	Medical History Checklist	p.67
6.9	Inventory of Estate	p.68
6.10	Genealogical Codicil	p.69
6.11	Funeral Service Worksheet	p.70

My Living Legacy – The Production

Getting Ready

What is a Living Legacy? A Living Legacy is a great way to preserve and catalog your family history! How do you get started with this exciting project? Preparation for the project will help make the production of a Living Legacy video a success. When doing a life history, many steps will be involved. First, and most important, you will want to decide who the Living Legacy will be about. The possibilities are endless: grandparents, parents, a special relative, a dear friend. You may even decide to feature two or more people. Any person/persons who have a story to tell can be the subject of a Living Legacy. Once you have decided who will be the focus of the video and obtain their permission, you can begin your planning!

The Coordinator

To begin the planning process, you or an individual who is qualified and willing to be the Coordinator for the Living Legacy video will need to oversee and organize the project. This can be a daunting task, depending on the difficulty of the project. The Coordinator will set up the interviews, contact everyone involved, coordinate the scheduling, make travel arrangements, organize letters, documents, props, the location of the video shoot, delegate roles, and all other aspects required for the Living Legacy video. If your project might be difficult and you feel that you may need to have a Coordinator, choosing the individual qualified to do this will require some research. The person you select should be a good organizer and have a personal interest in the project. They should be trustworthy and easy to work with and run the project smoothly so everyone can have an enjoyable and memorable experience.

The coordinator may need to assemble a staff to help them if a complete life history will be recorded. Please refer to the My Living Legacy worksheet that will help the Coordinator organize all these assignments. You or your Coordinator may need a production staff and a post-production staff. They may need people to gather information about family history and genealogy. It is very important that the coordinator assign these tasks to responsible individuals.

The primary tasks that the Coordinator may choose to perform or assign others to do are:

1. Picking the subject for the recording
2. Other participants
3. Budget
4. Taping location
5. Sound
6. Lighting
7. Video equipment
8. Travel arrangements
9. Scripts
10. Music
11. Props
12. Editing
13. Important decisions

Whether it's yourself or the person you choose as the Coordinator, keep in mind that the success of the project will largely depend on that position. People feel a strong link to the past and will appreciate a well-run, organized effort.

Featured Person / People

The coordinator of the Living Legacy video should get permission from the person/persons to be interviewed. It is good to discuss what you have in mind for the interview. You may start out by saying how interested the family is in its history and does not want it to slip away without being saved. Ask the individual if they have any recollections of their family history that they would like preserved. This will let them see what an important project this is!

If the person is willing to do the interview, let them know it will not be a difficult event. As a matter of fact, it should be fun! Keep the discussion going in a positive direction. Let them know the Living Legacy is for the whole family and others who would like to know more about them. Also, let them know that the recording will be a celebration of life. Some people may be a bit shy or timid about sitting in front of a video camera or phone with a camera. It would be beneficial to show the interviewee the camera and explain how it works. It might be helpful to take a quick picture of the surrounding room and play it back for him. This will show them how easy the process can be.

The Coordinator will have the individual study the interview questions and fill out the answers on a separate piece of paper (refer to questionnaire section). After looking at the form, they may have questions of their own. Be ready to answer them. Try to cater to all their wishes. Discuss the questionnaire together and ask them if they would like to add or delete any of the questions. All of this takes dedication and persistence. The results will be very rewarding if you plan well.

People, Props, & Pets

Now is the time to give some thought to any other people you would like to include. You may want to interview other family members or friends. Historical experts could be included along with experts in pertinent fields. Discuss with them what their role will be and what information to be included. Children are a welcome addition to the video but remember that they can be a challenge. It would be important to limit the time to accommodate the child's attention span. This will be determined by the child's age and temperament. If you would like to include others besides the main subject for the interview, consider asking them if you can video them briefly. A simple conversation with another family member, which is unscripted, may be a good way to capture them on video without making them uncomfortable. You may want to them to have a conversation with a child on their lap. You could build a whole video around this cheerful interaction.

The person being interviewed may want to use some props (pictures, documents, letters, hobbies, etc.). You can use your imagination here. They may wish to demonstrate one of their hobbies, show off an old car, showcase some homemade furniture, a special recipe, or any one of a multitude of things. If a pet is to be included as part of the family history, we recommend it to be included during the personal history section. The interviewee may want to relate how they selected their pet, its attributes, tricks the pet can perform, and the feelings they have for their pet. They may want to include pictures or any other information that is relevant (refer to pet section). Discuss where the pet will be positioned. It would be good to have the pet restrained so it does not wander around the set.

As part of the Living Legacy, you may want to organize the family genealogy (refer to genealogy section), family history, letters or documents, and any personal stories before you film. Accuracy is extremely important since this information will be seen by other family members and passed down to future generations. Now, let's get more specific. Check out the individual sections of this manual. This will help make your Living Legacy a success

How Will It Be Produced?

It's important to discuss how the video will be produced (refer to light and sound sections). The Coordinator will need to talk to the interviewee about how long they would like each session to last. This will help you to have enough material to fill the time and storage for the recording. Discuss the pictures you will be using and how much time allotted to them. To make sure the production runs smoothly, you should set up a time that is convenient for everyone involved. It may take a few hours to several days or longer to get all the material accumulated and recorded, so it is important to set up a schedule. Ideally, the personal interview should take place first, then any other family members and friends could be interviewed. But you can arrange the process to fit your schedule those involved. It is important to contact everyone involved to verify the video recording date/dates and times. If someone is unable to attend the video, they could write out their history or experiences and someone else could relate these for the video. Individuals may want to record themselves. This additional recording can then be added to the edited, completed video. Copies of family letters and documents can be submitted and included on the video along with any special messages or comments. At this point, the Coordinator should discuss how the interview will be conducted, specifically, where the person doing the interview and the interviewee will be positioned for recording. There are a few choices to think about. The person being interviewed and the one asking the questions can be together in front of the camera. You may choose to have the person being interviewed seated in front of the camera/phone while the one asking the question is behind the camera. Another possibility would be for the person being interviewed to handle the whole production himself by doing both the asking and answering of the questions (refer to the interview section, positioning).

Location, Location, Location!

Now you must decide where the recording will be made. This is where creativity can be very important. In some cities there are community centers, libraries, parks, hotel and motel meeting rooms, or theaters that may be willing to rent space for such an event. You could choose to use the home of family or friends. Make sure to explore all your options and pick a space that works well for everyone. Once the space is secured, you will want to start thinking about any production challenges that it poses. Check out the room size and background. Check out the lighting requirements and how sound travels in the space you will be using (refer to lighting and

sound sections). You can keep the production simple and stick to the basics but remember this should be discussed ahead of time.

The main objective is to record and preserve the person's life history. If you choose an outdoor location, it would be advantageous to check out the location beforehand. Check out the lighting and sound at the time of day you will be recording (refer to lighting and sound sections).

It may be difficult for older ones to be convinced that they will be comfortable being video recorded. If this happens, it would be good to ask if they would like to audiotape the family history. There is less involved with audio-taping, and the setup time will be cut by a third. But you will need to have a location that is free from most if not all background noise ideally. The questions would remain the same.

Managing Expenses

As with any project, there will be related costs such as: rental of a hall, hotel/motel rooms, parks, tents, etc. production expenses, video equipment, batteries, lighting equipment, tripods (purchase or rent), funds provided to those who cannot afford the trip, and many other miscellaneous expenses. If you are going to employ a video production company, you will have to consider the extra costs this will incur. How will you obtain the money for the production? Some of the family members may wish to contribute money to help with costs. Others may wish to contribute some of the items needed to produce the video. There are many creative ways to earn the money needed or acquire necessary equipment. Use your imagination!

When the Coordinator is deciding who will oversee the production budget and paying the bills, it would be best to consider someone who has experience with money management and budgeting. The person chosen should keep a ledger of all the expenses, as well as a list of who contributed to the event and how much, or what items they contributed. It is beneficial to have a budget for the project, showing the potential expenses involved and how the money will be raised and spent. All this information will help all aspects of your project run smoothly.

Lighting

You've got your camera – whether it be a professional video camera, DSLR, prosumer gear, or your smartphone, you'll want the subject of the interview to look good. Ideally, you will want to film the life history outdoors at a meaningful location. But that might not always be the case and you may be indoors. Either way, the best way to do this is by placing the speaker in a comfortable chair, in a suitable location in front of a simple background. By doing this you can control the lighting using a fixed lighting source or manipulate the set outdoors to take advantage of the best lighting. In the following, we'll be discussing the ideal lighting situations for filming in an outdoor setting or setting up lighting indoors using the *Three-Way Point System*.

The Great Outdoors

If you choose an outdoor setting for your video, it is important to consider the lighting in the area you will be recording. You should visit the area you have chosen and observe how the light will affect the area. It is best to keep the sun behind the camera. Keep this in mind when you decide where the person being interviewed will be positioned. You should also be aware that the sun will change position during the day and you will have to reposition where the camera will be placed in relation to the sun. You should check out the weather forecast for the day you will be recording, so you can plan your lighting accordingly.

It is best to conduct the interview from a stationary location. Be sure you have ample room to change your camera's position as the sun's position changes during the day. If you are recording in direct sunlight, the colors will be sharp, but you will find the shadows to be more pronounced especially around the eyes and nose. The best time to video is early in the day when the sun is at a low angle and the light will be distributed evenly. The same is true if you record in the later afternoon, especially if there is some cloud cover. Afternoon lighting will create a warmer effect. A light to medium overcast day is also a good choice because the clouds defuse the sunlight. Of course, everything depends on understanding the lighting conditions at your location.

You will get better results if your background doesn't not contain reflective objects like windows or mirrors. You may have the person remove their glasses or other overly reflective objects. This will prevent the light or the camera person from reflecting off their glasses or backgrounds. This applies to glasses with self-darkening lenses. Keep in mind, though, that many people will wish to wear their glasses since this is the way he or she is known.

If the person chooses to wear their glasses, position them so that the reflection of their glasses and / or other reflective objects is minimal. The Coordinator should discuss this with the person / people being interviewed ahead of time before the filming session.

When you have the person being interviewed positioned, check the image in your viewfinder. If the image appears too bright, you may want to choose a more shaded area. This can serve two purposes; recording in the shade helps everyone stay cool on a hot day and allows you to adjust the light to suit your desires. Natural light is the perfect light because it fills in places that no other type of light can. If you are recording in a shaded area, you may need additional lighting. To accomplish this, you can either buy or create what is called a shiny card or a bounce card. To create one, all you need to do is cover a 4x4 piece of cardboard with aluminum foil, using tape to secure the foil onto the cardboard. Another option would be to use a piece of white cardboard. With the aid of an assistant, direct the sunlight toward the person being interviewed; move forward and backward to get the best light for your video. Much of these basic ideas could apply to a cell phone regarding light. However, many manual functions on a video camera do not apply to a smartphone.

When considering an outdoor setting, remember that the background is just as important as the foreground. The background should be free from any movement unless the scene calls for motion. Avoid areas where people could walk into the view of the camera lens. This movement can be a distraction. This will prevent unwanted distractions from being on the video. Make sure to consider any other circumstances that might occur. You can avoid a lot of delays by trying to anticipate any difficulties. To insure a great video, it would be beneficial to use a tripod for your camera to keep the image steady while you are recording. If a tripod is not available, you could use a chair or any steady object to place the camera on. If the camera is hand held, a bouncing effect can result. This effect will be magnified when recording from a distance, especially if the zoom feature is employed. You want to keep everything as steady as possible. Outdoor settings can add variety and eye appeal to your video. Just keep these tips in mind and everything should run smoothly.

Your Own Film Set!

Since the best lighting is outdoors, and there is only a limited way we can let it into the camera, we must try to create the illusion of outdoor lighting. The best way to do this is by placing the speaker in a comfortable chair, in a suitable location in front of a simple background. By doing this you can control the lighting using a fixed lighting source. This is recommended so you can control the direction that the light appears to come from. Now we'll discuss the ideal lighting situations for filming in an outdoor setting or setting up lighting indoors using the *Three-Way Point System*.

The first light you would use is called the main light, or key light. This would represent the sun and have wattage of as much as one 150 watts. The light would usually be 6 - 8 feet above the subject and it should be shining down on your subject from about a 45-degree angle. If you can't get a light source high enough, try using a floodlight pointed up at the ceiling letting the reflected light bounce down. This will not work if your ceiling is too high. The ceiling should be white, since any other color will influence the color balance on the video. Check your monitor or the viewfinder on your camera and see how the lighting appears. Try to avoid hard shadows due to too much light from the key source. The next set of lights will help eliminate this problem. You will have to improvise if professional lighting is not available. Remember that safety is your first concern. If you are using an outdoor floodlight to create the main light source, make sure it is fixed to a ladder or another solid object. It is very important that these objects are stable and out of the way, so no one will trip over them. Fasten all the wires tightly to any object they are coming down from. Tape the wires securely where they cross the floor. Make sure the wires are fully visible (preferably orange or yellow) to everyone. Keep in mind that this light (the key light) is the hottest light of all three types of lights used and severe burns could result if they are touched. Be careful to place the light away from flammable objects to avoid causing a fire. Do not attach too many lights to one electrical line. This could overload the electrical circuit causing a fuse to blow. It would be good to find alternative electrical outlets on separate fuses and distribute the electrical load to avoid any loss of power.

