

Questions for a parent

Their life before you, and what raising you was really like.

You need this paper, a phone that records, and an unhurried hour. Three or four questions are plenty for one sitting — follow the light in their eyes, not this list.

Before you sit down

- ☐ Asked permission a few days ahead, so they can warm to it.
- ☐ Charged the phone and tested the voice recorder once.
- ☐ Turned off the television; silenced my own phone.

The questions

1. What were you like at my age — honestly?

2. What do you remember about the day I was born (or arrived)?

3. What did you give up to raise us, and what did you get back?

4. What's one thing your own parents did that you promised to do differently?

5. What was your happiest ordinary day — not a wedding, not a birth, just a good day?

6. What did you want to be before life decided otherwise?

7. When were you most scared as a parent, and what did you do?

8. What music was playing when you were twenty?

9. What do you know now that you wish you could tell yourself the year I was born?

10. Which of your own habits do you see in me?

Afterward

- ☐ Moved the recording off the phone the same day (computer, family folder, or private archive).
- ☐ Named the file with person, date, and subject.
- ☐ Told them what it meant to me.