

Inheriting Legacy

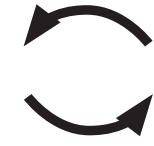
DIS SENIOR PROJECT S23 - ROHAM HUSSAIN

How can you have meaningful conversations with your family?
& How can you responsibly learn from your ancestral legacy?

It's a balanced
exchange, each
inform and grow
from the other



interviewer



narrator

Oral history is the practice of
documenting the communicated
past experience of a narrator.

I propose a process for
inheriting knowledge from
your older family members.
Developed through research
and my own journey. I hope
you'll be inspired to pursue a
similar journey in your own life!

1

why

start with intent

I wanted to better understand the origin
of my family and my place within it. How
have they become who they are and
how have I been enabled through their
struggles?

What am I struggling to learn right now
in my life, that they've already learned?

2

scope

a person and a topic

I chose to focus on the childhood of an
intimate family member. Make sure to
ask for their permission, of course!

3

prepare

to meet your narrator

I was upfront about the nature
of my project, my goals, and my
planned outcomes.

I asked them if they would like
to remain anonymous. They said
yes. I agreed to omit identifying
information about them, such as
their relationship to me and their
name.

I told them I wanted to record our
conversations. I explained their
rights: they have full ownership
and authority over their voice
and can choose what to include /
exclude, even after the fact.

I tested recording equipment and
asked them to find a quiet place
where they would be undisturbed
for 1hr, for future conversations.

4

curiously

come up with questions

I wrote open-ended questions, and
pursued anything that seemed
interesting — you won't know
exactly what you're looking for!

Ex. What is your earliest memory?
Ex. What did your father like to talk
about with you?

Listen! Be empathetic and don't
judge. I tried to create a safe
environment for my narrator to
feel comfortable to share.

5

collect

the raw data

I combed through the recording
and created a transcript of the
conversation.

Capture detail, as much as
possible, without it becoming
exhausting. Note pauses (short
and long), sighs, etc.

This will be a time-intensive
process. You may also have to
consider how to represent the
nuances of another language.

A	B
Traditional Interview	Written Interview
natural conversation	email questions
face-to-face or virtual call	narrator writes answers

6

transcribe

and capture detail

What's missing? Where are there
gaps in your understanding?

To understand the narrator's past,
I had to ask myself, which people,
environments, and contexts do I
need to better understand?

If necessary, repeat steps 4-7.

How have you, as the
interviewer, changed and
effected the process?

And how have you changed as
a result?

I self-reflect on my biases
and examined why I chose
to ask the narrator certain
questions and not others.

I'm still figuring out how I've
changed.

Ex. What am I feeling about
this narrator?
Ex. How does my own ideology
affect this process?

Think about your audience. For me, the audience
was this classroom setting and my immediate
family members.

Consider how to respectfully preserve your
findings so they are accessible to the future.

An idea is to analyze your narrator's evolution
by comparing who they've been with whom you
know them to be.

7

analyze

the context web

8

reflect

on yourself

9

interpret

your findings