The second light, called the fill light, is more subdued. This light should be lower in wattage, usually about half the power of the key light. As mentioned previously, the key light could be up to 150 watts, so 75 watts for your fill light would be a good mix. This light is usually on the opposite side of the speaker and fills in the areas that the key light doesn't. This light is usually placed at eye level, but make sure not to have it directly pointed right into the face (eyes) of your

subject. Move the light forward or backward to achieve the best light. Check your monitor or viewfinder to see how the lighting appears. This light helps remove shadows below the eyes.

The third light is called the back light. The backlight can be one or possibly two lights of even lower wattage than the fill light. The purpose of this light is to create depth in the scene, as well as separate the subject from the background. The backlight also highlights the person's hair and shoulders. You could place one light at head level and another light may be located near the floor. Try to avoid bright spots by checking your monitor or viewfinder. Be aware of reflections off glasses, chrome objects, mirrors, or any other shiny object. Keep lights out of the camera viewing area.

Keep in mind that professional lights give off a certain color temperature, which is measured in degrees Kelvin rated 3200K. This means nothing to the novice videographer, but to a professional it means the color temperature is higher than common household lighting. They may have wattage of up to 1,000-watt sizes, and maybe more. The purpose is to give a more even and balanced light in your video, and eliminates the reddish color given off from the tungsten or filament bulb. One light that is found everywhere is the long tubular fluorescent bulb that is used for overhead lighting. If this type of light is a dominant source of lighting for your video, it may cause a green cast and will give a false color to your video. Some cameras have an adjustment for colors that come from various lighting sources, so check your individual camera's owner's manual. Some problems arise when lighting conditions are mixed together, such as light coming through a window, fluorescent lights overhead and incandescent lighting. All these may give off a misleading color while viewed in your image finder in your camera or monitor. Please pay attention to the type and amount of light available as you set things up. If all this sounds complicated, don't let it worry you. Use what you have, sticking to the basics. What is important is that you are trying to make a living legacy. The idea is to keep everything as simple as possible, so this can be accomplished without frustration. You do not want to create an "overdone production." Just make sure you have adequate lighting and sound, and everything will be great.

Sound Design

You can have the best camera, the best lighting, and Lincoln's bedroom for a location, but if you don't have good quality sound, all is for nothing. The viewer needs to hear the person speaking as clearly as possible. The video is a valuable secondary part. Did you ever watch a movie and your ears are straining to understand the words? You don't want to frustrate the people who are watching the video, so make sure you make the sound portion a priority. When recording a life history, the main goal is to eliminate background noise, and other sounds that may make it difficult to for the viewer to understand what is being said. To do this, you must be aware of the "sound villains" and the "sound heroes". The person filming / recording needs to be keenly aware of their surroundings. Let's discuss how to set up and manage your sound systems. We will detail the setup of **Studio** (stationary location or set indoors) and **Field** (mobile location or outside) sound systems.

Studio Sound System

Sound is easiest to control in this setting. First, look around your set. It's best to avoid a large room setting with nothing in the room to hold the sound in. If the room is too small, you may hear echoes. It would be best to try a practice run. Make a short recording in the room of someone who has the same volume level as the speaker does. Play this recording back through the camera, a television, computer monitor, or headphones. What does it sound like? If the sound is lost in the room, you may need a smaller space. Does it sound like the person is singing in the shower? In that case the room is not large enough. You want to use a room to be large enough to fit all the people needed for the interview, with enough space to move around. The ideal room will have some sound absorbing items in it, such as carpeted floors, drapes, or upholstered furniture. These items will limit the echo effect. Your test run will tell you if the sound is satisfactory for the space you chose.

The microphone on your camera may be all you have to record the audio part of the video. This type of microphone limits the distance you must be from the person being interviewed. Again, run a short sound test, checking the sound on a television set or monitor. Some video cameras have a socket or jack for headphones or earbuds. Some higher-end headphones can block out all outside sound and allow you to hear what is really being recorded. For the average person with limited equipment, a pair of earbuds, like the one used for phones, mp3 players, etc. will suffice. Even an earpiece such as those that pair with Bluetooth headsets will work. Most of

these items can be bought at any major discount store, including a headphone extension cord and microphone extension cord.

An external (off-camera) microphone may be most effective if there is going to be a long distance from the camera to the person/persons speaking. This type of microphone will work best if you are interviewing a group of people, you want to video one person interviewing another person, want to include background sounds, or if a demonstration is being recorded. In many cases, the interviewer and the one being interviewed will only be a few feet apart, but the video camera is 8 feet away from the subjects. The external microphone – specifically a shotgun mic would be a good choice to get the sound quality you desire. For variety you may include some full-length shots in your video. We do recommend using a lavalier (a clip-on) microphone that is remote controlled since this heightens the speaker's voice if attached on the lapel / collar area and avoids many unwanted sounds and cables. When testing your sound, be aware that additional unwanted sounds may filter in, such as ticking clocks, humming heaters or air conditioners, people talking, cars, telephones, cell phones, and pagers. If you are editing, it would be beneficial to let a second or two of tape run before you start recording and a few seconds after you stop recording. Try not to let your subject/subjects jump your cue to start talking or moving. You want to allow enough time, so you don't clip off any of the beginning words or actions. If some unwanted sound occurs, don't hesitate to hit the stop button, where the sound occurred and start over.

Field Sound System

We now enter an area where control is more of a challenge. In the great outdoors many things can distract from the speaker's voice or cover it over. Some "sound villains" are wind, vehicles, emergency sirens, aircraft, people talking, barking dogs, animals of all kinds, along with a multitude of other things too numerous to mention. When outdoors, try to keep away from a busy thoroughfare. When you are on location, such as a childhood home, you may want to pick a quiet time of day to video.

If you are using an internal (on-camera) microphone, make sure the person being interviewed is facing the camera or walking towards you. Some cameras and phone apps have sound manipulation for use. You should refer to your camera's manual for more specific information on this feature. Basically, you will need to monitor the sound either with earbuds / headphones (if your recording device has the appropriate jack) or by reading the audio meters that may be

presented. If you have neither of these, you (or your cameraperson) will need to pay attention to the background sounds occurring. When you feel the scene is ready and you want to start, use a prearranged hand (for non-edited videos) or verbal (for edited) signal (cue) to let the person know when to start speaking. You should set up a hand signal or other signal that may not be seen by the camera.

When recording outdoors, an external microphone (a microphone not located in the video camera) would be beneficial. A wireless microphone as mentioned, is also an excellent choice in this situation. A visit to your camera dealer or local electronics store will help you find a wireless microphone that is compatible with your camera. If you are using a wired microphone, make sure you and others are aware of where the microphone cords are placed. If necessary, mark the area. This will prevent any equipment from being pulled over and, even more importantly; no one trips and is injured. Keep sound quality in mind when choosing a site for the video. Bushes, trees, natural growth, fences, buildings, and manmade structures can help shield outside noises. Remind any people present to remain quiet while you are recording since this will cut down on background noise.

Microphones

If you will be having more than one person on camera at once, you may want to use a hand-held microphone. In this case, you should try to have only one person hold the microphone. Doing this helps avoid the noise generated by the microphone when it is moved from one speaker to another. If it is a windy day or have background noise, use a wind screen over the head of the microphone. Most microphones come with one. A foam cover helps to avoid most whooshing and roaring sounds. You may wish to get an additional cover to even place over the foam pad if the wind / background noise requires. Most professional and many prosumer video cameras have manual audio controls to use as well. There are even phone apps that can help regulate the audio being recorded too. One final note: Do not have the subject or interviewee hold or place the microphone too close to their mouth or speak too loudly into the mic. This will cause an overloading of the sound and distort the quality of the speaker's voice.

Editing

The main objective for most people is to be satisfied with their Living Legacy video. A video can involve several techniques become a “finished product.” The techniques we will cover range from simple such as Continuous and Assembly-Style editing to involve varying degrees of “bells and whistles” in Post-Production editing. If you’re producing the video life history for either yourself or for an audience, keep in mind what you want your finished video to look like.

Field Editing

The 2 most basic type of editing is what we call **Assembly-Style Editing** and **Continuous-Shot Editing**. These styles involve manipulating the use of your camera. In Continuous-Shot editing, you are basically filming in one continuous clip. This is a popular style for candid interviews, in which the interviewee can say or do whatever is on their minds and that the recording only stops when the interview is over. Assembly-Style involves starting and stopping the recording, adding / deleting scenes as you go along. You may even utilize your camera’s functions or phone’s apps to manually add transitions for the start and end of the clips. The main thing to remember about these editing techniques is that you will want to plan before you film so that you are not having to redo clips multiple times over.

Post-Production Editing

For the more advanced videos, editing would be required. You will need a computer and editing software for this. Post-Production editing involves taking your recorded clips, images, music, other media files, etc. and arranging and manipulating them to your desired preference. Of course, this may get complicated, so you may decide to have a professional video company do this. If you choose to edit yourself or hire a production company, you will need to make sure all media you use are created by you or that you have received proper permission for using them in your video. There are also many tutorials online to learn how to edit videos.

Using the computer for editing videos, and prints, is most exciting; since so much, if not all work can be done in your own home. Having a computer with current software, storage mediums, a scanner, a video recorder, and a DVD burner, you should be ready to go. Now many computers are being manufactured without CD / DVD drives, Firewire ports, SD Card slots, and some are now without even USB ports. In the future they will be gone and replaced with another form of recording information. For those who are adept with their computer, there are varieties of computer hardware and software programs available to transfer analog/digital video to a DVD,

memory stick, or the cloud. Subject, or heading titles, can be added and faded in with other editing functions to give a professional look. Programs now allow you to have a small production studio in your home. The PC and Apple computers have built in functions for such editing sound and video. You may also opt for free editing software that may be downloaded or purchase and editing suite from companies like AVID or Adobe.

Working with Photographs and Films

You will want to make sure you have everything that you want included in the video acquired. If in the event you don't possess a scanner to transfer pictures to a DVD / CD burner; many stores now have scanners that allow you to load prints onto a CD or other file. You may also utilize your local public library for this service as well. You may also, provided you have adequate lighting, opt to just take pictures of your photographs, and transfer them digitally. There are also many sites on the internet who will assist you in assembling your family genealogy; so shop around. One problem you may encounter is the communication gap on what information you are trying to assemble. It is best to try to find someone in your local area who can fit your needs. Make sure if you are hiring someone, get several referrals from them. Ask to see some samples of their finished product, and see if it fits your needs, and budget.

There are many creative approaches you can take when displaying your photographs. If you have a computer at your disposal, you could enter the photographs into the computer and display them on a monitor or television screen. The draw back to this approach is that it involves quite a bit of time and work. To simplify, you might consider showing the photographs while you are recording. One method would be to have the photograph placed on an easel, and then have the person being interviewed look at it and make appropriate comments. This would require the person who is video recording to focus first on the person being interviewed and then focus on the photograph. Another option is to have the videographer focus on the easel with the photograph on it. The photographs would be numbered on the back and placed in order on the easel. The person being interviewed can then make comments while the video camera is focused on the easel. This method allows the videographer to have control of the image. Make sure the person being interviewed is close to the microphone. This will allow for the best sound quality (see sound section). Also make sure to use a camera tripod to ensure that the close ups on the photos remain steady.

You will probably have hundreds of pictures to choose from, so keep in mind that you will have a limited amount of time to show them. Choose the photographs that best represent your family's history. Pictures have a way of recalling days gone by. They, also, help memories to flood to the surface. Try to pace the commenting well, so you can show as many photographs as possible. Keep in mind that you don't want to rush the one being interviewed, but you can help them if they seem to be stuck commenting on a certain photo by gently suggesting that they move onto the next photograph.

You may also have some old 8-millimeter film, super8 film, 16millimeter film, and videotapes that your family recorded. You will want to digitize them if you haven't already in order to have sections added to the Living Legacy video. Many companies can convert them to a current format to be played on a computer or DVD player. The one being interviewed may want to mention these items by an assigned name or number, commenting on their contents. Showing each film individually would take up too much time. Of course, you will want to label and date these items ahead of time. If a projector is available for the event, you may want to show a few of them. Also, if you do decide to have copies made, you might want to ask if anyone would like their own personal copy. Find out what this will cost and make a list of all interested ones. At this time digital, DVD, and Blu-ray formats are the most popular, but time will tell what the next thing coming down the road will be. It may just come to you as a download to send to your friends and family. Progress in technology is constantly evolving but human-interest stories in whatever format will go on forever. If you are shopping for or borrowing equipment to do the life history or genealogy, it would be recommended to get a prosumer video camera or a DSLR camera which should work for most budgets and productions. You could use a professional video camera if budget allows. This format is the most commonly used format using present day technology. Most photography outlets will be more than happy to explain digital technology to you and help you find the items that best fit your needs. Photographs and films are a great way to catalog your family history! Take advantage of the ever-expanding technology available. Many we known large discount chain stores and pharmacy chain stores offer a wide variety of print scanning, video transfers, and recording options.

