

# Write a Life Starter Program

*Don't get it right. Get it written!*

## INTRODUCTION

Nobody gets from the beginning to the end of their time of earth with making an impact on some level – no matter how long or short that time – and there are lessons to be learned from that impact. Every life adds something to our multi-dimensional and colourful world. Every single one of us makes a contribution: big or small, positive or negative, empowering or discouraging. Some lives enhance the people they encounter, and others have the opposite effect.

The purpose of Write a Life is to capture those lessons while we still can. It's too late when life has ended to record the story of that life in the storyteller's unique voice.

It's a lovely thought – writing the life story of someone's life in their own words – but too often the thought is as far as anyone gets. Maybe we make a start, but there seems to be too much information, too many confusing or irrelevant details, tangents, side stories, outside influences and other factors that make the task seem impossible to complete.

The vital message, and the key to Write a Life, is 'Don't get it right. Get it written.' This Starter Program provides you with a blueprint to lay the foundations of your story. It will reveal many different parts of that story for you to explore, but the focus is always on extracting only the details that are relevant to the theme you're working on.

In an ideal world, you could have a weekly chat with the person whose story you want to preserve and take them through the Write a Life process in a leisurely and orderly way. There would be no restrictions on time, and the subject of your story would be ready, willing and able to answer your questions. You'd do all the exercises, polish the story and end up with a wonderful collection of facts, memories and wisdom to share with family and friends. Your story outlives the storyteller.

The reality is that there will be obstacles in all shapes and sizes along the way. If age or illness is a factor, you could be working against the clock. Some people will be reserved about sharing their story and you will need to draw the information from them. Other won't remember or will be confused so will have to do some research with other family members.

Some people love to talk, and your challenge will be to stop them going into too much detail too soon. The great danger of too much detail in the early stages is that you could get bogged down and lost and discouraged very quickly. The Write a Life process is designed to allow a drip-feed of information, layer by layer, as you build the complete story.

If time is a factor, gather as much information as possible at every opportunity, transcribe it all unedited, and then use the Write a Life process to shape it. It's best to use a recording device, rather than to try and handwrite as the person speaks. There are plenty of free speech-to-text apps that will help greatly with transcribing the story. None of them are perfect, so read what it has recorded as soon as possible so that you can correct any mistakes or misinterpretations while the conversation is fresh in your mind.

It's important approach the process with a degree of urgency because nobody is guaranteed tomorrow.

The Write a Life process is a labour of love, and as such, worth every effort it takes to preserve the stories, memories, experiences and wisdom of a unique and precious life.

A life remembered lives forever *Eileen Bennett*