

WRITE THEIR LIFE

“There is no death, daughter. People die only when we forget them,”
my mother explained shortly before she left me.
‘If you can remember me, I will be with you always.’”

— Isabel Allende, *Eva Luna*



INTRODUCTION

When someone we love dies we fear that we will eventually forget him or her. Or we may even fear remembering because it is too painful. In reality no one ever stops thinking about the person he or she loved: our memories flood in and out and wash over us at both anticipated and unexpected times. These memories are important. They are vital. You keep your loved one close to you through these memories.

However, Edmund White said “When a person dies, a library is burned.” We want to help you to ensure your loved ones story continues to live and impact others. You may have lots of memories in your mind, but as time moves along these do slowly fade. Take time now to ensure these memories are preserved and shared. It will help give purpose and direction to your grief as well as preserve the stories of the person you love.

That is where this ‘Write their Life’ journal comes in. This programme is a guide to help you remember and keep those memories alive. You will find a collection of Writing Prompts: different topics about your loved ones life for you to write about. There are 52 prompts, designed to give you one topic per week. If you complete one topic each week by the end of a year you will have a full collection of memories spanning the entire life of your loved one. Now that’s not too difficult, and look at what you will have achieved.

BARE.

INSTRUCTIONS

We have created 52 writing prompts for you about your loved one. Topics cover stages in life, but rather than being questions requiring you to chronology a life, the prompts are more theme based. So don't worry if you feel you don't know their story in detail or in order. That's not needed.

Our aim is not having you record every moment of your loved ones life in detail. That's not the goal and it was their life, not yours. That task may be just too difficult. Rather, the intention here is to preserve your memories of them, their values, main stories, wisdom and legacy.



The idea is to complete one writing exercise each week, but you can go as quickly or as slowly as you are comfortable with. Some topics may cause you to ponder and slow down, at other times you may write with a rush and excited speed. There is no pressure, so write at your own pace.

Each topic is designed as a prompt. Let your thoughts and memory take you wherever you want with that topic. Write as little or as much as you want per topic. Don't be put off by the lines provided. Write less or more. If you wish to write more than the pages given there are some blank pages at the back. Simply write the topic number at the top and keep writing.

The benefits of completing this project are immeasurable. Writing will help give you perspective and purpose. Some entries may bring tears, others laughter, but whatever emotions you find emerge, allow yourself to feel the emotion and allow your mind to open to whatever memories come. It is a way of keeping your loved one close and having them live on.

Embrace the journey you are about to undertake.
Its value is priceless.

BARE.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Have you ever contemplated the significance of a name? If you have children you probably remember how long it took to choose their names. There's magic involved in a name. You package a bundle of hopes and dreams into a chosen name along with an unspoken wish that the child turns them into reality.

Your first prompt is to have you consider your loved ones name.

- Write their full name.
- Describe why they were you given their name.
- Were they named after anyone in particular and if so why?
- Did they have any nicknames throughout life and if so why were they given?
- Are there any particular stories revolving around their name?



PAINT A PICTURE

Close your eyes and picture your loved one before you. Describe in vivid detail the appearance of your loved one.

- **If you could paint a picture with words of them what would you write?**
- **What was unique about them?**
- **What was their style and what sort of clothing did they wear?**

You may even see them in your mind at different stages of their life. How did they change over time? What time of their life stands out to you most vividly and why?



THREE WORDS

A single word can say a lot. But we are being generous. We are going to give you three.

- **If you could sum your loved one up in three words, what words would they be?**
- **Explain why you chose those three words?**
- **Were there any particular events that you could describe that give example to any of those three words? If so write about that event as illustration.**



PARENTS

Parents – the people that bring us into the world, shape, us, set us on our course and give us life, hopefully with a road map that helps us on our journey.

This prompt asks you to write about your loved ones parents:

- Write their names and birth and death dates and places.
- Describe a little about each of these individuals.
- Describe their personalities.
- What traits did your loved one inherit from their parents?
- Describe an interaction you remember between your loved one and their parents?
- How reflective is this example of their relationship?



