

Write a Life Starter Program

Don't get it right. Get it written!

THEME 1: WHO?

The Write a Life process starts by gathering and recording basic information about the life story you want to tell.

It is really important at this stage to be disciplined about keeping the answers short and to the point.

For now, less is more!

Exercise 1

What is your first name?	
Why were you given that name?	
Do any other family members have the same name?	
How do you feel about your name?	
What other names do you have?	
Were you given those names or did you choose them?	
Why do you have those names?	
How do you feel about those names now?	
What is your birth surname?	
Where Does it come from?	
How do you feel about it?	
If your surname now is different to your birth surname, which do you most identify with?	
Why?	

A life remembered lives forever *Eileen Bennett*

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Exercise 2

- ✓ Once you've recorded those basic details, you need to start to put them into sentences.
- ✓ You don't need anything other than the most basic information at this stage.
- ✓ Resist the temptation to dig deeper or add embellishments!

If I am writing my own story, it will look something like this;

FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE

I'm called Eileen because both my parents had a sister of that name. Those two aunts are the only other with that name in our family.

I've always felt that my name is a bit old-fashioned and that it never fully belonged to me.***

My parents chose Catherine as a second name for me. I think this was because my mother's mother was called Catherine and because my mother had a sister called Catherine who died very young. *

I chose the name Therese for my Confirmation when I was 12 because that was the name of my father's favourite saint.

He died when I was seven. ***

Those names don't have much impact on my life now. I never use them and I am probably the only person who knows them.**

My surname at birth was Bennett. It's an Anglo-Saxon name that means 'little blessed one'. There are Bennetts in a lot of the southern counties of Ireland.

My family came from West Cork. ***

It's not an unusual surname, but it's also not one of the common Irish ones.

I kept my name when I got married because I could see no good reason to change it to somebody else's.
**

It's my name and I like it. ***

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If you're writing somebody else's story, it will look something like this;

This is how story based on the answers given in the First Person Narrative, might look in the Third Person;

THIRD PERSON NARRATIVE

Eileen was given that name because both parents had a sister called Eileen. Those two aunts are the only other with that name in the family.

Eileen always felt that her name is a bit old-fashioned and that it never fully belonged to her.***

Her parents chose Catherine as a second name for her. She thinks this was because her mother's mother was called Catherine and because Eileen's mother had a sister called Catherine who died very young. *

She chose the name Therese for her Confirmation when I was 12 because that was the name of her father's favourite saint.

He died when Eileen was seven. ***

Those extra names don't have much impact on her life now. She never uses them and thinks she is probably the only person who knows them.**

Her surname at birth was Bennett. It's an Anglo-Saxon name that means 'little blessed one'. There are Bennetts in a lot of the southern counties of Ireland.

Eileen's family came from West Cork. ***

It's not an unusual surname, but it's also not one of the common Irish ones.

Eileen kept her name when she got married. She could see no good reason to change it to somebody else's. **

It's her name and she likes it. ***

Exercise 3

After you've collected your answers and written them in sentence form, make sure you mark any place you wanted to ask for more information. Max 3 levels for now.

In the examples used here, statements marked with * indicate that there is more to be explored at a later date.

The more * after a statement, the more relevant it is to the primary story and these are the areas to be revisited first.

For now, it is enough to simply notice and tag anything you feel is significant, especially anything that is has had a direct impact on the primary personal story, rather than secondary or less relevant stories.

A life remembered lives forever *Eileen Bennett*