The Interview

It is very important to give a good deal of thought to who will conduct the interview. The person being interviewed and the person doing the interview should be comfortable with each other. This is vital, because any tension will show up on the video. Of course, this should be talked about ahead of time to avoid any embarrassing questions. Discussing all these options with the person being interviewed will help the interview run smoothly.

Who's Doing the Interview?

Choosing the person/persons to do the interview is the responsibility of the Coordinator (refer to coordinator section). The first person to consider for the job would be the person coordinating the story. If this is not possible, we recommend the person that is chosen is well acquainted with the person being interviewed. Another option would be a family member or someone close to the person. You may choose to have more than one person conduct the interview. If the interview is being done for a club, organization, business, or religious group, a spokesperson for that group may be used to do the interview. In some cases, you may want to employ a professional speaker. If you choose this option, it is important that they have access to all the material they need to conduct the interview. People attending the recording may want to ask some of the questions.

Tips for Interview

After you decide who will do the interview, you must decide how the interview will be conducted. One of the issues you should discuss is how you want the interviewer and interviewee to be positioned for the video camera. If you do the interview on a one to one basis, you have some options as to how you can accomplish this. The person doing the interview can be shown on the video with the one being interviewed. You may choose to have the interviewer not appear on the video at all. It is possible to have a combination of both on and off camera interviews. As mentioned in the previously, some of the questions may even come from the people attending the taping. You may turn the video camera to face the person asking the question, and then turn the video camera back to the one being interviewed when they give their answer or stop and start the recording once positioned. It's possible to be very creative with all this. Make sure you discuss everything with all concerned before you make any final decisions. If cost is not an issue more than one camera may be used and editing will be involved and having the recording in sync.

Who will be present at the interview? It is important to discuss this with the one being interviewed ahead of time, so they can give it enough thought. Do they want a large audience in attendance, or will they feel uncomfortable? Do they want the other people who will be interviewed at their taping? It may be that some of the answers he will give are of a very personal nature. In that case, he may not want anyone in the room when he answers, not even the person doing the interview. It is important that you consider all your options here, so the interview runs in an orderly manner.

You can make notes of the amount of time you would like to spend on each question. Remember, people tire out, so it may be necessary to schedule more than one interview session. This is especially important if you're interviewing an elderly, disabled person, or children. Included in the script would be any pictures, documents, or any other props you will be using, and when they will be introduced. Again, you want to make note of how much time will be allotted to discussing each item. Have everything (pictures, documents, props, etc.) that will be used during the interview organized, labeled, and noted on your script. Try to pinpoint any potential problems, this way you can create alternate plans to avoid any delays. All this may seem like a lot of work, but it will save you time in the long run, and make the interview run as problem free as possible. If you follow a few basic points, the interview will be fun and go smoothly. The coordinator of the recording should make sure that everyone is very familiar with all the material that will be used. When the video begins, everything should be done in a calm, unrushed manner. The interviewer should be kind and considerate. After the interviewer asks a question, they should allow plenty of time for an answer, don't ever hurry the person being interviewed. Before the interview begins, you should agree on a special signal or sign that allows the one being interviewed to know that you would like to move onto another question. Try to follow the script as much as possible, but remember, your script is a guideline, not something written in stone. Have water readily available. Talking can parch a person out and make them feel uncomfortable. You will also want any chair or couch you are using for the interview to be comfortable. Everyone should feel at ease.

Recording a Living Legacy will be a rewarding and joyful experience for everyone involved. These production basics and startup steps will help you make wise decisions, and it will also help you to stay organized, so the recording will go as problem free as possible. The most important thing to remember, though, is to have fun! You are now ready to begin filming the various aspects of a Living Legacy video!

My Living Legacy – Life History

Video Life History

What could be more valuable than to "save a life," on video, being able to observe that special person talking about their personal and family history as they lived it. A Life History video adds more meaning to the story when you see all the color and emotion that are inherent to that person's character. Recording their story is a very special way of documenting a person's life.

The video can be done in a home setting or any other chosen location. You can video the individual walking on the same soil where they grew up while they comment on their life experiences, retracing their steps from childhood. You will be able to hear about how life was when they were a child all the way up to the present day. They can express their sorrows, their joys, and their hopes for the future, along with any suggestions or helpful hints to make the journey through life easier for others. They can also relate the people who influenced their life.

You will want to include special stories or memories. If the guest of honor has a special friend or someone they would like to include in their story and that person cannot attend, it may be advisable to travel to them for the recording. If it is not possible have them attend he or she may send a recording to add to their story. A video or audio message could be included. No gift could be more precious than that of the human experience, along with a person's hopes and dreams, captured as a permanent electronic record!

Family Reunions

A family reunion is a very special event. Your family may have planned their family reunion months in advance. Many families organize a reunion every year, while some have one or two events where the whole family gathers together. Whatever way your family reunion is planned, it can be a great time to create or add to a Living Legacy!

If planning time is minimal, you may want to do a shortened version of a life story. In many cases, family reunions are the only place you get to see certain people that must travel long distances. You may want to feature them along with a few of the older family members. You will want to be creative with your planning, so you can take advantage of the many people who will be gathering for your family reunion. You should have a special area set aside to do the

recording. Make sure it is away from the hustle and bustle of the reunion. As family members gather, you can ask them to fill in their place on the family tree that may be provided. You can ask individuals if they would like to appear on the video. If they agree, give them a copy of the questions that you printed out in advance. Ask them to check off the questions they would like to comment on. Make sure that they pay attention to the questions that involve areas that they are known for or have an enthusiasm for. This will make the video very personal. They can talk about how they are related to the family, a favorite story, or how they met their spouse. If there is something special that they would like to be remembered for, or a special event in their life that they would like to discuss, make sure that they mention it to you, so you can be prepared to ask the appropriate questions.

You will find it very enjoyable to include people from different generations. Make sure you involve the children at the event. It would be particularly nice to have the grandchildren sitting on grandma or grandpa's lap while they make a comment or two. Prepare the questions or comments ahead of time so the children can be prepared. From weddings to anniversaries and everything in between, be as creative as you wish! Why not get everyone involved; have those who wish to comment, state their name, how they are related to the main person's life history, and what they are presently doing with their life. As the years go by, they may wish to add to their information on the DVD or other media. Remember to follow the simple instructions for producing a Living Legacy. If all the material seems overwhelming, then skim over the high points and keep it simple. Remember to review the sections on lighting and sound. Now all you must do is get out the video camera / recorder, set up the tripod, lighting, and microphone and begin!

The Wedding

One of the most important events in a person's life is their wedding. This is a family gathering that will always have great attendance. People and relatives all over the country may attend. For some cases, this occasion may be the first and the last time such a cross section of people will be in the same place. For those people who have a genuine interest in preserving family history, this is a unique opportunity. You can use your imagination to see all the possibilities available to you. For example, when sending out wedding invitations, you could include a family tree form for the person to fill out and send back with their reply. The elderly on your list may be able to provide you with some very valuable information. This information, along with copies of photographs, could be brought along when they attend the wedding. If you are planning to do a

video for your Living Legacy or at the wedding, you could include some information about it in the invitation, along with a simple form for them to fill out if they would like to participate. Most importantly, when recording a life story, please make sure that it in no way detracts from the wedding. A good idea would be to plan the taping a day or two ahead.

Those involved in the wedding will not want to divide their time between the two events. It would be very important to keep things as simple as possible. Ask just one or two questions to the participant. A little is better than nothing. Remember that these will add interest and depth to your final product. It is unfortunate, but as people age, a long trip may become very difficult, maybe impossible, so it's important to capture these moments on location. Kept in its proper place, a Living Legacy may add joy to the wedding, since both events are a celebration of life!

The Funeral

Funerals are usually a time for people to associate and reminisce. It is not a common practice for people to make a funeral talk video, but it is slowly becoming a part of many funeral preplanning packages. Funeral homes in many areas are now offering this option. While having the funeral talk recorded is a good thing to do, it's important to have a video record of all the interesting stories and history pertaining to the individual who died. Some of these stories may never come up again, so the funeral would be a great opportunity to get family and friends to record these memories. Remember, family members rarely get together these days, so you must grab the opportunity when it presents itself.

It would be a good idea to set up the recording equipment in a room that is away from the funeral itself (see lighting and sound sections). Tell your family and friends that they will have an opportunity to record the good experiences they shared with the deceased loved one. Loving comments may also be expressed. The individual may want to discuss any one of the questions found on the question sheet. A copy of the questions should be made available, in large print to any who would like to review them. You may want to attach the questions on an easel. They may just want to talk about what that person meant to them. As the person is recording their message, they should give their name and address, along with their relationship to the deceased.

You should offer an alternative way to relate memories about the deceased in case someone doesn't feel comfortable being on a video. Most funeral homes have a signing book for people who attend the funeral. Next to the signing book you could have copies of the family tree. Ask the individual to locate their position on the family tree and sign their name. You should also have a box next to the signing book that has self-addressed, stamped envelopes with copies of the family tree inside. This will allow the individual to fill out the form at their leisure. They may want to include copies of any photographs they have. Encourage the person to relate any personal information they have about the deceased and ask them to include this with the family tree when they send it back. It is important that they include their name and address, along with a telephone number so they can be reached for further information or verification.

Another very good alternative to a video recording is an audio recording. Some funeral homes also send the event over the internet or by cellular phone. We are in a new era when many people want things now. Provide an audiocassette recorder for those who wish to make any comments. Make sure they identify themselves on the recording. It would be a good idea to have a form available for those who wish a copy of the deceased's life history. Include a modest cost for the actual recording and for shipping. They should decide what format they would want such as a digital download, DVD, audiotape or other. Discuss any other alternative formats they may want. What a genuine expression of love you will have created by recording valuable information and history for future generations. In the future, cemeteries will have a copy of his or her or life story on site for those who wish to see their journey in life or attain family history.

Me, Myself, and I

What if no one is available to help you prepare your life history? Is it your desire to do the video recording for your Living Legacy by yourself? Would you prefer that no one hear the answers to your questions or see your expressions while you are being recorded? Do you wish to address a question privately? Do you have comments to make that you want no one else to know about? Most of the material in the production guide will apply when you do a Living Legacy by yourself.

First, you should prepare a script for yourself. You could have someone else write a script for you, if you prefer. Next, you should set up your production area. Put the camera on a tripod and set up an external microphone. You can then start the camera. Begin the video by

introducing yourself. You might want to give the date of the video, the location, and explain why you decided to do the video on your own. After the introduction you may wish to continue with your own personal history. You can choose any format you want. You could start at the beginning and work your way to the present, and then express your plans. You may want to start with your present-day life and go backwards chronologically. Of course, you can do or say anything that comes to mind. It does help, though, if all these items are noted in your script.

Next, you might want to describe locations you visited that are important to you or are of interest to those who will be viewing the video. You may want to express why you are creating this video. Pictures can be included by either stopping or starting the video camera each time you want a picture to be shown. You may also choose to display your pictures on an easel. This way you can keep the video camera rolling while you give comments about each picture. You may want to leave a personal message for someone special. Doing this in private may help the words to flow freely. Keep in mind that you should consult your attorney if any message or directive is of a legal nature.

Be aware of your surroundings while doing the video. You want to keep things as simple as possible. Remember that the subject of the video is you, not the background. If you decide to do the video outside, or at various locations, there may be people watching, so don't let them bother you. There is a vast amount of computer software available for your computer to help you with the production of your story. All you need is a computer and the ability to use the computer software, along with enough memory space available on your computer. Music may be added but be sure it isn't overpowering. You want your voice to be clear and audible. Play the video back with the music to be sure that the music is not too loud.

How would you describe yourself? How would others describe you? In the reference section, you will find the "Describe Yourself" worksheet. The worksheet is a list of words that can be used to describe your personality. Going through this list will give you a more complete picture of your emotional / personality assets and liabilities. You might take some time to go through the items on this list beforehand, or you could choose to be spontaneous and go through the list right away. Show this list to someone who is close to you. Another person's perspective can be very revealing.

Pets – Our Special Friends

Our pets mean a great deal to many of us, so why not include them in your Living Legacy video? Whether a person owns a dog, cat, horse, or any other pet, it is often considered to be a part of their family. To begin showcasing your pet, it would be good to start with pictures of it, arranged chronologically. Try to have dates and other pertinent information about the pictures written down for you. We all tend to forget dates and important data. You want the narration to go smoothly and not appear to be disorganized and inaccurate.