LAUGH OUT LOUD

Linda Ellerbe has said – “I have always felt that laughter in the face of reality is probably the finest sound there is and will last until the day when the game is called on account of darkness. In this world, a good time to laugh is any time you can.”

Yes indeed laughter is the best medicine. So now we want you to think back and remember a time of laughter. Even the memory of the time is probably bringing a smile to your face now.

- Write about a time your loved one made you laugh and laugh and keep laughing.
- What was it that made the situation just so funny?



FAMILY

“You are born into your family and your family is born into you. No returns. No exchanges.” – Elizabeth Berg.

For this topic we want you to describe as much as you can about your loved ones family.

- List and describe their siblings and/or other significant family members.
- Describe their family heritage.
- Where did your loved one fit in the family?
- What was their relationship with their family members like?



FAMILY TIME

Now dig a little deeper about your loved ones relationship with their family and hone in on one event.

- Describe a time where you were together with your loved one and their family?
- What was the occasion?
- Why is this event so memorable?
- What does it tell you about your loved one and their relationship with their family?



FIRST MEMORY

It has been said that memory takes a lot of poetic licence. It holds on tight to some memories and omits others, according to the emotional value a memory holds. So for this prompt we ask you to describe in vivid detail your first memory of your loved one.

Take your time, sit and really think for a moment. Draw down as much as you can on that memory.

- Describe the scene, who is in it, the objects, the smells, the sounds.
- How are you feeling? What is happening?
- What impact has this first memory of your loved one had on you throughout your life?



AS A CHILD

9

“Keeping in touch with childhood memories keeps us believing in life’s simplest pleasures, like a rainy afternoon, a swing set, a giant puddle to play in...”

- Chrissy Ogden.

What was your loved one like as a child? You may have first-hand knowledge or only information your loved one has told you about their childhood. Record what you can remember.

- Here are a few possibilities to write about:
- First Write where and when your loved one was born.
- Describe their appearance, their personality and characteristics.
- What made them happy or sad, angry or scared?
- Did they ever express a favourite or most significant childhood memory? If so, write about it. Why was it so special or significant?
- Where did they go to school? What did they enjoy about school? Or not?
- Did they have any particular special childhood friends?



CHILDHOOD FAVOURITES

“How dear to the heart are the scenes of my childhood, when fond recollection presents them to view.”

– Samuel Wordworth

- Describe some childhood favourites of your loved one:
- Outline what your loved one enjoyed to do as a child.
- Describe their favourite toys, games and activities.
- Where did they like to go for outings?
- Did they have any hobbies? Play a sport? Learn an instrument?
- What were their favourite foods?
- Did they have favourite television shows? Radio programs or movies?
- Remember to explain WHY things were your favourites.



BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays often seem to stay strong in memory.

Describe a special birthday shared with your loved one. This may be one of their birthdays or yours, one from childhood, or adulthood.

What birthday memory is most vivid and why?



DREAMS

- Did your loved one share with you their dreams? What were they?
- These may be childhood dreams or even dreams they held onto as an adult.
- Were they purely fantasy or were they dreams they wanted and worked toward coming true?
- Did they fulfil any of these dreams?
- Did they regret not following any of these dreams?



SURPRISE

Forrest Gump has famously said – “My mum always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.”

- Describe a time when your loved one surprised you or you surprised them? Or a time life caught your loved one by surprise.
- What was the occasion?
- What was the result?
- Did your loved one like surprises in life? Or were they wary and shaken by surprises?



HABITS

Sean Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* tells us that “we become what we repeatedly do.”

Let’s face it we all have habits, some very obvious, some a little more hidden that only those very close to us would know about.

Here we ask you to describe any sweet or funny habits your loved one had.

- How did you respond to those habits?
- Did they have any habits that were a little annoying?
- Did they ever try and control and stop any of their habits?
- Can you remember and describe a time where a habit of them caused an issue or brought about a funny memory?



