

“To be a person
is to have a story
to tell.” ~Isak Dinesen

1. What is your earliest memory?
2. “How did you get to be the woman you are today?” This question is the framing device for Anita Diamant’s novel *The Boston Girl*, and it could also help anyone frame their life. How *did* you get to be the woman you are today?
3. Make a family tree with as much detail as you know. Then go to www.familysearch.org, create an account, and make your family tree using the website’s information. What did you learn? What family lines are the most interesting to you? Why?
4. Pick one of your female ancestors who died before you were born. What do you know about her? Write down a story you know, or ask another relative to tell you a story or two. Or, if no one knows, do a bit of research on the time period and place where she lived. How is your life different? How is it similar?
5. Write about a decision that changed your life.
6. What sport, hobby, artistic endeavor, or other talent did you develop during your childhood? How did it influence your life? Are you still involved in it?
7. What do you know about your birth story? If the details are sketchy, can you ask someone in your family for more? If not, what was happening in the world during the year you were born?
8. Take watches—wrist or pocket—as your subject today. What watches have you owned and in what time periods of your life? What kind of watch do you like? What was your favorite watch ever? What happened to it? What about your current watch: how did you get it? What have you experienced while wearing it?
9. How did the zeitgeist of your adolescence influence you?
10. What type of books do you like to read? Why?
11. Make a list of the medical conditions you’ve experienced. How were they treated? How have they influenced your life?
12. Write about a building in your hometown that was important to you.
13. Write about a time when you were brave.
14. Write a story about you and your dad that you’ve never written down before.

15. Write about a piece of jewelry that is important to you in some way. You don't have to still own it (or even ever have owned it—maybe it belonged to someone else entirely). It doesn't have to be expensive...just important to you.
16. Make a list of all of the schools you attended, including the city and state. Then, pick one and describe something about the school itself—the shape of the building, the smell of the elevator, the sound your shoes made on the floor. What did your locker look like? What was the PE gym like? What could you see out the window?
17. The singer Sarah McLachlan said that “music should save lives.” Is there a song, a type of music, or a musical experience you had that saved or even just shaped your life? How has music influenced you?
18. How has technology changed during your lifetime? What technology has had the biggest influence on you?
19. Write about a woman from history who you are not related to but admire or feel a connection to. Why does this person catch your interest? How has your knowledge about her affected your experiences?
20. Write a story about you and your mom that you've never written down before.
21. Who was your favorite teacher in high school? How did he/she help you? What made that teacher your favorite?
22. How has religion influenced your life? How has your relationship with it changed over time? What is one of your immutable beliefs?
23. Find your purse, backpack, or other bag you use often. Make a list of the items inside of it, with commentary on their importance or why you keep them with you.
24. Do you have a hobby, craft, or interest you spend time doing as an adult? Write about it. How did you discover it? Why do you do it? How does it improve your life?
25. In what ways are you leaving pieces of yourself behind? Or, how have you found pieces of others after they had passed away?
26. Who was your best friend when you were in elementary school? What do you remember about this person? What did you like to do together? What happened to your friendship?
27. Write about your opinion and use of social media. Which platforms do you use? How does it influence you?
28. What historical events—things that might eventually be read about in history books—have you witnessed? (Even just watching about something on the news is experiencing it.) Pick one that influenced you the most and write about how you reacted to it. Or, make a list of as many historical events from your lifetime that you can think of.
29. Where have you traveled and how has it changed you? Pick one place to focus on and dig in deep to it, or write more broadly about how traveling has influenced you.
30. Write about your relationship with your siblings. How many do you have? Do you get along? What did you do together as children? How do you interact as adults?
31. What was the most difficult experience of your childhood? How did it shape you as an adult? If you could go back in time and change the experience, would you?

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