Besides pictures, there are many things we can share about our pets. Many people are proud of their pet's pedigree. Why not make a chart showing their ancestry and display this on the video? You can also video any ribbons, trophies, or awards your pet has received. You can also talk about any shows they were in. Pets come to us in a variety of ways. We may have received our pet as a gift. A friend or relative may have given our pets to us. You may have purchased your pet at a store, found it at a Humane Society or other shelter, or your pet may have found you. You can share this information on the video. What do you enjoy about your pet's personality? Describe your pet's many characteristics and habits. Pets do some amusing things, so why not share them! Describe their favorite toys, if they liked to ride in the car, any special experiences you had with your pet. Most of all, relate how much your pet means to you.

Before videotaping your pet, it would be best to have them groomed. You can bring your pet to a pet salon or do it yourself. Either way, your pet should look its best for the video! Video recording your pet can be a challenge, so it would help if you discuss with the videographer how you want it to be done. Video recording outdoors may be a perfect way to showcase your pet. You may also want to show your pet approaching you, giving you a hug, practicing some commands, or even doing one of his special tricks. Do you want a close-up shot of your pet, or a far-away image of it? Discuss these issues before you film.

It would be good to have a working script or outline to keep things organized. Make sure you employ the basics here as far as sound and lighting goes (see lighting section and sound section). Make sure the sun is at your back and that you check your settings and sound. If you will be recording your pet outdoors, make sure you check the weather forecast. You may decide to video indoors. In that case check the lighting and sound sections to make sure you have the proper lighting and sound settings. It would be beneficial for all involved to go through a practice session. Remember that you are not expecting perfection here and sometimes

special moments happen when least expected. Some of you may want to discuss as story or two of pets no longer with you. In many cases people talk about their favorite pets from the past and include pictures.

It is possible to do the video of your pet all by yourself. Have your camera on a tripod, check your viewfinder, imagining yourself in the picture. It is possible to do it on your phone; just find a steady object and indirect lighting and begin. You will probably will use a midrange picture setting. Start the camera and then walk into the scene and begin video recording. If you don't like the way the video turns out, you can edit the footage or re-shoot. With the advent of new technology, more options are available to you. For many people, especially the elderly, the only friend they have is their pet. Therefore, a valid concern arises: what will happen to their pet if they are no longer able to take care of it? It would be beneficial to make financial arrangements for your pet (see "Wills" in the Resources section). A person should be designated to handle these issues. It is not suggested that a person goes overboard with these things, but it is important to note that many pets are left stranded without much forethought for their future. Some people leave a trust for their pet with a responsible caretaker, and upon the pet's demise the balance of funds is left to a charity, or person of their choice. Video recording your pet can be fun and rewarding. Just follow the suggestions above and you'll have a Living Legacy that will include your special friend, your pet!

True Confessions

Throughout our lives we have many experiences, some good some bad. There are some experiences that we love to share with others, while other experiences we regret. There are many things that we've said or done that need to be reconciled. We may need to express our feelings to resolve the issue, or we may need to apologize for things we've done to hurt someone. You can imagine a multitude of scenarios and circumstances that affect others or us.

Recording these experiences on a video may be a good way to express the things that have been on your mind, or a way to tell something that you have not told anyone before. You could use the video to let people know about something special you said or did. The video could have a positive message in it. If you have been helping a person or cause anonymously, this video would give you an opportunity to let others know what you've done. You could use this as an opportunity to vent your personal frustration or reveal a deep secret. This is also an opportunity to make a true confession.

The confession may be something minor that you need to get off your chest, or it may be something quite substantial that needs to be revealed. In all cases, you want to make sure your facts are accurate and that you are truthful. Remember this video may be painful for some, but it may release a great deal of frustration or trauma you or another person is feeling.

Make sure you have planned for those you would like to view this video. You should also plan for when you would like the video shown and how it should be presented. It is quite possible you will want to record all these experiences and feelings and then destroy the recording. Of course, the choice is yours; just make sure you make known your wishes. When the video begins, it is important that the person is thinking about their audience. They should keep in mind who will be viewing the video and how they will respond to what is being said. Even if the person were relating something that may have a negative impact, it would be advantageous to put a positive spin on it by showing how the experience helped the individual learn a valuable life lesson, or how it affected them, so others may learn from it. A person may relate the struggles they had in the work force, at home, at school. Other experiences may come to mind. Relating these types of emotions and experiences can be very revealing they can help others see who the true person is, and why they feel the way they do. Once we understand a person better, we become closer to them.

Mountains to Climb

For many of us, our life experiences are journeys of gradual peaks and valleys. But, for some people, their journey includes climbing some mountains. Some difficulties are of an external nature, and others are internal, but no matter how they occur, overcoming them takes a great deal of effort and dedication. There are many avenues to go down to resolve them.

Some life stories are humorous, while others are heartbreaking. We may have pent up stories we wish to share, and other incidents that we choose to keep hidden. Many people suffer silently in stressful situations, and others learn to adjust to their circumstances on their own, or they seek professional help. Some may struggle with a disability, or the daily challenge of being a single parent. You may have experienced a financial setback, a rocky marriage, persecution, bullying, workplace harassment, loneliness, or other issues. Endurance; a word seldom ascribed to people these days, it comes in various forms. Many people internalize their endurance. Here is your opportunity for you to express your story on video, as you climb up your personal mountain to success.

It is very important to have these experiences in order before starting to record. Consider using notes or cue cards to keep things organized. When the video begins, it is important that the person is thinking about their audience. They should keep in mind who will be viewing the video and how they will respond to what is being said. Even if the person were relating something that may have a negative impact, it would be advantageous to put a positive spin on it by showing how the experience helped the individual learn a valuable life lesson, or how it affected them, so others may learn from it. A person may relate the struggles they had in the work force, as they started up and maintained their own business. Relating these types of emotions and experiences can be very revealing. They can help others see who the true person is, and why they feel the way they do. Once we understand a person better, we become closer to them. Always keep in mind the recording can be shared by an audience of your choice or destroyed whenever you choose. Whatever your choice, keep it in a secure place.

Fresh Air

Both men and women are dedicating more of their free time to the great outdoors. They are enjoying recreational activities, both on land and in the water, for many different reasons. Many people enjoy the personal challenge these types of activities afford. The competition can be with themselves or others. Others enjoy the physical benefits they derive, and others enjoy the sport. This outline is for the active person who wishes to explain their abilities, give a demonstration of their activities, or include a video segment in their Living Legacy of the outdoor / indoor activities they enjoy.

Here is an opportunity to show and tell your abilities, whether they are good, bad, or in between. The format is simple just start from the beginning. You will first decide what activities you would like to include. You can refer to the “Activities Worksheet” provided for a list of various activities and the “Activities Questionnaire” for relevant interview questions. The second thing you should decide is the location of your video. You can video this segment on “location” (where you enjoy your activity). You can provide the narrative for the video, combining this with video of you standing or sitting in front of the camera talking about your activities.

Start your video by giving a description of your activity or sport, explaining how you became interested in it and who or what influenced you. You may wish to give credit to the person or persons who influenced you by including them in the video. As with anything else associated with making a Living Legacy, you can be creative. Make sure to keep in mind the safety of the

individual doing the video recording. Do not put them in any dangerous situations to be creative. You can discuss any aspect of your activity that you wish. You could talk about the equipment your activity uses, how it is made, the cost, where it comes from, and when and how it is used. Talk about any short cuts or “tricks of the trade” you’ve learned.

Doing a demonstration of the activity using the equipment would be very instructive. What kind of difficulties or dangers did you encounter, and did you sustain any injuries? You could discuss any events you participated in or attended as a bystander. Show off the awards, medals, or ribbons you’ve won. Include the friends you’ve met along the way in your comments. You may wish to relate the personal satisfaction and enjoyment you gain from your activity. You can show how an item is made, and then display the final product. If their hobby involves a sport, they may want to show all the equipment needed. They could then demonstrate how the sport is performed. The possibilities are endless!

Use variety while taping! You could use a multi-camera operation for filming the demonstrations, close-ups while taping the individual, scene, or equipment will add variety to the video. Using these techniques can give the people who watch the video a better idea of what is being discussed. Again, use your imagination and be creative with your Living Legacy. Don’t be afraid to try different things. The video should be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

My Ride – A Personal Experience

Many of us, as we reflect on our childhood, can close our eyes and see our dad, mom, sister, brother, or friend help steady our bike and give us our first push as we wobbled down the sidewalk. We might recall our first tumble, but that was quickly forgotten as we experienced the exhilarating feeling of speed and freedom as we traveled on our bike.

You never forgot that moment trying to balance on your bike with the wind rushing past my face, pedaling as fast as you could go. The world, no matter how small it was, was yours to explore, till your legs gave out, it got dark, or it was time to turn around and go home. Then it happened; seeing and hearing it for the first time – a MOTORCYCLE!!!! The sound shook the ground, the colors were beautiful, the chrome was shiny, and best of all, it moved with its own power. You knew what you wanted right then and there, but as a kid, the best thing you could do was to take a card from a deck of cards and fasten it to the frame of your bike. As it hit the spokes, and

with a little imagination, it would sound just like that motorcycle! When you grew up, did you get one?

There are so many stories that I'd like tell about my many bikes. I never want to forget any of them. Like me, riding may be the center of many people's life, or close to it. In any case, each personal a story, a love, or a special experience they can't wait to relate. Here is YOUR chance! Along with your life history and, possibly, your genealogy, you can tell your own special story. Tell it like it is from your first motorcycle to your last. You can talk about your friends, your travels, your close calls, your rallies, your love for the road, your joys, your sorrows, and your hope for future. You may want to tell your story while you are standing next to your bike. You may want to include some of your biking buddies on the video. You can include pictures of your bike or bikes and you may even want to show off that tattoo or jacket!

Whatever you wish to share, do it now! There are so many things to tell so put it on the video for all to enjoy. My Living Legacy has prepared a few questions for you to answer in the Activities section of your comprehensive Resources guide, if you wish, but you can always add your own.

Class Project

A video of a lifetime! Try turning My Living Legacy into a brief outline for a class project. Here are a few places you could start looking for someone to feature in your video: nursing homes, military groups, senior centers, hospitals for the aging, assisted living homes, hospices, and even your neighborhood historical society. Not only will you aid your community if you donate the video to a "video history memory bank," but the reward that you will personally receive for showing interest in another person and caring about their life history, is more than you can imagine.

A video life history could generate a great deal of interest with children of all ages. They will enjoy hearing and recording special stories and learning about another person's life. The student will engender a respect for the elderly and an appreciation for their life experiences. Older ones, in many cases, enjoy visits with young people. Keeping in touch with older ones creates a link to the past that is priceless. This project may stimulate an interest in their own family's past. Keep in mind that for some people family life may be very hard, so you would probably want the students to do this project on a voluntary basis to avoid any embarrassment.

Recording the life history of an individual may help the student to appreciate life more and learn to make better decisions about their own future. In all cases, make sure you have decided with the facility you chose and received permission from the person or persons you wish to interview for your class project. Students should develop a list of questions they would like to ask the one being interviewed. These questions should be given to the one being interviewed so they can review them and select which questions they would like included in the interview. It is good to know how much time the person is willing to devote. This will give you a timetable, and an idea of how many questions to include. You may want to include special objects owned by the person and have them comment on them. Pictures can be used as part of the interview process. You could have written descriptions of the pictures, or you may want the person to make personal comments about them. Locating a newspaper from the day or year the person being interviewed was born and having them comment on it would add interest to the video. Ask the person if they have anything special they want to say, or special object included as part of the video. When doing the actual video, make sure all the events are dated with all pertinent information, such as locations. A teacher may use this project as for an extracurricular grade.

When teens are involved, the viewpoints change, and so will the questions. Have them develop a sense of belonging to the past. For many this may be difficult, since their minds are racing ahead to the future. Finding out about community life in the past, relationships, businesses formed long ago, religious experiences, and different attitudes may hit home with them and help them to appreciate the different facets of life. Have the teens write a short story or essay on what they personally learned from the interview, and how they benefited from the class project. Read the sections on lighting and sound, keeping in mind the physical condition of the person being interviewed. Make this an enjoyable event for you, your students, and the person who is sharing his life history with you. As a personal note: When you have an opportunity, it would be a kind gesture to visit someone who is in a nursing home, or someone who is unable to leave their home. The elderly, in many cases, are alone; their circle of friends is dwindling, as they get older. Stop in and feel the joy of caring!

Religion

For many people, religion is a very important part of their personal life. Because of the value religion can play in a person's life, a Living Legacy life history video would not be complete without including their religious beliefs and experiences. With the thousands of religious sects and divisions in the world, it would be impossible to develop a single outline that would fit each one. There are some religions / sects that may not wish to be included on video. To better express the religious beliefs of the person whose Living Legacy you are doing, it would be beneficial to write out an outline yourself.