15

CHRISTMAS

Christmas is one of those special times where we often hold tight to the memories of. This prompt asks you to think back over all the Christmases of your loved one and write about Christmas.

- Describe a special Christmas spent with your loved one.
- Did your loved one enjoy Christmas?
- Did they have any special Christmas traditions they kept?
- Were there any particular Christmas gifts given or received by them that hold a strong memory?
- Explore and write about your Christmas memories of your loved one.



TEARS SHARED

- Describe a time you shared a tear with your loved one. This may be tears of joy or tears of sadness.
- What caused the tears? Explain the background to the situation.
- Did the tears help resolve the situation?
- What did this experience tell you about your loved one?
- Generally, was your loved one an emotional person? Did they cry often, or bottle up their emotions?



FRIENDS

"I think if I've learned anything about friendship, it's to hang in, stay connected, fight for them, and let them fight for you. Don't walk away, don't be distracted, don't be too busy or tired, don't take them for granted. Friends are part of the glue that holds life and faith together. Powerful stuff."

- Jon Katz

Think back on the friends of your loved one and ponder the following writing prompts on friendship

- What made your loved one a good friend?
- Did your loved one have lots of friends or were they someone who preferred a few close friends?
- Did they have an extra special friend throughout their life?
- Describe a happy memory shared with your loved one and friends.
- Are there any funny stories about your loved one and friends?



MUSIC AND MELODIES

Plato has said - “Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

We can't live life without music influencing our lives. It gives colour and depth to life and also interestingly music has a powerful way of remaining in our memory.

So write today about music in your loved ones life. Here are a few ideas to get you pondering:

- Are there any special songs or music that bring back memories of your loved one?
- What are those songs and what memories come with them?
- What was your loved one's music tastes?
- Did they not enjoy any particular music?
- Did your loved one play any instrument? Were they a singer?
- Did they hum any tunes as they went about their day?
- Describe a memory where music played a major part in the experience.



FAVOURITE PLACES

- Where were your loved one's favourite places?
- What made these places so special?
- Describe some experiences as these places.
- Did your loved one like to travel? If so, where have they travelled in their life?
- Are there any special travel memories your loved one had?



20

PETS

Love, care, companionship – there is a special bond between every pet and its owner. In this writing exercise we ask you to share about the special pets you loved one had in their life.

- Did your loved one have any pets or like animals?
- If so, explain how significant they have been to them in their life.
- Describe a memory of your loved one that involved animals.



21

HOLIDAY TIME

So many of our memories we hold close are of special events that seem to be embedded in our memory and bring a smile to us when we think of them. Sometimes they even bring laughter as we reminisce about extra fun times.

- Describe some of your most memorable holidays you shared with your loved one.
- Where did you go? What did you do? Who were you with? What were the highlights?
- More importantly though, explain what made these occasions so memorable for you.



LESSONS LEARNED

We all teach each other in our lives through our experiences. Life is very much about learning from each other. Before you write today stop and take some time to ponder. Think deeply about the ONE lesson that will answer this question.

- What is the most significant lesson you have learnt from your loved one?
- How did you learn that lesson?
- What was the circumstance surrounding it?
- Was it a lesson they deliberately taught you, or one that came purely as a consequence of the experience?
- How has this lesson impacted your life?



AN INWARD SMILE

23

It is true that every action we take impacts the lives of others around us.

Now we want you to think about what memories simply bring a smile to your face.

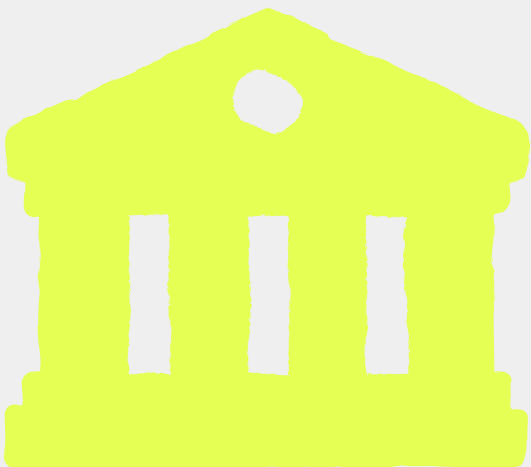
- What is something your loved one did or said that always brought you to smile?
- Describe such an experience where you couldn't help but smile at them or because of them.
- How did that make you and even them feel?



