

Connection Over Perfection

This journal is not about writing perfect answers or documenting facts.

It's about having a good time together, and being connected to the person you love.

There is no right or wrong way to fill in these pages.

In each spread, you can write what your parent (or the person you love) shares with you.

I highly encourage you to also write about what comes along with those stories.

Write about their emotional state and how it was changing during the conversation. How did you feel in those moments?

If the person gets off on a tangent, just write about that! How the focus was lost, but you found a new story.

Flexibility is key.

These conversations don't have to be formal.

They can be very quick, over the phone, or while you're taking your parent to a doctor's appointment.

Whenever the right moment comes, I want you to have these prompts ready, so you always know what to talk about.

And most importantly:

Enjoy your time together.

With love,

Iryna

Scenario 1: What if your parent doesn't remember or gives very short answers?

It's important to remember that you're not trying to test their memory. You're creating space for whatever they can share, and even small fragments are important.

What you can do:

Add your own reflections to fill in the gaps.

For example, you can write:

"This is what my parent remembers about this," or

"This is what my parent said about this, but this is also what I know from stories that were shared in the family, or what I remember my parent told me earlier."

Your reflections can add to the story and help fill in what your parent is missing, creating a more complete picture.

Scenario 2: What if your parent confuses details or mixes things up?

This whole process is not memory testing.

This is the story they have now, the way they remember it now. You are not looking for factual data. You're looking for their stories.

What to focus on:

Think of this as an opportunity to write down these stories the way they remember them at the moment when you have this conversation. Again, you can add some of your own reflection.

If your parent is mixing things up, focus more on their emotional truth and emotional state rather than factual accuracy.

What's important is their story.

Remember: Your parent's version of the story is the real story for them, right now, at this moment.

You are preserving how they remember it, and that's what makes it meaningful.

Scenario 3: What if your parent doesn't want to talk about certain topics?

Their boundaries matter. You can respect those boundaries and simply write it down.

What you can do:

You can write: "This is a subject that my parent doesn't want to talk about." You may or may not know why they don't want to talk about it, and that's okay. You can write that down and add what you know about the subject from your own memories or family stories.

You may gently try again later and see if they want to talk about it. If not, then this is their truth at the moment. They don't want to talk about it. And that's okay.

Scenario 4: What if your parent seems to be annoyed and questions why this matters?

You don't need to convince them that it's important.

What to say:

You can tell them that you just want to listen to them and hear their stories.

Tell them that their stories are interesting and important to you.

This reassurance is very important for them at this stage of their lives. Knowing that they're not being left alone, that their lives matter, and that they are interesting to their family lightens up their days.

You can say, "I have never heard about that and would like to know," or

"My kids might ask about it, and I want to know."

You can be very honest and sincere.

If they are resistant and don't want to talk, that's fine. You can back off and let them relax. Write about your experience in the journal.

Scenario 5: What if your parent gets tired quickly or loses focus?

You can do just short sessions. It doesn't have to be spending the whole day answering all those questions.

It can be very short, just a few minutes.

You can come back to these questions later if there is something that you feel is unanswered or there is something that can be added.

When they get off topic:

Getting off the topic can lead you to new discoveries, something that you didn't even think of asking.

Think of it as an adventure, wherever that conversation leads you. This is also what you can record.

And what if the emotional load of seeing your parent decline is too much for you to carry?

I can help you with that.

[Schedule a call with me](#)

or just email me at iryna@irynaishchenko.com