

Welcome to the Story of Your Life

The purpose of this book is to inspire you to Tell Your Story. We are confident that you will find our “guided journal” format educational and engaging - and even fun. It will enable you to quickly and easily gather and compile the information that matters most to you and your loved ones.

It is purposefully written in a happy, lighthearted tone while capturing your details in a straightforward format. You can share personal stories, organize all of your stuff and specify your funeral wishes. You will be so relieved once you start. Then tell your heirs ... they will be thrilled! Better yet, ask them to join you in the fun of filling it out.

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It’s just that easy to get started! We know you will enjoy the journey ...

With great admiration,

Annie & Christy

This Book Contains Information About Me

NAME

ADDRESS

Keep This Book in a Secure Location!

This book was filled out on _____ (date)

It has been updated on the following dates:

Prepared for Your Eyes Only!

List the people who should have access to the information in this book keeping in mind your comfort with confidentiality.

NAME

NAME

NAME

If you are not one of the individuals listed above, please immediately return this book to the person who filled it out or one of the people listed above.

Congratulations on selecting this book to capture the treasures of your life – stories, memories, the meaning of your stuff and how you want to be remembered. We know you will enjoy filling it out and hope you will email us and tell us what you love about it!

While we hope you find this book clever and helpful, we sell this book to the public with the understanding that we, the authors and publisher, are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. All such services should be sought from competent, licensed professionals. This book does not take place of a will. Using the book to help you organize your thoughts and documents for your heirs and your professional team is extraordinarily wise, and we encourage you to make all of them aware of your book.

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Two very different experiences in the authors' lives brought this book to life

Annie's thoughts:

After our parents' divorce, our fabulous mother died quite unexpectedly in my arms. I was 12 years old. My brother (13), our two-year-old sister, and I were lost without our mother's physical presence, and soft voice. On top of that, she did not leave behind anything to tell us about her – how she felt about us, her life, or her worldly treasures.

So very often I have wished that I could ask her a question... and talk to her about a million other things. If she had filled out a book like this, I would have some idea FROM her, ABOUT her... and about us.

Since that time, I have dealt with the deaths of other people I have loved. A book like this would have been of great value in each of those situations. I wrote this book so that other people would not have my experience.



My mom, two weeks before she died. June 1971.

Christy's thoughts:

I am the lucky mother of a wonderful daughter named Sommer. My mom was diagnosed with a rare disease when I was a 17-year-old freshman at Vanderbilt. The doctors thought she could survive 6 months. At her request, I tearfully remained in school and tried to come to grips with the fact that she would not be in my life much longer.

In my case, the story has a happy ending. It has been more than thirty years since that phone call, and my mother (one of my two best girlfriends – the other is my daughter) is still living! We have had decades to enjoy life together... and to prepare for her passing. I have told her “goodbye” many times when doctors predicted her imminent death. One of our favorite doctors, Jean Hausheer, warmly teases that my mom has more lives than a cat. Maybe we are a little crazy, but we laugh about it – because we have had these wonderful years we thought would be taken from us.

My daughter (Sommer) with my mom (Wanda) on Easter Sunday 2014.



My mother and I have dealt with the deaths of many other loved ones. Whenever there has been prior planning, the process is so much less difficult. The emotions are still keen, but when there is clarity about what to do, the grieving is based on the emotional loss, not on confusion or fear. I am fortunate that my mother has spent time organizing “things” for me so I will know what to do when she does finally transition from this life. It is time for me to begin that planning process for my own daughter.

When Annie mentioned that she wanted to create a book to help organize her “things and thoughts,” I knew it was the right thing to do. I hope this book helps you organize your “stuff” and that you smile along the way.

Throughout this book, Annie and Christy share their thoughts and experiences.



Annie



Christy

*Special thanks to our friends
who provided input and
personal stories along the way:*

Frank Addington

Alison Coulson

Bob Deck

Katheigh Degen

Betsy Fentress

Courtney Fuchs

Laurie Ingram

Ada Koch

Sara Lewis

Merikay Lott

Shelley McThomas

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PART ONE

My Personal Information



*I always wanted
to be famous, happy
and healthy!*

CHAPTER

1

It's All About Me

This chapter gives you the opportunity to share your family history, whether you were raised by your birth parents, adopted, lived in foster homes, or your parents divorced and you split time in various households.



Real life is complicated, lots of people can serve the role of “parent” in our lives!



How My Life Began

I was born in: _____
(city, county, state, country)

Birth date: (including the year!) _____

My name as it appears on my birth certificate: _____

My birth certificate is located: _____

Parents listed on my birth certificate:

Mother: _____

Her maiden name was: _____

Father: _____

I was raised by my birth mother and father for my entire youth. (If so, skip to page 20)

I was not raised in the home of my birth parents for my entire youth.

The following pages give you the opportunity to explain where you lived.



My maternal grandmother was from a large family in South Dakota. They had very little money and in the 1920's one of her younger sisters went to live with another family for a period of time. All of my Grandmother's siblings shared one drawer of a cabinet that held all their clothing!

I Was Adopted

I was adopted when I was _____ days, _____ months or _____ years old.

The records can be found in _____
(city, county, state, country)

Name of adoption agency: _____

Address of adoption agency: _____

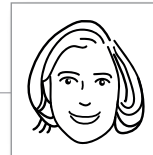
Name of attorney: _____

Address of attorney: _____

Adoptive parents: _____

Birth parents: _____

— TELL A STORY —



*Take time to
tell any story you
wish to share,
whether you
have told it a
million times
or never before.
Family history is
important.*

I Had Step Parents

I lived with my father _____ (name) and my step-mother.

Step-Mother: _____

Her maiden name was _____

She became my step-mother when she married my dad

on _____ (date) in location _____

I lived with my mother _____ (name) and my step-father.