EDUCATION

Malala Yousafzai has said – “They cannot stop me. I will get my education, if it is the home, school or any place.” When we think about it, continually learning and educating ourselves is the journey of life. Let’s now consider the education your loved one received in life, by pondering some of the following prompts.

- Did they continue with any formal education beyond school?
- If so, what did they study and where?
- Did this education help them towards their career goals?
- What value has this education been throughout their life?
- In what other ways did they educate themselves through life?
- Who has been their greatest teachers in life?



WORKING LIFE

When we think about it so much of our life is taken up with our jobs. In fact the average person will spend 90,000 hours at work over their lifetime. For this exercise write about your loved ones working life.

- Begin by outlining the jobs they have done throughout their working life. Where have they worked and when? What was their actual job?
- Describe the joys and satisfactions they received from your work.
- Outline their greatest achievements in work and main lessons learned.
- Did they look back with satisfaction about their working life?



HOME SWEET HOME

They say our home is a shelter from the storms of the world. No matter what 'home' means to you there are always memories tied up with the places we have lived. A home is more than bricks and mortar, it is also made up of love and laughter, sadness and tears.

For this prompt think back on the homes your loved one has lived in.

- List the places they have lived throughout their life. Provide the addresses and describe the house.
- What took them to each place?
- Describe any special memories of the homes in which they lived.
- Describe in vivid detail the favourite home of your loved one. What made it special to them?



PARENTHOOD

“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”

- Forest E. Witcraft

- If your loved one was a parent what sort of parent were they?
- Describe a memory of them parenting.
- List their children's names, birthdates and birthplaces.
- Describe the unique relationship they had with each of their children.



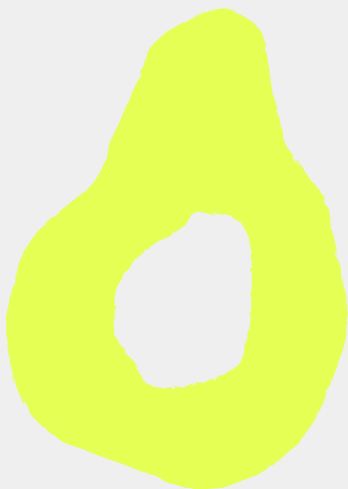
TOPICS OF IMPORTANCE

- What world events interested your loved one?
- Was there any topic that got them going or excited them?
- Were they passionate about any issues in life?
- What was their political leaning?
- Did they ever make a stand on something important to them? If so describe the time.



DOWN TIME

- What did your loved one do in their spare time?
- Describe the scene of spending “down time” with your loved one?
- Write about what they have done throughout their life that gave them pleasure, happiness, relaxation and contentment.
- Did they have any hobbies that have spanned your lifetime? What hobbies have come and gone?



GIVING GIFTS

We all love giving and receiving gifts and it is interesting how certain gifts remain strong in our memory.

- Describe some special gifts you gave or received from your loved one.
- What was the occasion for these gifts?
- Were there any times that a gift giving didn't go as planned? Did gifts received or given by your loved one fall flat? Or exceed expectations?
- Were any funny or odd gifts exchanged?



HAPPINESS

“Just follow your joy. Always. I think that if you do that; life will take you on the course that it’s meant to take you.” – Jonathan Groff

- What did your loved one do that gave them joy, pleasure and happiness?
- When were they most happy?
- Are there any specific memories that stand out or times in their life where they felt the most joy?
- What in life brought them happiness?

