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to preserve their stories and share them with future generations.*



Finding Out About Our Family:

Table Talk Topics



To Ask Older Family Members and Friends

People and Places:

1. How has Hanover changed over your lifetime?
2. What are some of your favorite places in Hanover? What makes these places important to you?
3. Who are the most important people in your life? How did you meet them?
4. Over time, how have you changed the way you look at life and/or people?

Tradition and History:

1. What are some pieces of global, national, and/or local history that you remember most?
2. What is your most cherished family tradition? Why is it important to you?
3. Do you know the meaning of your/our family name? Are there stories about the origins of your/our family name?
4. If you were writing the story of your life, how would you divide it into chapters?

Spirit and Special Moments:

1. Do you have a personal philosophy? What is your best piece of advice for living a good life?
2. What things keep you feeling young? What is your “fountain of youth?”
3. What are you looking forward to?
4. What kinds of things bring you the most joy? How have these things changed throughout your lifetime?

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More Questions to Discuss with Older Family and Friends



Life Story and Family History:

1. What is your first, most vivid memory?
2. What was the happiest moment of your life?
3. What national, local, professional, and/or personal events had the most impact on you?
4. As a child, who lived with you? What were they like? What was your neighborhood like?
5. Can you tell me about your/our family history, as far back as you can remember?
6. Have you ever had any nicknames as a child or as an adult? Where did they come from?
7. Is there anything that was common when you were a child that you wish was still common now?
8. [If ever married] How and when did you get engaged? What was your wedding like? What is/was your marriage like? What is the most important thing about a relationship?
9. Can you describe your career? What have you done for work in your lifetime, and how did it impact you? What matters to you about the work you have done/still do?
10. If you had to divide your life into chapters, what would they be titled? Which “chapter” is your favorite, if any?

Philosophies, Lessons Learned, and Advice:

1. What are you most proud of? Why?
2. What do you see as your place or purpose in life?
3. What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were young?
4. Do you feel differently about yourself now compared to how you felt when you were younger? In what ways?
5. What is one of the biggest struggles you've overcome?
6. Do you wish that you had done anything in your life differently?
7. What does “happiness” and “success” mean to you?
8. What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
9. Who has made the biggest impact on your life and why?
10. What is on your bucket list?
11. What are the major values or principles that you live by? Have they changed over time?
12. In what ways do you think that I'm like you? And not like you?
13. Who are three people you admire most and why? These could be people from your life, historical figures, fictional characters, etc.
14. If you could write a message to your children/grandchildren/future generations and put it in a time capsule for them to read 20 years from now, what would you write?
15. Do you want to share anything with me that I did not ask you about?