

# The Levy Launch

A Center Providing Management/Strategy Consultation,  
Corporate Training/Education and Academic Resources.

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The Levy Launch is a center providing organizations with management and strategy consultation to improve organizational performance through systematic analysis of existing organizational problems and developing specific plans for improvement. Our consultants will initiate and guide change processes, design systems and structures to support and manage change and implement technology. We offer corporate training, coaching and corporate education. The center's corporate development workshops include team building, leadership training and increasing managerial effectiveness. In addition, we offer self-improvement workshops such as lifestyle modification. Organizations investing and making a commitment to offer their employee's personal development workshops attract more qualified workers, improve morale, enhance job satisfaction, develop competencies, and create inclusive work environments. In addition, corporations maximizing on opportunities to provide their employees with self-improvement workshops convey a sincere commitment to develop and empower their employees to achieve their fullest potential in their personal and career pursuits. The center also provides forensic psychology training for law enforcement on how to effectively communicate with the mentally ill in the community. For educators, curriculum for undergraduate and graduate business courses, humanities and liberal arts courses is available.

## "The Legacy Project"

A chronological outline for writing your memoir or the history of your life

"The best use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it"

--William James

"Let us so live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry"

--Mark Twain

"Real life is to most men, a long second best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible"

--Bertrand Russell

# The Legacy Project

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Early Childhood

Where were you born and what is your birthdate?

How your family happened to live there? Why your family lived in this area?

How many were in your family at the time? (siblings)

Where did you live until you started school?

Did you have any pets as a child?

How did you get along with your parents?

Do you remember the names of your mother and father's parents?

Do you know where they were born?

Did they come here from another country? Where? At what time did they come here?

What did your grandparents do for work? Where did they live?

Do you have any memorable memories of your grandparents?

Your earliest memories? (at what age; are they positive or negative memories)

Your favorite toys and games to play; and who did you play with?

What was your families religious affiliation?

Did your family eat in the kitchen or dining room?

Was there music in your house?

Did you have a lawn? Did you help mow the lawn?

Were there books in the house? What kinds of books?

Describe the floor plan of your house?

Did relatives live with your family? How about boarders?

Can you remember any major repairs your house needed?

Did you collect anything as a child?

Did you go to camp? What did you do in camp?

Did you attend religious school?

Where were your father and mother born?

Do you know much about their siblings?

What did your mother and father do for a living?

Did they attend college?

What did you do on Saturdays?

What kinds of gifts did you receive for Christmas?

How were your birthdays celebrated?

Did your family entertain? How often?

What were your favorite board games? Did your family play board games together?

### **School Years**

What do you remember about kindergarten? Did you experience separation anxiety from your parents?

Who do you remember? (what did you like about your favorite teacher, or teacher you disliked)

What was the name of your elementary school?

What did you do during recess?

Describe a time in school when you were proud, disappointed or selected for a position?

What was hard for you to do in school?

What did your elementary school look like?

What subjects did you enjoy most or least?

Did you like Physical Education?

Was there a bully at school?

Did the bully ever approach you?

Do you remember field trips you took in school ? Where did you go?

Did you win any awards at school? For what?

Who was your best friend at school?

Were you in a boy or girl scout troop?

What did you like about the scouts?

Did you earn good grades in school?

Did you have any friends who went to elementary through high school with you?

Can you remember a historic event that occurred while you were in school?

How have you changed from your early school years?

Did you ever want to run away from home? If yes, why?

Did you move around a lot from home to home?

What sports did you play in school?

### **High School**

What was the name of your high school?

Who were your friends?

What teachers do you remember? Why?

What was your favorite song in high school?

What extra-curricular activities did you do in high school?

Do you remember any students you felt sorry for? Why?

Did you study a foreign language? Which one? Are there any phrases from that class that \ stuck with you?

Do you remember any long papers you wrote or any special projects?

Who did you go to the prom with? What did you wear? What was the theme? Did you dance much?

Were you a rebel in high school?

