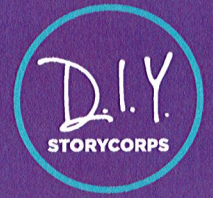


# PLANNING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW



Below are some specific questions to consider before you hit record. Meaningful stories often focus on challenge, choice and outcome. Reflect on what moments in your life presented you with a challenge. Why did you feel this was a challenge? Why did you make the choice you did? How did the outcome feel? What did you learn?

What are 3-5 main topics that you would like to touch upon in your conversation?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any topics you do not want to discuss?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are five questions you'd like to ask your interview partner?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

*A thoughtful question can open up an entire thread of conversation. Feel free to develop your own questions or use the Great Questions for inspiration. It can be helpful to start with some general questions before asking about more complex subjects.*

## GREAT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

How did that make you feel?

What happened next?

Can you remember a specific time...?

Can you give me an example?

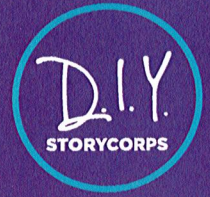
Can you paint a picture in words?

What were you thinking when that happened?

Is there anything else you'd like to say to one another?



# GREAT QUESTIONS LEAD TO GREAT CONVERSATIONS



## 10 TOP GREAT QUESTIONS

1. Who has been the most important person in your life? Can you tell me about them?
2. What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
3. Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
4. Who has been the kindest to you in your life?
5. What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
6. What is your earliest memory?
7. What is your favorite memory of me?
8. Are there any funny stories your family tells about you that come to mind?
9. Are there any funny stories or memories or characters from your life that you want to tell me about?
10. When in life have you felt most alone?

## FOR FRIENDS

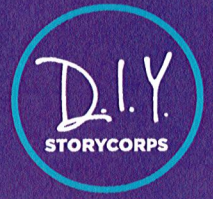
1. What is your first memory of me?
2. Was there a time when you didn't like me?
3. What makes us such good friends?
4. How would you describe me? How would you describe yourself?
5. Where will we be in 10 years? 20 years?
6. Do you think we'll ever lose touch with each other?
7. Is there anything that you've always wanted to tell me but haven't?

## GRANDPARENTS

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What was your childhood like?
3. Who were your favorite relatives?
4. Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?
5. What was my mom/dad like growing up?
6. Do you remember any songs that you used to sing to her/him? Can you sing them now?
7. Was she/he well-behaved?
8. What is the worst thing she/he ever did?



# GREAT QUESTIONS LEAD TO GREAT CONVERSATIONS



## PARENTS

1. Do you remember what was going through your head when you first saw me?
2. How did you choose my name?
3. What was I like as a baby? As a young child?
4. Do you remember any of the songs you used to sing to me? Can you sing them now?
5. What were my siblings like?
6. What were the hardest moments you had when I was growing up?
7. If you could do everything again, would you raise me differently?
8. What advice would you give me about raising my own kids?

## ABOUT LOVE/MARRIAGE

1. Do you have a love of your life?
2. When did you first fall in love?
3. Can you tell me about your first kiss?
4. What was your first serious relationship?
5. How did you meet your husband/wife?
6. How did you know he/she was “the one”?
7. What lessons have you learned from your relationships?

## WORKING

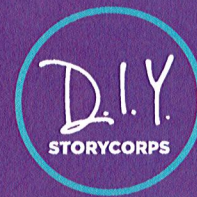
1. What do you do for a living?
2. Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
3. Do you like your job?
4. What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
5. What did you want to be when you grew up?
6. What lessons has your work life taught you?
7. If you could do anything now, what would it be? Why?

## RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

1. Can you tell me about your religious beliefs/spiritual beliefs? What is your religion?
2. Have you experienced any miracles?
3. What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life?
4. Do you believe in the afterlife? What do you think it will be like?

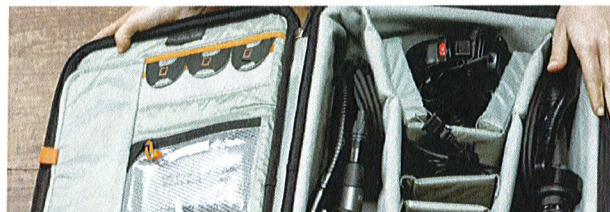


# THE INTERVIEW PROCESS



## 1. ORIENT PARTICIPANT

Greet your interview partner. Explain the process and plans for sharing the interview. Let the person know if you will be taking notes, how long the interview will be, and that you will take breaks.



## 2. PREP & SET UP

Set up in an area that is comfortable and conducive to good sound quality. If you are setting up in a new space, arrive early, and prepare to answer any questions. Set up your recorder and/or microphones. Make sure the microphones are five inches away from each participant's face.



## 3. SOUND CHECK

Do a soundcheck by asking simple questions to check levels. Be sure to listen for any background noises as well. Make adjustments, if necessary.



## 4. RECORD

Begin with a specific time or topic in your interview partner's life that most interests you. Use StoryCorps' Great Questions list for inspiration. Ask follow-up questions to get deeper into a story. Questions that encourage vivid details can make the interview special.



## 5. PHOTO

Ask about taking a photo together. This will be a great visual element to have alongside the audio of the interview.



