

FAMILY BARD DIY

Recording the personal life stories of your loved ones is absolutely something you can do yourself with some planning and patience. Here's some steps to make the process easier:

1. Plan and prepare:

- A good place to start is to determine if you'll be recording one person, a couple, or a group of family members. Then schedule a time or times that works for everyone. Choose a time of day when your subjects are rested and energetic. Mornings and early afternoon generally work best.
- If you'll be recording more than one person, consider if you want only a group recording, or if you want some time with subjects on their own. Schedule accordingly.
- Choose a suitable location with good lighting and minimal background noise. Interior or exterior can both work, but *a quiet location is essential*. Window light or interior lighting work equally well if the direction of the light illuminates the face.
- Ensure your subjects are comfortable! They might be sitting for some time.

2. Equipment:

- Any camera that can record quality audio will work. This might be a camcorder or your cell phone. If using the camera's internal mic, you'll want to work close to your subject for best voice pickup. Test! Film a quick test and play back to ensure you've got good audio and picture.
- Minimum 1920x1080 camera resolution is recommended. You'll be happier filming **landscape/horizontal**, rather than portrait/vertical. Either 24 or 30fps is fine.
- You won't want to hold the camera for the duration of the interview, so be sure to acquire a tripod. These are inexpensive and will improve both your image and audio. Even a cell phone tripod is very useful.
- Ensure your camera is fully charged and has enough storage space. Bring an extra battery.

3. Asking Questions:

- Create a list of questions or topics you want to cover. The possibilities are vast, and sometimes it only takes one question to start a flow of storytelling. You can refer to our attached list of suggested questions for ideas.
- Organize your questions chronologically or thematically to guide the conversation.

- Try to keep the process casual and loving, you want your subjects to be comfortable.
 - Ask open-ended questions, and remind your subjects to rephrase the question in their answers. For example, rather than answering, “Mercer Island”, a more complete answer would be better, such as, “I went to school at Mercer Island High”.
 - Listen actively and show genuine interest in their responses. Encourage them to elaborate on their memories. Try not to interrupt, but do redirect if things get rambling.
- 4. Capture other visuals:**
- If possible, incorporate photographs, family heirlooms, or mementos that can help illustrate the stories being shared. It’s fun to have your subject describe the items.
 - You can also film relevant locations, such as the family home, schools, or significant places from their past.
- 5. Record additional Interviews:**
- Consider conducting multiple sessions to cover different aspects of their life, or invite other family members to share their perspectives and stories.
- 6. Organize and Edit:**
- Edit the video as needed, to your ability, adding captions, titles, or visual elements to enhance the storytelling. This is a great task to delegate to another family member, such as a teen who is interested in family history or video editing.
- 7. Share and Preserve:**
- Share the video with your family and discuss how you want to preserve and distribute it. You might choose to create copies for other family members or upload it to a secure cloud storage platform or private YouTube channel.
 - Keep detailed records of the video content, including dates, interviewees, and key topics covered.
- 8. Encourage updating:**
- Encourage family members to discuss the stories add to this digital archive as the family grows and matures.

Please visit FamilyBard.com for more information and assistance!