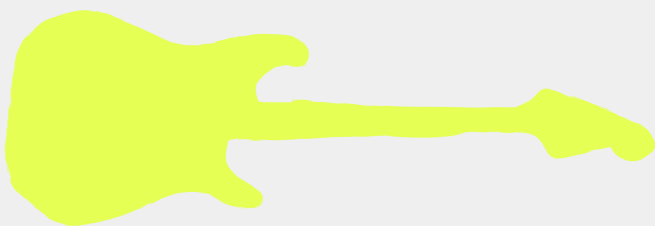


TALENTS

“According to the law of Dharma, you have a unique talent and a unique way of expressing it. There is something that you can do better than anyone else in the whole world--and for every unique talent and unique expression of that talent, there are also unique needs. When these needs are matched with the creative expression of your talent, that is the spark that creates affluence. Expressing your talents to fulfil needs creates unlimited wealth and abundance.”

— Deepak Chopra

- Take a moment and think about your loved ones talents.
- Outline their talents.
- Do you know how these talents came about?
- Did they share them openly or were a little shy about their talents?
- Share a special memory where these talents were shown.



FAVOURITES

For this prompt you are to begin by simply listing. Make your list as long as possible.

List as many of your loved ones favourites that you can think of...food, books, television shows, movies, famous people, places, music, colours, animals, items, events...list all things they loved and what gave them JOY.

Now if you can go a little deeper and describe some memorable events involving some of these favourites.



ACHIEVEMENTS

- If you could ask your loved one what their greatest achievements in life were, what would you think they would say?
- From your perspective is this their greatest achievement? Or do you have other thoughts?
- Write about a time when your loved one achieved beyond their own expectations.
- What traits did they display through this experience?



PICK ME UP

**Ralph Waldo Emerson has said –
“The purpose of life is not to be
happy. It is to be useful, to be
honourable, to be
compassionate, to have it make
some difference that you have
lived and lived well.”**

- Write about a time when your loved one “picked you up” and helped you through something difficult.
- What was the occasion? How did they ‘pick you up’?
- What does this experience tell you about your loved one?



KINDNESS

William Penn writes – “I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it. I shall not pass this way again.”

- Ponder the topic of kindness.
- Describe a time when your loved one showed kindness to others.
- What does this teach you about your loved one?



LIFE LESSONS

In another topic we ask you to consider what life lessons your loved one would want to give to you and others. But for this prompt we ask you to think from your perspective, not theirs.

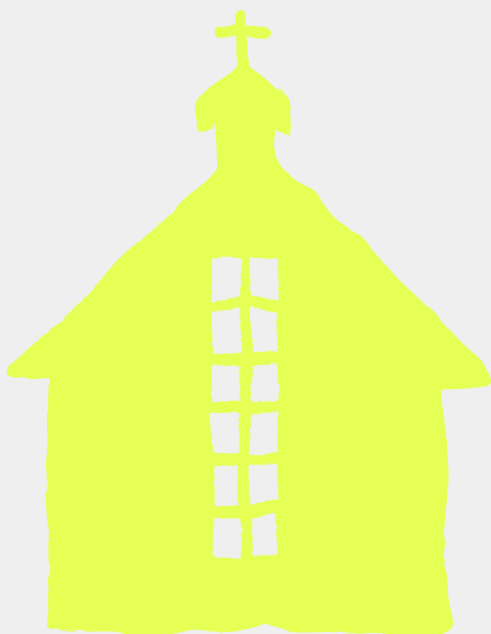
- For this topic look holistically at your loved ones life.
- Outline the lessons you have learnt from your loved one.
- How have these lessons helped you grow as a person?
- Your loved one may never have known this is something you gained because of them. This topic is really asking you to explore – How is my life better because of the lessons the life of my loved one gave me?



BELIEFS

Explain the spiritual, ethical or religious beliefs of your loved one.

- How were these beliefs shown?
- Describe how they developed these beliefs and how they impacted their life.
- How did their values and beliefs change during their life?
- Who or what influenced those changes?
- Did they have a personal mantra?