To start off, you will need to know if your subject's religion allows them to be on video / photographed. Some don't allow it, some are okay with it. If the religion allows this, then in addition to listing your own personal religious beliefs and practices (if you're doing this Legacy Video of yourself), it would also help to list the grandparents on both sides of the family, outlining their own religious beliefs. If the beliefs are different, you may want them to explain why. Next, you can list the parents along with their religious beliefs. Lastly, list the beliefs of the person and their immediate family. You may wish to begin this segment by relating any childhood experiences involving their religion. Was it a family tradition? Do they like their religion? What religious beliefs did the person have as an adolescent and as a teenager? Be sure to include their initiation date and where it took place. List the names and addresses of the religious institution/institutions attended by them and their family and describe who administered it / the process.

If the person so desires, they may wish to explain their beliefs and why they believe the way they do. You may include any scriptures or quotes from religious writings that support their beliefs and shaped their life. The person could read their favorite scripture or religious writing and discuss how it influenced their life. They may want to talk about their eternal hopes, views, a possibly their ministry experiences. The person may wish to relate any personal experience with their faith and how they shared their beliefs with others. Talking about life's hardships and how their faith helped them is very heartwarming. Relating what their religion means to them and those around them is a good way to round out the interview.

These are just a few ideas and we're sure you can think of many different items to include in this section. Having an outline to follow will help the interview run smoothly, so make sure to have your outline ready when you start recording.

The Traveler

A life history would be incomplete if a person's travel experiences weren't included. As a child, most everyone can remember being plopped in the back seat of the family car and being told, "We're going for a ride!" For many of us, that "ride" never stopped, the travel bug bit us!

The person being videoed may wish to relate, in detail, their first trip, all their traveling experiences, or just highlights of their journeys. Remember the saying, "are we there yet"? They can explain where they traveled, the date that they left, the date they returned, who went along on the trip, how long the trip lasted, the mode of transportation, and the expenses involved. Without question, the one being interviewed should talk about the special places they remember, any special events that were associated with their trip, the wide variety of people they met, all the friendships that were made, the obstacles that were encountered, and the preparation it took to make the journey. It would add a very personal touch to have the individual talk about the things that they learned from the trip. Would they like to return to any special place? Are there any places they would still like to visit? Have the person describe their favorite trip. For the interview itself, you may want to have the person sitting in a chair looking at the camera and commenting on their travels. You can alternate the interview with vacation pictures, videos, or films.

There is a huge industry devoted to photography, video, blogging, and scrap booking. Also, available are myriads of computer programs to help you organize your efforts by cataloging them. This can include still prints and video images with sound added to make it look like a professional travel log. Always keep in mind, as you assemble your information, the audience and their attention level. You may want to ask a friend or relative to help you sort through all the pictures that you have. This will give you a fresh perspective and help you to limit the images you use, so your finished product will appeal to many different people. You don't want your audience falling asleep. Be creative and you will make your presentation much more interesting.

My Living Legacy – Genealogy

Video Genealogy

How to Get Started

Genealogy is “the strands of DNA that link us together.” It seems that in this world so many people are looking forward to their future, but there are, also, a growing number of people who are looking backwards to their roots. Currently genealogy is the second most popular hobby in the U.S. Instead of throwing family memorabilia out with the trash, people are now saving things. They want to know the identities of the people in the pictures and they want to know more about their ancestors. Recording a Living Legacy will give family members a chance to comment on pictures, diaries, and assorted memorabilia. Do you think that someone would be interested in researching a complete family genealogy?

Friends and family members may be invited to join in the life story by adding their comments on the family tree. They may wish to have a diagram of the family tree and have pictures on it, or just names, and comment on those people they knew.

What and where did your interest in genealogy begin?

Why are you interested in your family’s past?

Who got you started?

How did you obtain your information and pictures?

Display your genealogy work in the video.

Show your family tree.

Do you have any interesting experiences involving genealogy?

These are just a few ideas and I’m sure many others will come to your mind, just add them to your personal list. The format is simple, as you can see. Just have the person being interviewed discuss things that they feel comfortable with. Go over the questions with them before hand, adding or deleting questions as you see fit. It could a show and tell, let them decide. You do not have to have a long dissertation on the subject, just let the interview flow naturally. A brief outline would be very helpful to keep you organized and on track.

If someone decides to research the family roots, doing so would add interest to the video and draw the family together. You could, also, hire someone to assemble the family tree. Accuracy is the key! Try to get as much information as possible first hand. Secondhand information is not as reliable, as facts can get blurred when time passes. When doing a family genealogy, you should start by recording facts and memories that are already known. Begin with yourself and work backwards. When recording this information, you will want to use a pedigree chart (included) to organize the information.

The information on the pedigree chart may include the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. The individual's full name | 6. Name of marriage partner |
| 2. Date of the person's birth | 7. Date & Location of Marriage |
| 3. Location of the person's birth | 8. Name children and all information |
| 4. Date of persons death | 9. Divorces & Adoptions info |
| 5. Location of persons death (buried) | |

The following information can be very helpful when doing any type of family genealogy:

1. Keep a correspondence record. (Keep track of all letters, Emails and telephone calls)
2. Keep a resource checklist. (Keep track of all the resources that you use)
3. Verify facts and stories with close relatives. (Try to interview aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends of the family)
4. Check out family memorabilia. (Family Bibles, photo albums, scrapbooks, letters, family keepsakes)
5. Check out any previous research. Look for published information about your family history.
6. (Articles in periodicals, newspapers, historical society, Library of Congress, local libraries, local family history centers, the Church of Latter-day Saints, etc.)
7. Research your family genealogy on the internet as found on the website.
8. Post any information, queries, etc. on your website.
9. Post your queries on a surname message board or at any message board located at a genealogy web site)

Protect Your Genealogical Investment

After spending many years of gathering the names of relatives, when they were born, married, and when they died, collecting photos, cemetery readings, and documenting familial relationships, we tend to accumulate piles of papers, notebooks, and detailed family trees.

When your time has passed, and all this information is left behind, what will happen to this vital work you have done? You should consider leaving specific directions in your will concerning your project. You can use the form below to communicate your instructions.

After you've done all your genealogy research, you want to make sure that you make provisions to preserve it. The following information can help:

1. Make a provision for the genealogy information you've collected in your will. Bequeath your material to a descendant who will treasure the research. If there is no person in your family that would appreciate this gift, then donate your research to a local historical society, library, or archive. Someone may have to go through all the papers you've collected and decide what should or should not be kept. If there are items you feel strongly about preserving, make sure you include specific instructions in your will.
2. Make photocopies of any original documents. Put the original documents in archival quality containers such as filing cabinet. You could rent a safety deposit box at your local bank.
3. Make copies of photographs that do not have negatives. Photography stores can make copies of negatives, but this can be expensive.
4. Publish your work, no matter how big or small, and distribute it to your relatives. You may want to put all your information on a family web site. You can always update your work as you see fit.
5. Donate your work to a local library, historical society, the Family History in Salt Lake City, or any institution that you like.

My Living Legacy – Health & Legal

Legal & Health Videos

You may decide to have a separate video for each subject (financial needs, health directives, and legal options). Recording this information is optional, and for the most part cannot be considered as legal and binding. The recording may show your intent on a subject, and why you chose the direction that you did. In many of these areas it would be good to seek legal advice, or professional assistance from a close family member or good friend who has experience in these areas. There is information found on the internet, at libraries, and in various CD's and DVD's that you can purchase. You will find current information and advice that can be valuable to you when making this recording.

As one looks at the past while recording a Living Legacy, you will find that it is beneficial to look at your present situation and future needs. Recording this information can be very helpful and it can serve as a reminder of the areas of your life that require your attention.

****Important Note****

In all states, statutes and other laws govern video recording of legal directives vary. Please refer to such laws/and or a legal professional before recording your legal directive. In many cases, written directives may require witnesses of your signature. Again, check with your state laws regarding all options.

Personal and Legal Information

This may be a good time to consider your current contracts, written or verbal agreements, property decisions, written or verbal IOU's, personal loans of money or property, and any financial promise you made. All these items should be put in writing (see your legal advisor). Keep in mind that recording your financial information is advisory and may not be legally binding, so to avoid disputes, legal documentation is suggested. You may find it beneficial to review your will. There are many reasons to do this: attitude changes, financial changes, beneficiary changes, or any other reason or reasons that make it necessary to have those items recorded in your will. Now is a good time to settle any legal disputes from the past.

This additional information is provided as a reference in case you would like to do future planning, or aid family and friends in locating information that may not be easily found. You

should have a legal document indicating your personal decisions regarding legal, religious, monetary, and health matters. You may want to include any directions that you personally would like carried out. For instance, you may have already made funeral arrangements. It is important to take time to reflect on any other information you want to include and decisions you want made on your behalf. This information can be vital whether you are physically able to voice your opinion or have died.

Along with your personal information, you should keep all your financial papers in a secure place, such as a fireproof container or safety deposit box at your bank. If you choose to put your personal information on a secure computer site, a CD, memory stick or electronic stored. Keep a record of this with your financial papers. Other items you will want to include are: your will, death certificates, birth certificates, social security card, marriage certificate, IRA forms, cash, deed to your home, a list of any stocks or bonds, bank account information, safety deposit box numbers and where the keys are kept, any out of state information with addresses and telephone numbers, insurance papers, military discharge information, citizenship papers, annuities, divorce papers, or any information you wish to protect from fire and water damage. Keep a record of your personal inventory in a separate place. It is beneficial to have a video record of your list of belongings in a separate location. Keep a laminated card, with instructions on locating your directives along with whom to contact in case of an emergency, in your wallet or purse always. Some people have electronic wristbands.

Other items you may want to include on this card are:

1. Emergency contact name, with telephone number and address
2. Family names
3. Religious affiliation along with a telephone number
4. What to do if... happens
5. Medical requests (medicines, use of blood or blood products, etc.)
6. Allergies
7. Current medications
8. Insurance information
9. Name of your lawyer
10. Location of your personal and legal information

Select a family member or friend to retrieve the information you have collected. You may choose to release the information in part or in whole. It cannot be stressed enough that you should have a will or trust (see section on wills). A competent attorney should do the will or trust. The use of homemade wills and trusts usually can be contested and may not be recognized in a court of law. Make sure to keep your will current. If your family situation has changed, now would be a good time to update your will. Be aware of identity theft. You may want to purchase a paper shredder, preferably a crosscut unit. Any financial papers, medical records, or records of any kind that are not needed by you or others should be shredded.

It would be beneficial for you to establish a family history record. This should include your legal name, mother's name, father's name, names of any brothers or sisters, your grandchildren's names, the names of any aunts or uncles, and the names of all your nieces and nephews. You should include the most recent address and telephone number for each person on your list. All this information will be extremely useful to you and your family. Take the time now to safeguard the future for generations to come. It will give you peace of mind and simplify things at a time when practical items are hard to think of. You will have guaranteed that all the vital information your family will need is available to them.

A Will, to Have or Have Not

If you have anything of value to leave behind a will / trust is a must, otherwise the cost of resolving your affairs may be high. Rather than having the state settle your financial issues, an up to date will gives protection to the beneficiaries, and who gets what. A current will also provide for minor children before they reach adulthood. Check your state laws for the proper directions to fill these forms out.

Wills

Do you and those close to you have a will? A will is fine if everything can pass by beneficiary, i.e. financial documents. However, if you own property, houses, cars, land etc. is more advantageous to have your assets in a trust. If you do not have a will, your family members are subject to the laws of the state you live in and the mercy of the courts. These laws vary, but in general the state will distribute your property according to the laws set forth in the state's statutes. Distribution may be as follows: administration expenses, funeral cost, healthcare costs, debts, taxes, and family allowance. After all this is paid out, you will be wise to speak to an attorney to make sure everything now complies with state laws. The courts distribute the

remaining assets. Even children from another marriage may make a claim. If there are no surviving children, the deceased's parents would be next to claim, followed by any surviving brothers or sisters, then nieces or nephews, and on down the family line of descent.

A Living Will

A Living Will is a written instrument directing the proper facility caring for you, your direction regarding medical care if you are in a terminal condition and unable to speak. It describes to, or not to use additional measures for life saving equipment. It handles your wishes about autopsy and organ donation. This speaks for you. It would be noted health care agencies have such forms, nursing homes, hospitals, and lawyers also have them. Paralegals can provide you with the necessary documents; they can also save you money. As in all documents, read carefully and if there is anything you don't agree with, or understand, get a clear explanation, and feel free to line out the part you don't want. Again, read again before you sign the line. Never hesitate to ask for legal help.

A General Power of Attorney

In the event you become incapacitated for a brief period and are unable to speak, you can appoint someone to act on your behalf. It can be a family member or a friend or anyone you choose. This person will be able to run your financial affairs until you are able to resume your financial activities.

