

## Write Your Life Story

### *Obstacles in Search of Solutions*

*Terry Northcutt*

Although writing a life story requires a lot of time, effort, and energy, it is possible to complete it if you address the common obstacles that hinder progress. Problems related to writing a life story usually fall into five categories: Feeling Overwhelmed, Difficulty Finding the Time, Fear of being Judged and Doubts about Writing Ability, Difficult Stories with Painful Feelings, and Wondering if Anybody will be Interested.

This course was designed to address most of these obstacles. However, before we begin, I would like to understand your thoughts about potential problem areas. We'll discuss your mission statement and potential obstacles in our first meeting to be sure the course will support you in achieving your goal of writing a life story.

Below I've listed thoughts associated with each category of obstacles to completing a life story project. Read through them and rate each one on the following scale:

0-No Problem 1-Mild problem 2-Moderate Problem 3-Major Problem

After rating each category, write any other potential problems you're aware of or any thoughts about the categories you've rated as moderate to major problems.

## **Identifying Potential Obstacles to Completing Your Life Story Project**

### ***Feeling Overwhelmed***

I have so many things I want to write about, I feel overwhelmed and can't get started.

I had planned to write my story chronologically—childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, etc. but there was so much to write, and it was taking so much time I couldn't keep going. It felt like I'd never finish, so I just stopped working on it.

0-No Problem   1-Mild problem   2 -Moderate Problem   3-Major Problem

### ***Difficulty Finding the Time***

I'm so busy, it's hard to find time to write my life story.

I've thought about writing my life story for a few years. I keep thinking I'll start it, but then another year goes by and I haven't even begun.

I started writing my life story last winter but when the good weather came there were a lot of activities with family, friends, and in our community. I never really got back to it.

I started writing my life story, but there were a lot of interruptions—I got a horrible cold that went into bronchitis, we got a new puppy I needed to train, my grandchildren came to stay over winter break—nothing bad, I just got frustrated because of all the interruptions and lost track of what I was doing. I haven't been able to get back to it.

0-No Problem    1-Mild problem    2- Moderate Problem    3- Major Problem

### ***Fear of Being Judged and Doubts about Writing Ability***

I want to write my life story, but I'm not sure if I can do it. I've never been good at writing. I find it difficult. So, while I want my life story recorded, I avoid sitting down to do it.

I've written some stories about my life, but no matter how many times I revise them, I still don't feel they're good enough to share with family and friends.

0-No Problem    1-Mild problem    2-Moderate Problem    3- Major Problem

### ***Difficult Stories, Painful Feelings***

I was enjoying writing my life story, but I came to some events that made me sad, anxious, and angry. Those feelings were so uncomfortable, I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue writing my story.

0-No Problem    1-Mild Problem    2-Moderate Problem    3- Major Problem

### ***Wondering if Anybody Will be Interested***

I want to write my life story but it's hard to get started because I'm not sure anyone will be interested.

I thought about writing my life story, but my life has been ordinary, so I'm not sure it's worth the time, effort, and energy it will take.

I was really excited about writing my life story, but I spent so much time on it my family and friends began to feel I didn't care about spending time with them.

0-No Problem    1-Mild problem    2-Moderate Problem    3-Major Problem

Below discuss your thoughts about the obstacles listed above and any other problems that might interfere with writing your life story. When you've

finished, read the article entitled *Solutions to the Most Frequent Obstacles to Completing a Life Story* then make a plan to address obstacles that might prevent you from completing your life story project.

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