TESTS OF FAITH

Write about a time in your loved ones life when their beliefs and values were put to the test and challenged.

- Outline how they responded to these challenges.
- How did these challenges impact their life afterwards?
- Did their belief and faith change as a result?

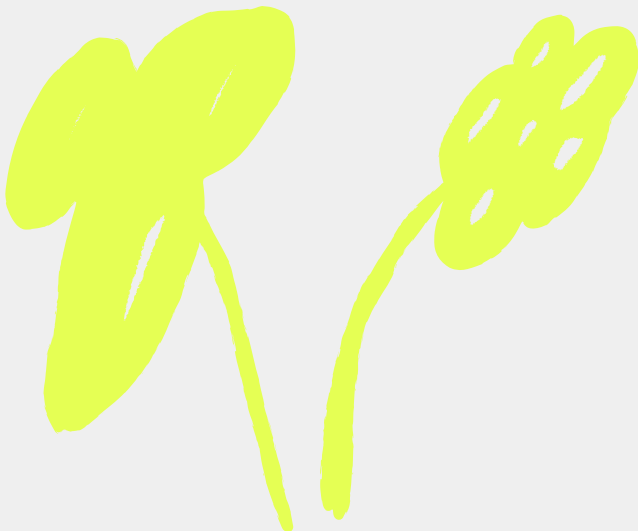


40

CHANGE

It is said that the only constant in life is change. I am sure when reflecting on life you would agree with that. Sometimes we embrace change or actively pursue it, at other times it is forced on us and we reluctantly submit to change. Either way change is a major part of our life journey. For this writing exercise think about the change that your loved one personally experienced.

- Describe the most significant changes they experienced in life.
- How did they respond to the change?
- How did these changes impact their life?



41

HAND IN HAND

Write about a time where you and your loved one worked closely together, as the perfect team.

- What was the occasion?
- What did you each do?
- What brought about the synergy and the working hand in hand?
- What did you gain from this experience?



42

WORLD EVENTS

Outline some of the world events that have been most significant in your loved ones life.

- Why did each of these particular events stand out?
- Were they personally impacted by any of these major world events?
- How was the world they had come to know changed by this event?

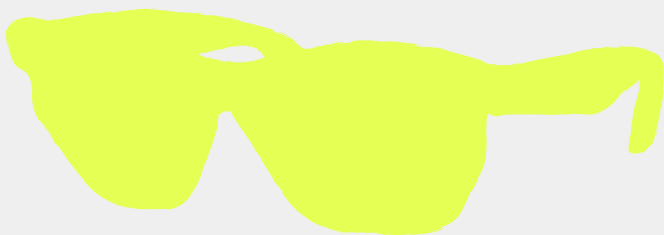


43

RED IN THE FACE

We all have times in our lives we wish were forgotten because they are simply put - embarrassing.

- Write about a time your loved one was embarrassed and made everyone around them laugh.
- How did they deal with the embarrassment?



TURNING BACK TIME

Once again for this prompt we ask you to think specifically about one experience.

- If you could go back and relive just ONE favourite experience with your loved one what would it be?
- Why did you choose this experience?
- Would you have changed any part of the experience? Why or why not?



TRADITIONS

The traditions we keep help define who we are. They give us identity, security, a feeling of belonging and importance.

- Think about your loved ones whole life.
- Describe some personal or family traditions that they have kept through their life.
- Did they carry any traditions on from childhood? If so why? If not, why not?
- Did they create any new traditions that have kept going through their entire life?
- Explain the importance the traditions were to your loved one in their life.



46

INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

Too often relationships get left out of our life stories as we focus on events. But when you think about it – it is the people that have come into our lives and impressed us in some way that have had the most impact on us in our lives. Take a moment to think about people that have come and went in your loved ones life. These people may have come and left quickly, yet their impact has been far reaching, or they may be people that have shown love and care through their entire life.

