

Write Your Life Story

*Spiritual Matters*

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Modified from:

*Telling the Stories of Life Through Guided Autobiography* by James E Birren, Ph.D. and Kathryn N. Cochran

*Writing your Legacy: The Step-by-Step Guide to Crafting Your Life Story* by Richard Campbell M.Ed. and Cheryl Svensson, Ph.D.

## **Spirituality Goes Beyond Organized Religion**

Spirituality focuses on connection to something beyond ourselves. The connection may be to a church, a synagogue, or a mosque. It may also be with nature or something else.

Spirituality is also related to how we answer the big questions about life and living such as What is the meaning of life? Why am I here? Why do we Suffer? What is right and what is wrong? It is often a source of guidance, wisdom and inspiration as we wrestle with life's big questions as well as a source of comfort as we navigate life's highs and lows.

Below are a series of questions to focus your writing about spiritual matters. You don't need to answer each question. Nor do you need to answer questions literally the way you wrote answers to essay questions or reading comprehension questions in school. Just read through the

questions and decide what would be interesting and meaningful for you to write about in terms of spiritual matters.

As you write your theme, weave in your age and where you were living at the time to help readers understand the context of your experience. Also reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of the events at the time and now that you're looking back. Are they the same, different, or a mix?

Finally, try to relate your story in two to four pages—with double spacing and a twelve-point font that's about 500 to 1,000 words. Remember writing is about selection: Selecting memories, selecting specific words, and selecting details relevant to your theme. The limitation on the number of pages will force you to choose the most relevant aspects of your experiences. And that will create a sharp focus for your story. You can always expand the story later. Initially, it's important to convey the most essential aspects of how you choose your life work as well as how it shaped you and the direction of your life.

### **Spiritual Matters**

What is your philosophy of life? Why do you believe we are here? Do you feel your life has purpose and meaning? How did you come to this philosophy of life?

Who had the most impact on shaping your values and beliefs as a child? Did those values and beliefs change as you reached adolescence and again as an adult? What prompted this shift in your beliefs and values?

Did you ever have a profound spiritual experience that impacted your beliefs or worldview? What happened? How did it change you?

When life is difficult is your spirituality a source of guidance and comfort? Write about a difficult time in your life when your beliefs offered guidance and comfort?

Have you encountered any role models or mentors that guided you on your spiritual path?

How has your spiritual beliefs influenced the trajectory of your life and who you've become?