Were you popular?

Where did your crowd hang out?

Was schoolwork hard or easy for you?

Were you happy in high school? Did you know it at the time?

Were you in a clique?

Did you ever hang out with anybody from a different group?

Did you ever skip school? Were you ever caught? Did you get disciplined?

How did you usually spend your weekends?

Have you ever attended a high school reunion?

How important were your high school years in life? Do you ever dream about those years?

When you evaluate your life today, how much of the high school do you see in yourself?

### **Summer Years**

What was a favorite summer?

What did you look forward to in summer?

Did your family go on vacations during the summer?

Did you go to summer school?      How many summers did you go to summer school for?

### **Academic History**

Where did you go to college?

What was your major?

What degree (s) did you earn?

How long did it take you to earn your degrees?

Did you attend graduate school?

What occupation (s) did you consider?

What was your career goal

Were you drafted in the military service or did you enlist?

If yes—which branch of the service? Did you see combat? How long were you in the service?

If you served in the armed services, did you learn a trade or vocation?

### **The House Your Family Lived In**

Was your house a one-story, two-story? Stone, brick or wood? Did you have a garage?

What was the floor plan?

What did you hang on your refrigerator door?

Did anyone live with you other than family members?

Which lights did you leave on all night?

What room did your family relax in together?

Where were the telephones?

Did you have a basement? What was down there?

What was your favorite part of the house? Why?

### **Employment History**

What was your first job as an adolescent?

Do you remember what you were paid?

What was your first job as an adult?

How long were you at your first job?

How did you get your first job?

What are some things you learned from your first job as an adult?

What was your longest held job? What did you like about it?

What was your favorite job? Why was it your favorite job?

Did you feel that you had a career or just a job?

Any memorable experiences from any of your jobs?

Has anyone helped you up the ladder?

Were you ever the boss?

Did you ever run your own business? How did you start it?

Would you call yourself ambitious?

Were you promoted? Did it come unexpectedly?

Were you ever passed over a position you thought you deserved?

Did you define yourself by your job?

### **Romance and Relationships**

What kind of dating did you do in high school? What is your favorite kind of date, even now?

Who was your first love? Did you think it was going to last? Who broke whose heart?

Describe your wedding, your outfit, the bridal party, the church or hall, the reception, the food.

What do you like best about your spouse?

What were the hardest times in your marriage?

Everyone has bad habits. What drives you craziest about your spouse or boy / girlfriend?

What qualities would you choose in a mate now if you had to do it all over again?

Name your boyfriends or girlfriends through the years.

How did you get along with your in-laws?

Where did you go on your honeymoon?

Talk about your first apartment together. Your first house. Were they places you loved or were they just making-do?

Looking back now, did you get married at the right time or should you have waited longer?

In your years of marriage, what have you learned about your spouse that you didn't know on your wedding day?

### **Parenthood**

Do you remember telling your husband that you were pregnant?

Was it a surprise or a long-planned for event?

Do you remember telling your parents?

Why did you name your children what you named them?

Which hospital did you deliver in? Do you remember the ride there? Do you remember the ride home?

Did you send birth announcements when your babies were born?

How did you decide which school to send your children to?

Did your babies have hair when they were born?

Did you send your kids to camp? Did you sew name tags on their clothes?

Did you buy your kids a set of encyclopedias? What kind? Where did you keep them?

What did you do to punish your kids? Was this hard for you to do? Which of your children needed the most discipline? Why, do you think?

Did you send your children to religious school?

Were you involved in the PTA or as a room parent at school? Did a teacher ever call you to discuss a problem or tell you something about your child that made you very proud?

What was the scariest moment in parenting? The toughest? The moment that made you most proud?

Did your children ever have a slumber party at your house?

What was the best part of being a parent? The worst?

What was the best trip you ever took with your children? What made it so good?

What one thing would you do differently if you could live your parenting years over?

### **Favorites**

What's your favorite candy bar?

What's your favorite kind of cake?

