

THE STORYCORPS INTERVIEW

GREAT QUESTIONS

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

What was the happiest moment of your life?

The saddest?

Who was the most important person in your life?

Can you tell me about him or her?

Who has been the biggest influence on your life?

What lessons did they teach you?

Who has been the kindest to you in your life?

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

What is your earliest memory?

Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along to me?

Have you had any experiences or moments in your life that you might consider sacred?

What are you proudest of in your life?

When in life have you felt most alone?

How has your life been different than what you imagined?

How would you like to be remembered?

Do you have any regrets?

What does your future hold?

Is there something about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked?

What is your first memory of me?

Was there a time when you didn't like me?

What makes us such good friends?

How would you describe me? How would you describe yourself?

Where will we be in 10 years? 20 years?

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS

Where did you grow up?

What was your childhood like?

Who were your favorite relatives?

Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?

How did you and grandma/grandpa meet?

What was my mom/dad like growing up?

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Tips for a great conversation

- Look at your partner, not the microphone.
- Stay interested and engaged.
- Be yourself; you can laugh or cry.
- Don't rush to fill pauses or silences.
- Ask questions like "How does this make you feel?"
- Be curious and honest, and keep an open heart.

THE STORYCORPS INTERVIEW

Was she/he well behaved?
What is the worst thing she/he ever did?
Do you remember any songs that you used to sing to her/him? Can you sing them now?
What were your parents like?
What were your grandparents like?
How would you like to be remembered?
Are you proud of me?

RAISING CHILDREN

When did you first find out that you'd be a parent?
How did you feel?
Can you describe the moment when you saw your child for the first time?
How has being a parent changed you?
What are your dreams for your children?
Do you remember when your last child left home for good?
Do you have any favorite stories about your children?

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Do you remember what was going through your head when you first saw me?
How did you choose my name?
What was I like as a baby? As a young child?
Do you remember any of the songs you used to sing to me? Can you sing them now?
What were my siblings like?
What were the hardest moments you had when I was growing up?
If you could do everything again, would you raise me differently?
What advice would you give me about raising my own kids?
What are your dreams for me?
How did you meet mom/dad?
Are you proud of me?

GROWING UP

When and where were you born?
Where did you grow up?
What was it like?
Who were your parents? What were they like?
How was your relationship with your parents?
Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?
Do you have any siblings?
What were they like growing up?
What did you look like?
How would you describe yourself as a child?
Were you happy?
What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
Did you have a nickname? How'd you get it?
Who were your best friends? What were they like?
How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
Do you have any favorite stories from your childhood?

SCHOOL

Did you enjoy school?
What kind of student were you?
What would you do for fun?
How would your classmates remember you?
Are you still friends with anyone from that time in your life?
What are your best memories of grade school/high school/college/graduate school?
Worst memories? Was there a teacher or teachers who had a particularly strong influence of your life?
Tell me about them. Do you have any favorite stories from school?

THE STORYCORPS INTERVIEW

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Do you have a love of your life?
When did you first fall in love?
Can you tell me about your first kiss?
What was your first serious relationship?
Do you believe in love at first sight?
Do you ever think about previous lovers?
What lessons have you learned from your relationships?

MARRIAGE AND PARTNERSHIPS

How did you meet your husband/wife? How did you know he/she was “the one”?
How did you propose?
What were the best times? The most difficult times?
Did you ever think of getting divorced?
Did you ever get divorced? Can you tell me about it?
What advice do you have for young couples?
Do you have any favorite stories from your marriage or about your husband/wife?

WORKING

What do you do for a living?
Tell me about how you got into your line of work. Do you like your job?
What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
What did you want to be when you grew up?
What lessons has your work life taught you?
If you could do anything now, what would you do? Why?
Do you plan on retiring? If so, when?
How do you feel about it?
Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?

RELIGION

Can you tell me about your religious beliefs/spiritual beliefs?
What is your religion?

Have you experienced any miracles?
What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life?
Do you believe in God? What do you think it will be like?
When you meet God, what do you want to say to Him or Her?
Do you believe in the after-life?

SERIOUS ILLNESS

Can you tell me about your illness?
Do you think about dying? Are you scared?
How do you imagine your death?
Do you believe in an after-life?
Do you regret anything?
Do you look at your life differently now than before you were diagnosed?
Do you have any last wishes?
If you were to give advice to me or my children, or even children to come in our family, what would it be?
What have you learned from life? The most important things?
Has this illness changed you?
What have you learned?
How do you want to be remembered?

FAMILY HERITAGE

What is your ethnic background?
Where is your mom’s family from?
Where is your dad’s family from?
Have you ever been there? What was that experience like?
What traditions have been passed down in your family?
Who were your favorite relatives?
Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?
What are the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?

THE STORYCORPS INTERVIEW

WAR

Were you in the military?
Did you go to war? What was it like?
How did war change you?
During your service, can you recall times when you were afraid? Times that you were proud?
What are your strongest memories from your time in the military?
What lessons did you learn from this time in your life?

GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT IDENTITY

How do you identify?
With what community/ communities do you identify?
Can you remember when you first learned that you are _____? What was that like for you?
Can you tell me where your family came from?
If yes, what do you know about your history?
What kinds of cultural traditions do you observe in your family?
What efforts have you made to maintain cultural traditions?

GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY

Where did you grow up?
What was it like?
Describe community in which you grew up and where you now live. How have those communities shaped you?
How long have you lived in _____?
How has it changed over the years?
What was it like when you first moved here? Describe the community where you now live. Have those communities shaped you?
What do you miss most about the way it used to be?
Who are some of the great characters from your community?
Do you remember any great stories or legends about your town?

What aspects of your community have made the greatest impression on you?

Do you belong to any political organizations?
Do you belong to any social organizations?
Do you belong to any cultural organizations?
What are the greatest challenges that you see in your community?

GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Can you talk about how your family or you participated in the _____ movement?
How, if at all, has the _____ movement affected you personally?
Can you talk about any barriers your parents or you have faced in education, housing, health, work, entertainment, shopping or in other areas?
Do you have any stories that illustrate any barriers you currently face because of your identity?
Do you have any stories about how things have changed for the better? Or any stories that show how things have not changed?
Are there any organizations or institutions that your family belonged to that you would like to talk about?
Can you tell us stories about those traditions?
Are you satisfied with the education you have received?
The resources you've had access to?