Step-Father: _____

He became my step-father when he married my mom

on _____ (date) in location _____

— TELL A STORY —



This is a good place to explain the living situation you experienced as a child/ youth. Did you live only in one household, or did you split time between households?

I Had Foster Parents

Name of Foster Parent(s) _____

City/Address _____

My Age _____

We keep in touch today _____



*You can explain
your history here.
Why were you in
foster homes?
Did you maintain
contact with your
birth parents?
Did you have
a favorite foster
home? Did you
have good or bad
memories about
any particular
situation?*

— TELL A STORY —

A large, empty rectangular area with a light gray background, intended for the user to write their story.

Special Primary School Memories or Honors

(be sure to list the grade)



My paternal grandfather almost finished 3rd grade before being called back to work as a sharecropper.

My maternal grandmother was called back to work half way through her senior year of high school.

Guess who was most mad about never finishing school?

My Job History

I HAVE WORKED FOR THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES/PEOPLE

COMPANY	YEAR STARTED	YEAR I LEFT	WHAT I DID
---------	--------------	-------------	------------

My favorite job(s) was/were: _____

The job I always wanted, or would have LOVED to try: _____

Timeline

MY MEMORIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In my sixties

In my seventies

In my eighties

In my nineties

In my hundreds



*Don't forget
the "emotional"
accomplishments
like forgiveness or
healing wounds!*

Other Information I Want to Share



*Share meaningful
messages or life
learnings.
Things that make
you...you.*

When I was Older (70's and Beyond)

My daily life went like this: _____

These are some of the things I think about and do: _____

Advice I'd give to someone that age: _____

CHAPTER

3

Medical Mumbo-Jumbo

This chapter chronicles your health history for the benefit of your family and medical professionals who might need it.



My Medical History

DISEASES/ILLNESSES (HEART, LUNG, ETC.) I HAVE EXPERIENCED

DISEASES OR HEALTH ISSUES MY RELATIVES HAVE EXPERIENCED

CHAPTER

4

The Poop on My Pets

*Don't forget your
animal friends.
This can help you
guide others on
their behalf.*



Legal Documents for My Stuff

(and for care of any minor children)

To deal with my assets (my stuff) and my children, I have or do not have a:

Will Yes No **Living or Revocable Trust** Yes No **Pour-over Will** Yes No

My original will is located in _____

It was drafted by _____

Contact Phone Number _____

The executor of my will is _____

My Living or Revocable Trust Agreement is located _____

It was drafted by _____

Contact phone number _____

Legal Documents for My Care

To deal with my health in case I am incapacitated,

I have or do not have a **Living Will or Health Care Directive**.

My Living Will/Health Care Directive is located _____

Contact name and phone number _____

To guide my physicians

I have or do not have a **POLST**.

My **POLST** is located _____

Contact name and phone number _____

Money I Receive

Retirement or Pension check each month from _____

in the amount of _____

They mail it to the following address _____

Beneficiary upon my death: _____

Retirement or Pension check each month from _____

in the amount of _____

They mail it to the following address _____

Beneficiary upon my death: _____

Retirement or Pension check each month from _____

in the amount of _____

They mail it to the following address _____

Beneficiary upon my death: _____

- Coins Collectibles China Crystal Family Treasures Furniture
 Guns Jewelry Silver Sports Memorabilia Other

ITEM _____

Description _____

Brand name and make _____

Date acquired _____

for (e.g., wedding gift, anniversary gift, inherited from someone, etc.) _____

and current location _____ (where you can find it)

Appraisal by _____

on _____ (date) is located: _____

Desired beneficiary/beneficiaries, and why _____

Is it a treasure? If so, explain (dollar or sentimental value): _____

I have included a photograph of it. _____

CHAPTER

12

My Fabulous Funeral

*Plan this now,
at least in part.
You can reduce
the stress on
your family.*



My Plan – At a Glance

I have a pre-paid funeral plan with _____

at _____ (address) and _____ (phone number)

The documents confirming this transaction can be found in the _____

I do not have a pre-paid funeral plan.

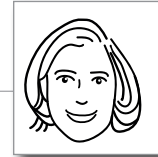
BURIAL OR CREMATION?

- I'd like to be buried (go to page 274)
- I'd like to be cremated (go to page 278)
- I'd like a casket funeral followed by cremation

SERVICE CHOICES

(Definitions for these services are on pages 271 – 272.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wake | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graveside Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celebration of Life | |



Even if you have a pre-paid funeral plan, be sure to fill out the appropriate sections of this book so your loved ones do what you WANT them to do! Would that be a first?

My Plan – Service Wishes

WRITTEN WORD FOR THE SERVICE(S) – THE DETAILS

Reading

Reader (first and last name)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Be sure to contact the VFW for military services at my funeral. _____

I would like the eulogy to be delivered by _____ (name)

at _____ (phone number)

A eulogy is a speech about the deceased. It is meant to be a tribute to the person who has passed. It can be difficult to deliver (emotionally), but it is very meaningful to the family and loved ones.

Pall Bearers, if I have a casket. (They are often listed as “Honorary Pall Bearers” if there is no casket.) Their names and phone numbers are:

1. _____	5. _____
2. _____	6. _____
3. _____	7. _____
4. _____	8. _____

A Quick Checklist for You When I'm Gone

This list should be addressed very soon after death. It's not in required order since so many things must be done simultaneously,



...and because each situation is different, and laws vary by state. Be sure to comply with the laws that apply to your situation.



A Quick Checklist for You When I'm Gone

ACTION TO TAKE Personal Matters	WHO?	STATUS
---------------------------------	------	--------

Call My Best Friends and Relatives...
and my Work/Office Friends. Here are
their names:

See the chapter titled *My Little Black Book* for their contact
information.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____