## 6. CONSENT/PAPERWORK

Once the interview is over, discuss sharing the recording, as well as any necessary release forms.

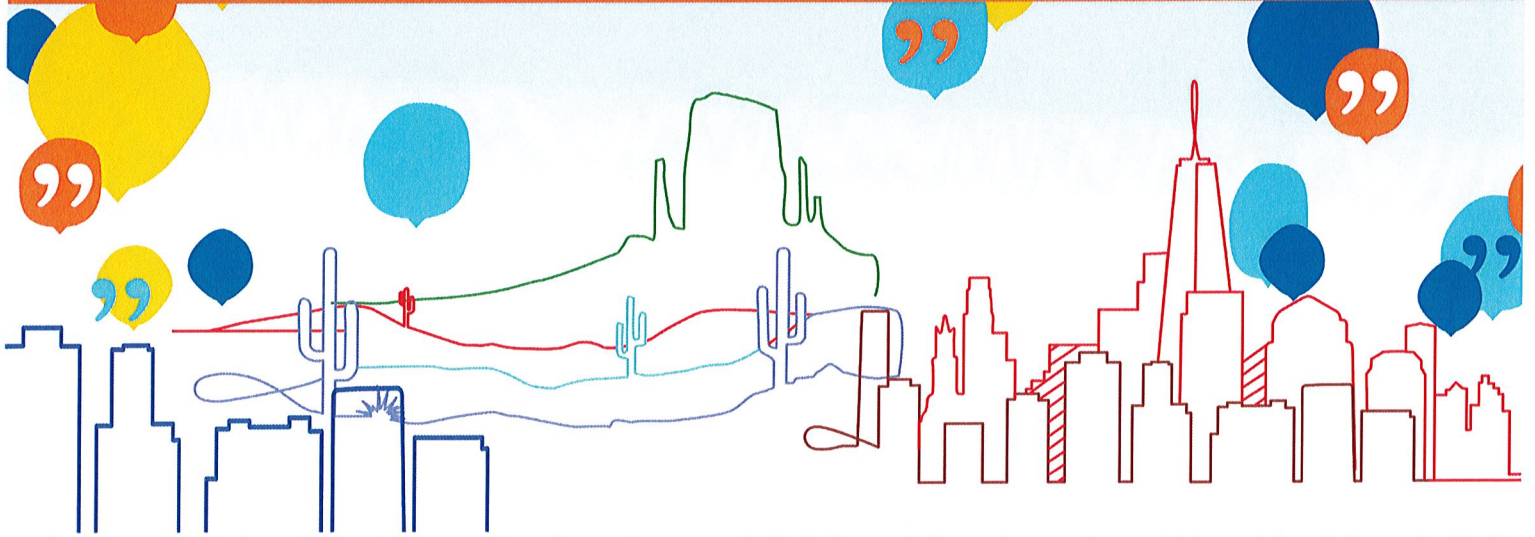


## 7. PACK-UP & CLOSING

Thank participants for their time, and for taking part in a recording. Be sure to give them your contact information in case they have any future questions about the Interview.







## 10 Conversation Tips for Your STORYCORPS Interview

### 1 Plan Your Questions

Before you record anything, use the StoryCorps question lists to **plan your questions** (or write your own), and share them ahead of time with your partner. This simple preparation will help you get the most out of your time together.

### 2 Ask Warm-Up Questions

Press the record button and follow the prompts to introduce yourself and your partner. Then **ask a few warm-up questions**, like “Where were you born?” or “Can you describe the first time we met?”

### 3 Ask Open-Ended Questions

Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or a “no.” Instead, use language like “Tell me about...” or “What was it like when...” This lets the storyteller steer you toward what is most important to them.

### 4 Ask Follow-Up Questions

Be **prepared to ask follow-ups** or diverge from your question list if you’re curious about something. If you’d like to hear more, try “And then what happened?” or “How did that make you feel?” or “What were you thinking in that moment?”

### 5 Think of It as a Conversation

Use your selected questions as a guide, not a script. If your partner goes off topic, go with it. You can redirect them to your original question later. **Think of it as a conversation**; there’s no right or wrong thing to talk about, as long as it’s meaningful to you.

### 6 Tell a Story

Don’t hesitate to **tell a story** about your partner, and to bring up your favorite shared memories. This can be a time to tell your partner how much they mean to you, and why you want to record with them today.

### 7 Set Up Context

Keep in mind that future listeners may not be familiar with the specific people and places you mention. **Set up context** where needed with questions like “Who was Uncle Steve?” and “Why was he such an influence on you?”

### 8 Encourage Vivid Details

Questions that **encourage vivid details** can make the story special. Invoke the senses by asking your partner to remember these details. For example: “What did your kitchen smell like when you were growing up?” or “What images stand out when you think about Granddad?”

### 9 Plan Some Reflective Questions

Keep an eye on the timer so that you are aware of when there are 10 and 5 minutes left. **End your interview with reflective questions**, such as “What legacy would you like to leave?” or “What advice would you give me about being a parent?”

### 10 Relax and Be Yourself

Enjoy the opportunity to share stories and reflections with your interview partner. **Just be yourself, be curious, and let the conversation flow.**