What's your favorite ice cream? What kind do you like (flavor)

What's your favorite saying? What does it mean to you? Why is it important to you?

What is your favorite book? Have you read it more than once?

What is your favorite song? When was the first time you heard it?

What is your favorite movie? How old were you when you saw it? At what theatre?

What's your favorite drink? At what age did you start drinking?

What's your favorite season?



Who is your sports team?

Do you have a favorite Broadway or movie musical?

Who is your favorite author or literary figure? Do you make it a point to read everything they have written?

Whose politics have you admired most?

Who is your favorite artist?

Who is your favorite male and female movie star?

Who is your best friend?

What is your favorite holiday? Where do you celebrate it?

Do you have a favorite retreat or place of respite where you go to bring you solace and silence?

What is your favorite cartoon character or comic strip?

What is your favorite restaurant? What special meal do you like to eat there?

What is your favorite flower?

What is your favorite color? Do you have clothing in this color?

What was the best day of your life?

### **Attitudes and Other Related Things**

Do you like rainy days? What do you do on them?

What heroic attributes do you have?

What are your best qualities?

What skills do you want to develop in yourself?

What qualities do you not respect in others?

What about yourself would you like to change?

What are some traits you admire in others?

Are you a doer or procrastinator?

What makes you angry?

What are you like when you're sick?

Are you afraid of doctors?

What's your pet peeve?

Do you consider yourself lazy?

Do you have a tendency to get the blues?

Are you easy or difficult to get along with?

Would you say you've lived in the moment, or dwelled too much on the future or the past?

Who is your hero?

Do you like to be alone?

Do you have a philosophy on life? What is it?

Do you ever bend the rules?

How do you feel about buying on credit?

What season of the year makes you the happiest?

What was the funniest dream you've ever had?

What is the weirdest dream you've ever had?

And the dream you wish would come true is .....

What would an ideal weekend be for you?

Where would you go?

What would you do?

Who would be with you?

What would you see?

How would the weekend end?

### **Imagine these things**

Someone from your past enters your life and gives you something. What do they give you and why?

If you could grant someone three wishes, who would you grant them to, why and what would they be?

What are the ten books you've read that have influenced your life the most? What books are these and how have they influenced your life?

If you can undo one act from your past life, what would it be and how does it change your life?

If you could be anyone else in the world, who would you want to be and why?

If you could return to an earlier part of history, what period would you return to and why?

If you could be a famous person in history, who would you be and why?

If you could talk to anyone famous in history who would it be and what would you talk with them about?

### **Looking Back**

What was your favorite year?

What is the most important date in your personal history?

What was the hardest thing you've ever had to do?

When do you first remember feeling like an adult?

What fads have you seen come and go?

Did you have a year of living dangerously?

What was your biggest mistake?

Have you ever had a medical scare?

If you had all the time in the world, what would you do?

If you could look into the future, would you?

What's the biggest bargain you ever bought?

Was there one moment in your life that changed everything for you?

Have you ever been in the right place at the right time?

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Did you ever choose someone to be like when you were young?

Is there a favorite philosopher, poet or writer that best expresses your philosophy in life? Who is it and why?

Do you have any biblical stories or passages that mean something special to you?

## **This and That**

What do you remember about the first time you rode a bike?

What do you remember about the first time you drove a car?

Do you remember your first kiss? What was it like?

What was your first heartbreak experience?

What was your first car?

Did you get an allowance?

Did you get along with friends?

Did you play sports? Which ones?

Which sports did you enjoy the most?

### **Events Related to your Mental Illness**

Do you remember where you were, who was with you and who first told you that you had a mental illness?

What were you doing at the time you were diagnosed? (attending college, working)

How did you feel about being diagnosed with a mental illness?

How has having a mental illness altered your life? What are the side effects of your medications?

Did you ever think you could still pursue your personal goals after being diagnosed with a mental illness?

Do you have any delusions?

How did you overcome your delusions?