Health Care Power of Attorney

This instrument is prepared in advance of a person becoming terminally ill. You now can have a relative or friend speak for you and express your desires regarding medical treatment. It is a written instrument directing the proper facility caring for you, your direction regarding medical care if you are in a terminal condition and unable to speak. It describes to, or not to use additional measures for life saving equipment. It handles your wishes about autopsy and organ donation. This speaks for you. It would be noted health care agencies have such forms, nursing homes, hospitals, and lawyers also have them.

Paralegals can provide you with the necessary documents; they can also save you money. As in all documents, read carefully and if there is anything you don't agree with, or understand, get a clear explanation, and feel free to line out the part you don't want. Again, read again before

you sign on the line. Some states have web sites available with forms that may fit your medical needs.

Healthcare Directive

What is a Healthcare Directive? A Healthcare Directive is a legal document that sets forth your personal requests for your healthcare. This is done so your desires will be followed in the event you are unable to tell your healthcare advisor of your desires because you're incapacitated.

In your Healthcare Directive you will outline any healthcare procedures you do and do not want, for instance: use of blood or blood fractions, life extending procedures such as liquid nourishment, resuscitation attempts, nursing home care, hospice care, mental health care, or refusal of certain treatments. Many people carry a health care form on their person, please check if this applies. You can direct how you want your healthcare costs to be handled and by whom. You can stipulate how your insurance is to be handled and provide information about your bank accounts. Anything you want to specify can be detailed in your directive.

You should have a person who will be your Healthcare agent. Your Healthcare agent would follow the wishes you set forth in your Healthcare Directive. They would have the right to refuse certain care and medications according to your desires. They would be able to sign legal documents that are needed to carry out your wishes. They would be able to make sure you were placed in the care facility that you requested and make sure that any healthcare providers have all the necessary information to carry out your wishes. This person would be assigned a Power of Attorney for Healthcare. The laws for this vary from state to state, but it should be signed by the agent you chose; two witnesses who are more than 18 years old and possibly be signed by an alternate agent of your choice. It is important to keep your Healthcare Directive in a safe place along with your personal history and any important papers, but not in a lock box.

Be sure to keep your directive updated, some forms or laws may change. Medical procedures change as well as our personal circumstances, so be on top of things so your directive contains all the information that your family needs to know about your healthcare desires. You may wish to make a video comment on your decision about these matters. It would be good to know the HIPAA act regarding your privacy about health matters, especially when entering a hospital.

This act would relate to who will have access to your personal information or will not have access. A good place to start is on the internet site under the United States Dept of Health and Human Services. This information is strictly advisory, please check with your local and state for additional information.

Trusts

When you make a trust, you control all variables. If you already have a will, now would be a good time to think about estate planning, and the advantages of a trust. Things can change rapidly, so it would be very important to make an annual review of your trust. This way you can avoid any regrets and make necessary changes before it is too late. If you do not have a trust, now is the time to make one. This is a very intelligent thing to do. If you have no family that you wish to leave your material and monetary assets, why not donate them to a religious organization, a special charity or foundation, or even someone, or something you have a special passion for. You could consider the needs of the community you live in and mention them in a video. A trust allows you to control your legacy. To the best of your ability, you can help your family avoid a material tug of war. You must seek legal help when it comes to drawing up your trust; it is designed specifically to you. Upon the first death, assets automatically go the surviving spouse. On the second death your assets are distributed exactly as you wished them to be without courts, lawyers, etc. Your trust has an executor named by you, more than likely it is one person in your family.

Remember, only you know your own personal situation, do you have children that are grown? Do you have special friends you want mentioned in your trust? Do you want to make provisions for your pet in your trust? Do you want to name someone to be the executor of your estate? These and many other questions can be addressed in a trust. Now is the time to seriously consider if you need a trust. It will save your family and friends a lot of emotional difficulty when you are no longer here to answer those important questions. A video of your decisions may resolve questions that may come up later.

Financial Concerns

For most of us, our lives have some loose ends; things we never get around to doing, or we purposely avoid. One area is that of our finances. It seems putting things off gets easier as we age, for a multitude of reasons. "Someday I'll get around to it, but not now," we say. We tend to think of ourselves as running on like a Lexus, but we end up like a 1949 Chevrolet. As you review your life history, this may be the opportune time to review your financial needs and get financial loose ends in order. This planning is like insurance, it's not just for you, but those you love, and care about. There are many places you can go for good advice. You could attend financial clinics and gather information to take home and review. In most cases, this is not a good time to make a quick decision. There are periodical magazines for the elderly, such as

AARP, that offer financial advice and direction that may help your situation. Take time to see what is best for your needs. This is an important suggestion; if you have lost your spouse in death, do not make any important financial decisions for at least a year. Let things settle down, so you have clear thinking.

If you don't have an attorney and need one, look for a reputable source to choose one. A trusted relative or friend may know one you may go to. There are financial planners/consultants who may offer a wealth of information for you. Take your time looking for the right person who fits your needs. Banks offer investment services, financial planning, bill paying, tax consulting, and many other products. If your bank is a branch of a larger one, and doesn't offer these services, seek out the parent bank for further assistance. You may have an accountant who knows your personal affairs; this individual may be of value to you. The Internet may be of a service to you also, checking a government site that pertains to your situation; many government agencies will send you information that will help you. If you have a safety deposit box, it is a good thing to have a copy of what is in it, in a location where if in an emergency, it can be located. In case of a death, the box may be restricted as to what may be removed from it. Know your regulations on this subject. As more financial information is put on line, remember to have someone you trust have your passwords, and log in information, to do your transactions, in case you are not able to do them. Brokerage accounts require this information. Also, passwords may be required to change from time to time, so keep this information up to date for the person helping you. From time to time it would be to your advantage to get an update on your credit history.

My Inventory

Very few of us are gifted with a photographic memory. What would happen if you suddenly suffered a catastrophic loss of your property? Would you be able to recall all the items that you possessed? Would you have proof for your insurance company that you owned these items? Keeping track of your personal inventory is a wise decision. A written inventory may be tedious and take a great deal of time. Creating a video inventory is the answer.

Listed below are a few of the things you will want to include in your video inventory.

1. Name the person who is doing the video inventory
2. State whether this is a personal or business inventory.
3. State the date of the inventory.

4. Name the location where the video inventory is being taped.
5. State the items that will be inventoried.
6. Name the insurance carrier(s), policy number(s), date(s) of enforcement, riders and exclusions,
7. the insurance agent with their address and telephone number, and the location of the insurance
8. policy or policies.
9. Visually display all serial numbers. (Make sure to have a written record.)

Remember, your video inventory does not need to include any fancy video techniques or titles. Your comments on the video should suffice. There are many ways you can choose to do your inventory. You may decide to verbally describe your possessions. You may wish to state that these are your possessions, and do not belong to anyone else. State the condition of the items, their age, where they were purchased, and, if possible, where the bill of sale is kept. You could also go into the item's history, if you wish. When doing your verbal description of your possessions, I would recommend that you state the of the item by comparing it with something else, maybe a yardstick, a person, or whatever you think would give an accurate description. Show the item you are describing for the video. It would be very helpful to show different angles of the item. Keep the items well lit. Add any information, on audio, that the camera cannot pick up. As you do your video, keep in mind that you only want to inventory items that belong to you, not including rented or borrowed items. I have just a few production notes for you. It would be to your advantage to have a light on the video camera. Always keep in mind, when using a light on the camera or phone the battery will discharge at a faster rate, so you will have less usable recording time. As you do your recording, be careful so you do not fall over any of the objects. Furniture and other low objects create quite a problem. When taping in a dark room or building, turn on all available lights, and if necessary, bring in a few standup lights to fill in, moving them around if necessary. It is not necessary to go slow when doing the video inventory, because, at any time when the video is being viewed, you can slow down the picture on the video player or freeze frame the items in questions. You may wish to state verbally who gets what, when and why. This not a legal document but may clear up family squabbles.

The Safety Deposit Box

It is important to make a list of the items in your safety deposit box. Keep this list in a place that is accessible to you and the people that will be handling your affairs. You should make a note where the safety deposit box keys are located. Banks do not keep a spare key on hand for you if you cannot find yours. In many cases it takes quite a bit of work to get a safety deposit box opened, if the keys are lost or misplaced and a family member needs to gain access. The box usually has to be drilled open at a cost determined by the bank or a locksmith. Witnesses have to be on hand to watch the box being opened and an inventory has to be taken of the contents. If the IRS deemed it necessary to investigate the contents of your safety deposit box, they would be required to obtain a search warrant to do so. You would be unable to gain access to your safety deposit box during the investigation. Remember to keep these important points in mind. At no time should you keep money in your safety deposit box. Before renting a safety deposit box, make sure to read over the contract to see if you agree with everything that is written. It is important to do this before you sign the contract. Make sure you understand what the bank's liability is in case any items are missing from the box. The burden of proof is with the one renting the safety deposit box. It is imperative that receipts are kept for items in the box. It is important to be able to show that the items listed on your inventory of the safety deposit box contents are really located insured if necessary. You may want to have joint entry to your safety deposit box. This is advisable if you are physically unable to get to your box for a variety of reasons. The individual could, also, be a witness when the box is opened. Their name must be on file with the bank. The person will have to have a key and be able to provide proper legal identification when they open the box.

Items to store in a Safety Deposit Box:

1. Bank books
2. Check books
3. Stocks and bonds
4. Income tax records
5. Mortgages, deeds, lease information
6. Burial plot certificate of ownership
7. Insurance policies for home, life, etc.
8. Military papers, such as discharge papers or others
9. Citizenship papers
10. Divorce papers
11. Marriage license
12. Birth certificate, yours or family members
13. Wills

Remember, it is very important to have a list of all these items and to explain where they are being kept, along with the names of the individuals who know where these items are located. Keep this information in a place where they can be located in case of an emergency.

When you are satisfied that your video inventory is complete, we suggest making a second copy of the recording. Make sure that one copy is located away from your home in case of fire, water damage, or theft. It is very important to update your recording after a few years. It is amazing how much we add to our belongings without realizing it. You have been provided you with a brief outline for doing a video inventory. You may develop your own method to do your inventory. Recording video inventories could even turn into a small business venture.

A Time to Review

The past is secure, but the future is a hazy outline. Keeping this in mind, I have included a few things that would be good to consider when looking into the past and planning the future. If there are any legal changes, or legal decisions to be made, it would be important to see your attorney. If you don't have one, ask your friends or family members and get their opinions. It may be to your advantage to record some of these legal decisions. You should have all the legal information written down and notarized by your attorney or a qualified individual. By recording these decisions, you will support your intent and show your competency.

Items you may want to include on the video

1. Annuities
2. Charitable giving
3. Equity index accounts
4. Estate planning
5. Income planning
6. Insurance
7. Investments
8. IRA planning
9. Long and short-term care
10. Major medical information
11. Pension information
12. Retirement planning
13. Risk management
14. Loans you have made
15. Personal loans
16. Healthcare decisions

My Living Legacy – Personal

Personal & Miscellaneous Informational Videos

Unlike video one, video two reveals information of a personal nature. Video three can include an individual's personal inventory, a record of things that were either borrowed from or borrowed to the individual, with an explanation as to the reasons. It may be that no one knows about these things, so it would be important to make a "video note" about these items. In the video, the person can record the date when all these items will be returned or any obligations will be settled.

If money is involved, it would be a good idea to include it in a video inventory. Remember, when a person lends money to an individual or group; legal papers should be drawn up, signed, and witnessed. These papers should be put in a location where they can be found, such as a family folder, safety deposit box, or any place that is secure. Another item to include on tape three would be the person's personal inventory. This can include many things. For instance, the video could include a list of the individual's personal possessions, their locations, and their purpose, along with why they were special. It would be very helpful to review the section, My Inventory, before recording your personal inventory. Personal messages should also be included. The messages can be left on a video, DVD, CD, electronic device, or an even an audio recorder can be used.

Special messages can include a special thank you to a friend or family member, a personal confession of something that is weighing on the person's mind, health problems, an apology that couldn't be made face to face, or any other item of importance to the individual.

When making the actual video, it would be important to make an outline of the items that will be discussed. This will allow the videotaping to run smooth, and avoid stopping and starting the camera. Please review the sections on lighting and sound, along with the section, me, myself, and I.

****Important Note****

In all states, statutes and other laws govern video recording of legal directives. Please refer to such laws/and or a legal professional before recording your legal directive. In many cases, written directives may require witnesses of your signature. Again, check with your state laws regarding all options.