- Outline the people that have had the greatest impact on your loved ones life.
- What was it about them that was so significant for them?
- Explain why you think they had so much impact?
- How did your loved ones' lives change because of these people?



WORDS OF WISDOM

A wise ancient King said Wisdom is the most important thing; so get wisdom. If it costs everything you have, get understanding. Treasure wisdom, and it will make you great; hold onto it, and it will bring you honour. Indeed life is about the getting of wisdom. Your task now is to ponder the wisdom your loved one has shared through their life. Imagine them sitting in a chair opposite you now ready to give you their pearls of wisdom.

- Explain what wisdom they would be sharing with you now if they could.
- Were there any particular events or sequences of life events that brought about the gaining of that wisdom?
- What words of wisdom did they share with you throughout their life?



BEING ONE OF A KIND

**“You are a living, breathing work of art.
As audacious as Dali's mustache,
mysterious like a Mona Lisa smile.
As sensual as O'Keeffe's painted petals,
glorious, like a Van Gogh starry night.”
— John Mark Green, Taste the Wild
Wonder: Poems**

**We are all individual works of art. No two
are alike. Each unique in our own ways.
Today write about all the unique
characteristics of your loved one that made
them their own unique art piece.**

- What quirky traits about your loved one did you really love?
- How were they an “individual” and what made them so unique?



ONE MEMORY

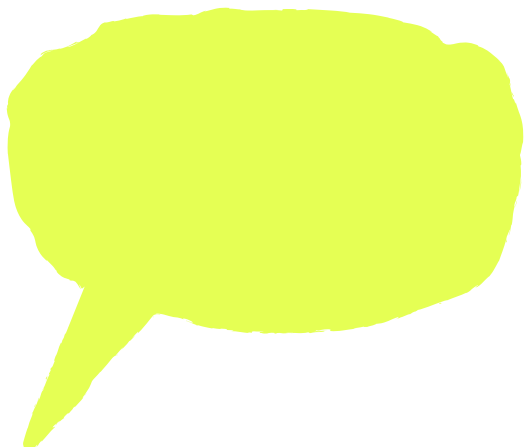
- If one memory could sum up your relationship with your loved one what would that memory be?
- This prompt is asking for a memory about **YOUR RELATIONSHIP**, bit just a special memory.
- What one memory explains what your unique relationship with your loved one was like?
- What does it tell us?



A LITTLE ADVICE

You have recently lost someone you love. You are going through grief, whether you are in the early stages or further down the track, grief is something that forever changes us when we lose someone who we have held so dear.

- What advice would you feel your loved one would give you if you met a friend who was going through a similar loss to yourself?
- Essentially what would they be saying to you now about how to live life and go forward?



GRATITUDE

Life is indeed a gift. At the end of the day your loved one lived a full life. Let there be no excuses, no explanations, no regrets, no sadness, only gratitude for them and their life.

Today you are to describe what you are most grateful for in having been a part of your loved ones life.

Once you have written what easily comes to mind, pause for a moment but do not stop.

Think deeper, look harder....We have much to be grateful for. Explore all you are grateful for in having known your loved one.



LEGACY

What legacy has your loved one left? Every life has meaning for those that came afterwards. We all can benefit from the lessons each of us gained in life, and the choices and experiences forged.

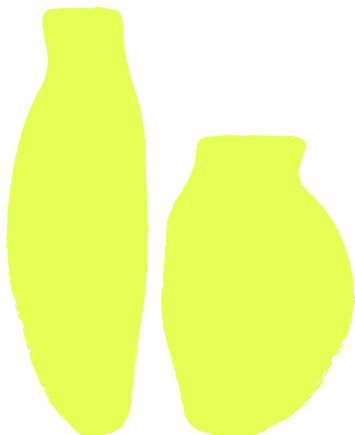
Your last writing exercise is your concluding summary:

How does your loved one want to be remembered?

What legacy have they left for their children, grandchildren and then their children?

What does their life stand for?

Write their legacy.



BARE.