Are you reading books and other literature on Schizophrenia?

Do you remember what your life was like before you became mentally ill?

How many times have you been hospitalized?

What do you remember about being hospitalized?

How have these hospitalizations affected your life? (the interruptions)

What are your dreams?

How are your current family relations? Who in your family do you interact with?

Describe your childhood—is there a history of mental illness in your family?

What makes you uncomfortable?

What type of work have you done?

What are your hobbies and leisure interests?

What is your most frightening experience?

Do you remember your family's initial reaction to you being diagnosed with a mental illness?

Where have you lived since being diagnosed?

How do you feel about your treatment experiences at the hospitals you've been admitted to?

How has Founders helped you?

## Why You Need to Record Your History

“The best use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it”

---William James

Stories and rituals embedded in oral histories has served a survival function for cultures by helping teach, influence and unite individuals to create a community of everlasting memory. History is shaped by stories revealing heroism; overcoming what seem to be insurmountable barriers, the magic of miracles and the drama of the human condition. Stories from oral histories document for the viewer first hand accounts of great events of the century and how these events transformed our lives. Without stories to inspire us to live meaningful lives, we might feel alienated. Listening to oral histories can potentially change your life; increase your understanding of self and others. Story telling can also foster empathy, unity and engender feelings of belongingness. In contemporary American culture one can feel alienated from their community of living.

If you can reminisce you can share your oral history. What does reminiscing mean? Reminiscing is as natural as walking. It means thinking back in time—remembering who you were and who you’ve become. As you think back in time, remember what experiences influenced your development and transformation into who you are today. To reflect on who you want to become, you must have the capacity to reminisce and run a thread from who you were to who you are now; look for your theme in life. The process of oral history taking actually empowers you by revealing how significant your life was and presently is. Individuals feeling insignificant admit to being disempowered, unable to lead self-determined, meaningful lives. As older adults, we want to feel empowered because empowerment means having choice, a sense of well being; knowing that your life counts-- has meaning and purpose.

Documenting an oral history gives you a unique opportunity to talk in your language about your entire life, beginning with your earliest memory. Stories composing your life have historical importance because they are first hand accounts of meaningful events which may include how your family celebrated a holiday with a special ritual. We need to know about this ritual before it fades away forever, untold and forgotten. Stories from your oral history represent treasures for your family and friends. Viewers will discover aspects of yourself rarely seen and talked about that adds to your unique character. Sharing your oral history will preserve for eternity your place in the history of humankind. Your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will cherish knowing and remembering how you overcame life’s difficulties and how your life changed as a result of it. Our lives are transformed by the myriads of curve balls thrown at us. How we swung and missed, and when we smacked the fast balls out of the park are stories begging to be heard and placed in a historical context of your life. Your transforming life moments will reveal your potentialities and vulnerabilities, and will inspire others for generations. In oral histories you offer invaluable advice to younger generations, in addition to responding to questions such as: Why do we become more spiritual as we age? What are some of your metaphors for life? What does living a life of significance mean? How do we attain meaning and purpose in life?

As the listener, I am curious to know what represents your most meaningful life lessons —and why. At the core of the human experience is the need to talk about why you’re a valued human being—why your oral history matters to your family and community of memory. It matters because you are a significant human being and it validates your life. Oral history taking is a life affirming experience; it’s an opportunity to reinforce that your life has been worthwhile, righteous and will continue to be rich in meaning. It is incumbent upon the older generation to hand over the baton to us. In our relay of life you transfer the wisdom and history to your family and community. As the recipient of these gifts we will transfer the baton to our children and their children. It is this intergenerational process that enables our culture to survive. Life stories carry lessons for us to understand how life can be uncertain and unforgiving, why and how we are all vulnerable and they draw us closer to the collective conscious. I suspect that the reason we like story telling is also because human beings enjoy talking about themselves in genuine, revealing ways. We may not like admitting it, but we like talking about our life and work. Human beings desire to be understood and known in an unblemished way that only you can articulate.