The Ethical Will

Most people think that a personal will be solely a written instrument intended to indicate who, or where you would like to leave certain items or money after you die. Not any longer! Now the new trend, with its roots in Biblical times, is the ethical will. The ethical will gives an individual a chance to summarize his or her life and explain how and why they arrived at certain ethical decisions. The individual or a special mentor explains personal decisions and family ethics. The individual leaves behind a message on how they led their life, and any special admonitions they would like to relate so others can avoid the mistakes they made. The person can choose to explain their set of values, so others may follow their example. You can find many questions that would apply to this type of will in the question section of this publication. The person making an ethical will may develop other questions or statements. There are web sites available for this very purpose. Changing an ethical will from a written format to a video format allows the person to show exactly what influenced their life, and, if possible, the very individuals who aided them. A series of photographs or prints can be used. You can do this by scanning them into a computer with a scanner using the appropriate software. You may even want to add a musical background. All this additional information shows how and where the individual developed their moral compass. The video format of an ethical will is an excellent way to enhance the individual's life experiences is an excellent way to enhance the individual's life experiences.

When All Else Fails

There comes a time when you can see that the video life history may not become a reality. There may be many reasons why. It may be that an older person may not be comfortable being put in front of a video camera and asked questions, ill health may be an issue, possibly the mood a person may be in, trying to put the life history together without help, maybe lack of equipment, or a host of other reasons. This may be a time for an alternative approach. You may try using an audiocassette recorder. Very little is required here, and many have used this method for years. First get your special person's permission; and review the questions they would like to discuss. This tutor has a variety of questions you may wish to use along others of your own. Possibly a different way to go about this may be bringing in family prints and have them discuss those individuals in the prints, recall dates if possible, and have them comment on the situation at the time. It would be good to number the back of the prints or attach a sticky note on the back for future reference. Later, make a copy of them with the number alongside for your reference. This method would be especially helpful if some of the pictures were borrowed from someone else and needed to be returned. What if the person is deceased? We can still get a good idea what that person was like, by interviewing the people closest to him or her. This is just like the documentaries done on television of notable people. Your own family member is just as

important to you more than they are. Watching a television program broadcast on national public television will set the tone for you and how it is accomplished. No matter how simple or complex your person's life history is, a living record will be kept. Again films, prints of all kinds, memorabilia, and warm comments from family and friends will make a good legacy for that person. Put the information on a CD or DVD or another electrical format for future family members to review and appreciate. You don't need to make a production out of it if you're not able. The main thing is to gather as much correct information as you feel necessary

Conclusion

Written by Dick Liersch*

MY LIVING LEGACY is designed to encourage people to preserve this world's most valuable resource, the individual person. Everyone is a living story. From the very simple to the most complex, we all have a story to tell. Each person's life is the very fabric of what weaves society together. We all matter. Our past, which includes everyone who came before us, is a bridge to the future. It affects how we view yourself and others. A Living Legacy video could be made to serve as a continuous record of one's life, much like a scrapbook or a diary. The video could also be a culmination of one's life experiences and desires. Remember, the reasons for recording a Living Legacy are to save memories, information, and any other important data for future reference.

Depending on what the person being interviewed desires, the video can be viewed by family only, friends and family, a select few, future generations, people doing research, or by any person specified by them. The video can be sent by mail, UPS (or other shipper), electronic means, on the World Wide Web, or any other option available. My hope is to have video recording locations all over the globe, so anyone who desires to, can save their life histories on video. The video can then be transferred to a more permanent copy such as a DVD or other media. Video recording life histories could be a franchised business or just a family-oriented endeavor.

With the ever-growing amount of video cameras, cell phones and recording technologies available, it offers a wonderful opportunity to gather information that is affordable. It can be a sales tool for those who wish to market their ideas. Most of all, it is a chance to reunite the

family in a joint venture, bringing people together as never before. Take time and share the treasure of a lifetime, a personal story.

The information collected also serves as a protection for the individual. The video will catalog any health, legal, and financial issues. Explanations about their will and why it was written the way it was, could be included on the video. The person could express any special desires they have. The family pet can be included in a variety of interesting ways. The prospects are endless! Countless books, methods, records, and organizations are available to help trace a family's history. The genealogy may take you all the way back to your family history in the far corners of Europe, or to a slave ship coming to the United States. You can build a new and continuous legacy. Many people are very interested in researching their roots. Making a video recording is a valuable, two-dimensional media that will help you get a better view of where your family was to where they are going.

*Dick Liersch is the founder of *My Living Legacy* and has been a photographer and videographer for decades. He has a sincere interest in researching family histories and preserving the past for future generations.



My Living Legacy – Resources

Resources

For your convenience, we are providing many useful resources to serve as an outline for your project. Organization is very important when you are filming a Living Legacy. These resources will help you organize and prioritize your thoughts.

Production Worksheets

Pre-production Worksheet

Living Legacy subject(s):

Living Legacy coordinator(s):1

Information assistants:

Production assistants:

Postproduction assistants:

Travel arrangement assistant:

Interviewer(s):

Video participants:

Filming location(s):

Budget:

Travel arrangements:

Production Worksheet

Production crew (professional or amateur):

Video camera operators:

Sound information:

Filming location information:

Lighting information:

Filming schedules:

Props:

Production scripting:

Information included on video one (life history):

Information included on video two (genealogy):

Information included on video three (legal, financial, health):

Information included on video four (inventory, other):

Rehearsal schedule:

Background music:

Editing:

Post-production Worksheet

Postproduction crew:

Video copies to be made

CD copies to be made:

Audio copies to be made:

Video copies to be sent to (include addresses):

CD copies to be sent to (include addresses):

Audio copies to be sent to (include addresses):

Original video location

Original video location

Original video location:

Location of additional copies:

Schedule for viewing video (one, two, and three):

Additional notes:

My Living Legacy – Resources

My Living Legacy: The Short Form Questionnaire

1. NAME:
2. DATE OF BIRTH:
3. PLACE OF BIRTH:
4. PARENT'S NAMES, PLACES OF BIRTH, DATE OF BIRTH'S:
5. FAMILY HISTORY, (THEIRS YOURS):
6. NAMES OF BROTHERS, SISTERS, PLACES OF BIRTH, DATE (S) OF BIRTH, YOUR EXPERIENCES:
7. NAMES OF AUNTS UNCLAS, COUSINS AND OTHER PERTINENT RELATIVES (EXPERIENCES):
8. RESIDENCES:
9. CHILDHOOD FRIEND (S) PETS:
10. SCHOOL EXPERIENCES:
11. HIGHER EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES:
12. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, (EXPERIENCES)
13. FRIENDS (EXPERIENCES)
14. MARRIAGE, WHEN AND HOW YOU MET, FIRST DATE:
15. CHILDREN'S NAMES, PLACE OF BIRTH, WHEN, (EXPERIENCES):
16. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY, TRADES AND AWARDS:
17. ARMED FORCES (EXPERIENCES)
18. PLACES TRAVELED, (AS A YOUTH, AND AS AN ADULT):
19. CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS:
20. LIFE HISTORY, (GOOD AND BAD EXPERIENCES IF DESIRED FAVORITE STORIES):

21. I REMEMBER WHEN:

22. MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

23. MY FAILURES:

24. IF I COULD CHANGE ONE THING IN MY LIFE, IT WOULD BE:

25. HOW I WOULD LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED:

26. PERSONAL TASTES, CLOTHING, COLORS, FOOD, ETC:

27. MY FEARS:

28. MY HABITS:

29. MY FEELING ABOUT THE WORLD AND WHERE IT IS GOING:

30. SPORTS I ENJOY:

31. HOBBIES I ENJOY:

32. MY FINANCIAL SITUATION:

33. MY MESSAGE FOR THE FUTURE:

34. SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR FAMILY, AND, OR FRIENDS:

35. GENEALOGY:

My Living Legacy – Resources

Self-Description Worksheet

Use the numbers listed below to help evaluate how these qualities pertain to you. You can explain your answer during the interview or have it prepared before filming / recording.

(1) Always applies, (2) Applies at times, (3) Rarely at times, (4) Does not apply

Descriptions:

Active	Empathetic	Loyal	Spontaneous
Adaptable	Faithful	Mediator	Stable
Affectionate	Fearful	Mild	Strict
Aggressive	Focused	Moody	Studious
Analytical	Follower	Motivated	Sympathetic
Angry	Forgiving	Negative	Talented
Animated	Friendly	Obsessive	Talker
Athletic	Funny	Opinionated	Thoughtful
Broadminded	Fussy	Optimistic	Unaffectionate
Cheerful	Genuine	Outspoken	Unsympathetic
Charitable	Helpful	Passive	Workaholic
Close-minded	Honest	Patient	Worrier
Compassionate	Idealistic	Peaceful	Spontaneous
Compromising	Impatient	Persistent	Stable
Compulsive	Inactive	Pessimistic	Strict
Considerate	Indecisive	Positive	Studious
Contented	Independent	Productive	Sympathetic
Creative	Instigator	Quiet	Talented
Daring	Intensive	Resourceful	Talker
Decisive	Joyful	Respectful	Thoughtful
Dedicated	Kind	Revengeful	Unaffectionate
Dependent	Leader	Self-controlled	Unsympathetic
Diplomatic	Loner	Self-deprecating	Workaholic
Easygoing	Longsuffering	Self-sacrificing	Worrier
Educated	Loving	Sensitive	Zealou

My Living Legacy – Resources

Activities Worksheet

There are a variety of activities that could be included on your video. Here is a list of a some of them that you may be doing / have done in the past:

ATV Riding	Football	Running
Automobiles	Gardening	Robotics
Aviation	Golfing	Rock Climbing
Biking	Hiking	Sailing
Bird Watching	Horseback Riding	Scuba Diving
Boating	Hunting	Sculpture
Board Games	Inventions	Shooting
Camping	Jet Skiing	Skateboarding
Card Games	Marathon	Sky Diving
Collecting	Martial Arts	Snow Shoeing
Cooking	Motorcycle Riding	Soccer
Cosplaying	Motorsports	Surfing
Crafting	Mountain Climbing	Swimming
Cross Country	Music	Table Top Games
CrossFit	Obstacle Course	Tennis
Cycling	Paddle Boarding	Tough MUDder
Digital Art	Painting	Triathlon
Disc Golfing	Parkour	Video Games
Drawing	Performer	Videography
Electronic Sports	Photography	Volleyball
Extreme Sports	Racing	Walking
Fantasy Sports	Reading	Water Skiing
Fishing	Role Playing	Writing

My Living Legacy – Resources

Activities Questionnaire

Rather than just say, "Show me your hobby." This short questionnaire may help the interviewer obtain more pertinent information.

- What is your hobby?
- What influenced you to start your hobby?
- Who influenced you to start your hobby?
- When did you start your hobby?
- Where do you work on your hobby?
- What materials do you need for your hobby?
- Does your hobby produce a product?
- How is that product made?
- Did you ever enter any of the items in a contest?
- Did you receive any accolades or awards for your hobby?
- Is your hobby strictly for your own pleasure?
- Did you turn your hobby into a business?
- Do others benefit from your hobby?
- Does your hobby involve a sport? Explain.
- Does your hobby involve collecting things? Explain.

Collections

- What do you collect? (The collection can be displayed for the video)
- How did you get started with your collection?
- When did you begin your collection?
- Who influenced you?
- Who helped you get started?
- Where were you living when you first became interested in collecting?
- Where did you obtain the pieces for your collection?
- How did you obtain the pieces for your collection?
- Why do you enjoy collecting?

- Do you enjoy the challenge of collecting?
- What does the future hold for your collection?
- What is your collection worth?
- Where is your collection stored?
- Are there any rare pieces in your collection?

Automotive / Motorcycle Interests

- What does your interest in automobiles involve?
- How did you get started?
- Who influenced you?
- Who is your mentor?
- Describe your first car.
- List the cars you have owned.
- What cost is involved in purchasing and restoring?
- Do you do the work yourself or is it done elsewhere?
- Describe your personal history with automobiles.
- What car would you love to own?
- Do you participate in car shows?
- Have you received any awards, trophies, or other honors?
- You could display pictures, movies, slides, or videos involving automobiles.
- You may want to display any titles for the cars.
- Of course, you can show your automobile(s) on the video.
- What type of bikes did you own?
- Did you make any modifications to your bike/bikes?
- What influenced you to start riding motorcycles?
- Who influenced you to become interested in motorcycles?
- What places did you visit?
- Did you have any close calls on the road? (Explain)
- Have you received any awards for your motorcycle?
- Did you ever attend a motorcycle rally? (Explain)
- What family members or friends shared your love of riding?
- Did you ever participate in a motorcycle race?
- Relate some of your most enjoyable experiences with your bike.

Auto Racing

- What got you interested in auto racing?
- Who influenced you?
- What kind of racing do you like to participate in or watch? (NASCAR, Indy style, drag racing, etc.)
- Discuss the tracks you've raced on.
- Discuss the events you've watched.
- Discuss the cars, the drivers, racing styles, or point position.
- Describe the people you've met.
- What is your favorite track?
- Have you seen any crashes or been in any crashes?
- Do you share your interests with any special friends? (You may want to include your friends in your video, reminiscing about past races and events.)

Hunting, Fishing, Clay Shooting, and Other Outdoor Game Activities

- What are your interests?
- How did you get started?
- Who helped you get started?
- Why do you enjoy this activity?
- Where are your favorite places to enjoy your hobby?
- Describe any equipment involved? (You may want to display them for the video.)
- Do you enjoy your activity with any special friend? (Include them in your video discussing different
- aspects of your hobby.)
- You can display pictures, slides, movies, videos, awards, and trophies.
- Do you have any special stories you'd like to relate?

Cooking

- When did you first show an interest in cooking?
- What were the results of your first attempts with the culinary arts?
- What got you interested in cooking?
- Who got you interested in cooking?
- Did you learn by observing others or did you go to a formal cooking school?

- Have you developed any special dishes or put together any special meals?
- Do you have a favorite labor-saving device?
- What are your favorite pieces of cooking equipment?
- Do you have any old-fashioned?
- advice for the novice?

Musical Interest

- When did you first start enjoying music?
- When did those around you notice your musical ability?
- Who inspired you?
- What song or musical group spur on your interests in music?
- What instrument do you play?
- What type of music do you enjoy playing?
- What training did you receive?
- Play a song on your instrument for the video.
- Do you love to sing?
- What kind of songs do you sing?
- Did you receive any special training?
- Do you have a favorite group or band that you like to listen to?
- Do you have a favorite musician?
- Have you seen them (him, or her) in person?
- Where did you see them (him, or her)?
- Why does music mean so much to you?
- Has music changed your life?

Crafts

- How did you get started?
- Who influenced you?
- What challenges have you experienced?
- How did you learn your craft?
- What is the history of your craft?
- How has it influenced you personally?
- Is your craft purely for personal pleasure?

- Have you turned your craft making into a business?
- Talk about your business.
- Do you share your craft with others?
- Do you have a special work area for your crafts?
- Do you teach your craft to others?

Photography

- When did you first become interested in photography?
- Who influenced you?
- Did you have any formal training, or did someone help you learn photography?
- What were your challenges along the way?
- Explain the history of photography.
- Discuss your first camera and the first pictures you took. (You could display them for the video.)
- Do you prefer black and white?
- or color photography?
- What subjects do you like to photograph?
- What kind of camera do you use?
- Do you like still life, film, or video photography?
- Do you sell your work, or do you like to do it for pleasure?
- Detail your personal history with photography and the progression you have made.
- What does the art of photography mean to you?
- How has photography influenced you?
- Download your favorite prints and catalog them for others to appreciate.
- Have you entered any photography shows or contests?
- Have you won any awards? (You may wish to show them on the video.)
- What techniques have you used?

Reading

- With television being king nowadays, why do you find reading fulfilling?
- What are your first recollections about reading?
- Who read to you as a child?
- Did a teacher help you start on the road to the love of reading?

- What is your favorite type of reading material?
- How do you find the time to read?
- Do you, or did you, read to your children?
- Are you an avid reader, and how had it changed your life?
- Would you like to encourage others to read?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to learn to love to read?

Writing

- Do you write for a living, or as a hobby?
- When did you start writing?
- What type of writing do you do?
- How did you develop your writing style?
- How did you develop your creativity?
- Did someone influence you?
- What have you written about?
- Did anything influence you to write about that specific subject?
- Has any of your work been published?
- Explain your writing style.
- How do you get your inspiration?
- How do others feel about your writing?
- What is the response to your writing?
- Do you write for your own pleasure and not to show others?

My Living Legacy – Resources

Military History Worksheet

If applicable, you should include details of the individual's military history. Below is a brief outline of items that could be included in the video. This outline covers all areas of the service whether Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard, Reserves, or Foreign Service.

Branch of service	Military occupation school location
Rank history	Non-combat experiences
Draft information	Officer training information
Rank when discharged	Humorous experiences
Date drafted	Officer training dates
Combat information	Bravest person you knew
Enlistment information	Officer training location
Combat dates	Worst day in service
Enlistment date	Best day in service
Combat locations	Personal message
Enlistment location	Things you may wish to get off your chest
Combat experiences	Training dates
Basic training information	PTSD
Combat wounds	Non-commissioned
Basic training dates	Help you have received
Combat metals	officer training locations
Basic training location	Additional information you wish to add
Discharge information	Additional schooling information
Basic training accomplishments or awards	Additional schooling dates
Discharge Date	Additional schooling location
Military occupation school information	Transfer information
Discharge location	Transfer dates
Military occupation school dates	Transfer location
Friends made	

My Living Legacy – Resources

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

Establish the date, place, and time. Also, it would be an advantage for the one being interviewed to write a simple timeline outline of events and people relating to their life's story. The outline may begin with where the person was born, when they were they were born, and the places they lived etc. This format may help categorize memories and bring them into focus.

- What were your mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, and/or any other relative(s) like?
- What are the family talents?
- How did your family get to this country?
- Does your family own a business?
- Who is or was your favorite family member?
- Why are they your favorite family member?
- What was your life as a child like? Schools attended and your favorite teacher?
- What were the fads of your childhood?
- What did you play with as a child?
- Where did you vacation as a child?
- What entertainment did you enjoy as a child?
- Did you have a pet when you were a child?
- What was the weather like when you were a child?
- Were you creative as a child?
- How did your family handle the Great Depression?
- Who was your first boyfriend/girlfriend?
- What were they like?
- How did you meet your spouse?
- When did you know you were in love?

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

- What was your wedding like?
- Where did you go on your honeymoon?
- How did you keep the love alive in your marriage?
- Were you ever divorced?
- Did you remarry?
- Do you have children?
- Were you present at their birth?
- Did you take pictures or video of their birth?
- How and why did you pick out their name?
- Do you have knowledge of any interesting family facts?
- How does your family celebrate the holidays?
- When did you strike out on your own? Your work history.
- Do you want to relate any family stories or histories?
- What genetic traits does your family have (tall, short, bald, etc.)?
- What is the general health of your family?
- Are there any famous people in your family? Do you, or did, know them?
- Are there any inventors in the family?
- Are there any political figures in the family?
- Are there any artists in the family?
- What is your family's political viewpoint?
- Who is or was the most dominant figure in your family? What was their influence?
- Do you know where family members are buried?
- Do you believe in God? Why or why not.
- Did God ever touch your life?
- What is your religious background?
- Were there any unexplainable events in your life?
- What is your favorite dream?

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

- What is your worst dream?
- Do you have any musical talents?
- What is or was your greatest challenge in life?
- Would you like to describe any silly experiences?
- Do you have a message of hope for the future?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What do you do when a problem comes up?
- If you had three wishes, what would they be?
- Are you creative?
- Are you happier with people or alone?
- What do you miss the most?
- What is your favorite place?
- What is the hardest thing you ever did?
- What is the meanest thing you ever did?
- What is the nicest thing you ever did?
- What is the kindest thing you ever did?
- What is the most generous thing you ever did?
- What do you look forward to?
- What advice would you give to young people?
- What advice would you give to married people?
- What are your feelings about work ethics?
- Do you fear death?
- Do you have a habit you can't break?
- Do you enjoy spending time with young people, middle-aged?
people, older people, or all people?
- Would you change any part of your life?

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

- What person, dead or alive, would you like to spend time with?
- What was the greatest shock of your life?
- What was your most embarrassing moment?
- If you could go back to any day in your life, what would it be?
- What was your biggest financial mistake?
- What was your best financial investment?
- Do you have any suggestions for investing money?
- What was the happiest day of your life?
- What was the saddest day of your life?
- What is your hope for the future?
- What was the greatest lesson you learned in your life?
- What is the biggest risk you ever took?
- What is the closest call you ever had?
- What was the hardest thing you had to endure?
- What are your talents?
- Where do you think your talents came from?
- What was one thing you planned to do, but never accomplished?
- Do you have any unfulfilled dreams?
- What is your biggest shortcoming?
- What was your greatest failure?
- In your opinion, what was the most historical event in your life?
- What is your biggest complaint in life?
- What is your biggest secret?
- What is your biggest fear?
- What was your strongest emotional moment in life?
- What person do you fear the most?

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

- What person do you respect the most?
- Who are the most trusting, kindest, most thoughtful, loving, wisest, people you know?
- If you could see someone (or more than one person) you haven't seen for a long time, who would that person be?
- Why would you like to see that person?
- What was the best advice you ever gave?
- What was the worst advice you ever gave?
- Who is the person you admire most?
- What is your strongest opinion?
- What is your favorite joke?
- What is your favorite story?
- Can you describe the greatest day in your life?
- Can you describe the worst day in your life?
- What things do you try to suppress?
- Why do you feel you lived to be as old as you are? (diet, exercise, attitude, faith, etc.)
- If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?
- If you were to ask any question possible, whether it could be answered, what question would you ask?
- What question would you like to have asked of you?
- Do you have a favorite possession?
- How would you describe an average day in your life?
- Do you have any unfinished business?
- Do you have anything to confess?
- Have you ever cheated anyone?
- Whom do you need to forgive?
- Whom do you wish to ask for forgiveness?

General Questionnaire Worksheet

The following questions are only suggestions. Feel free to add or subtract any question to better fit your circumstances. You may wish to develop your own introduction for the person being interviewed.

- How do you want to be remembered?
- What world changes have you witnessed during your lifetime?
- How would you describe the world as you see it now?
- Do you have any small or large claim to fame?
- Has anyone ever misunderstood you?
- Would you like to relate the location of your valuables?
- Are there any items you would like returned?
- Are there any items that you lent out that you would like returned?
- Are there any special recipes you would like to share? (Writing the recipes out would be a good idea.)
- Do you have a special message for a family member, friend, associate, or organization? (You may wish to use a separate tape to relate your message.)
- If you could write your own epitaph, what would it be?
- Do you have any special wishes you would like carried out if you would die unexpectedly?
- Do you have an opinion about the meaning of life?

My Living Legacy – Resources

Medical History Checklist

This checklist can be for you, your parents, or any family member living or deceased.

Alcoholism

Angina

Arthritis

Asthma

Back disorders

Blindness

Blood disorders

Bronchitis

Cancer

Coronary disease

Depression

Diabetes

Epilepsy

Fractures

Genetic disorders

Melanoma

Mental disorders

Nervous disorders

Osteoporosis

Respiratory disorders

Skin disorders

Strokes

My Living Legacy – Resources

Inventory of Estate

Estimated gross assets:

Annuities:

Business interest:

Cash:

Household Effects:

Joint & survivor pensions:

Life insurance:

Miscellaneous Assets:

Notes Receivable:

Trusts:

Value of all securities:

Total Gross Estate:

Estimated Liabilities:

Bank Loans:

Mortgages:

Notes Payable:

Other Debts:

Taxes Outstanding:

Total Liabilities:

My Living Legacy – Resources

Genealogical Codicil to My Last Will and Testament

To my spouse, children, guardian, and/or executors:

Upon my demise, it is requested that you DO NOT dispose of any or part of my genealogical records, those prepared by me personally and any records prepared by others, which may be in my possession, including, but not limited to: books, files, notebooks, computer programs, etc., for a period of two years. During this time, please attempt to identify one or more persons or organizations that would be willing to take custody of the materials and assume the responsibility of maintaining and continuing the family histories. (If you know of any family members or friends that are likely candidates to accept these materials, please add the following at this point.) I suggest that the persons contacted regarding custody of these items include, but not be limited to:

(Include the names along with their addresses and telephone numbers.)

In the event you do not find anyone willing to accept these materials, please contact the historical research center in my vicinity.

Please remember that my genealogical endeavors consumed a great deal of time, travel, and money. Therefore, it is my desire that the products of these endeavors be allowed to continue in a manner that will make them available to others in the future.

Signature:

Witness Signature:

Witness Signature:

Date:

My Living Legacy – Resources

The Funeral Service Worksheet

Do you have personal requests (such as how the ashes will be treated, if cremated)? Do you want to write your own obituary? Do you wish to have a picture included in the newspaper? What picture would you like? Do you want to have your video life history played at the funeral home? Do you want to have the funeral talk video recorded or put on audiocassette? Of course, these are requests, and a thorough discussion with the family beforehand will have a positive result for all included in the decision-making process. Some additional thoughts may occur, this is a brief outline. Most people put off these discussions and leave things to others to sort out. Try to be proactive and have a say about the end of your journey.

Listed below are a few items we do not discuss at length. The list will help you with organizing a funeral.

1. Funeral home name
2. Funeral home contact info
3. Immediate / Delayed burial
4. Cremation
5. Price
6. Attendance
7. Service Location
8. Religious location
9. Burial location
10. Service Conductor
 - Name
 - Contact info
11. Pallbearers
 - Names
 - Contact info
12. Music selections
13. Video, slides, or pictures of life story on presented
14. Organizations involved
 - Religion
 - Military
 - Fraternity
 - Sorority
 - Civic
 - Employer
15. Decorations
 - Flowers
 - Miscellaneous
16. Caskets & Vaults
 - Price
 - Casket composition
 - Vault composition



*My
Living Legacy*

© 2005 – 2018 My Living Legacy, LLC. All Rights Reserved