**Family origins**

**What is your ethnic background?**

**Where is your mom’s family from? Where is your dad’s family from?**

**Have you ever been there? What was that experience like?**

**What traditions have been passed down in your family?**

**Who were your favorite relatives?**

**Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?**

**What are the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?**

Do you know the meaning of your family name?

Are there stories about the origins of your family name?

Have you ever had any nicknames as a child or as an adult?

Where did they come from?

How are you like/Unlike your mother?

How are you like/Unlike your father?

What was most important to your parents?

Do you feel you’re like any of your grandparents if so, In what ways?

How are your children like/Unlike you?

What do you think are your three best qualities and your three worst?

Which do you think you have the most of: talent, intelligence, education, or persistence?

How has it helped you in your life?

Do you have any special sayings or expressions?

What’s your favorite book and why? What’s your favorite movie and why?

Who are three people in history you admire most and why?

What have been the three biggest news events during your lifetime and why?

If you could travel into the future, would you rather see something that specifically relates to you, or something that relates to the future of the country in general? Why?

If you could have three wishes, what would they be?

If you won $100 million tomorrow, what would you do with the money?

What’s the highest honor or award you’ve ever received?

What’s the most memorable phone call you’ve ever received?

What’s the best compliment you ever received?

What kinds of things bring you the most pleasure now? When you were a younger adult? A child?

What’s the one thing you’ve always wanted but still don’t have?

Do you feel differently about yourself now from how you felt when you were younger? How?

What do you think has stayed the same about you throughout life and what do you think has changed?

What’s your most cherished family tradition?

Why is it important?

What have you liked best about your life so far?

What’s your happiest or proudest moment?

What do you feel have been the important successes in your life?

The frustrations?

What’s the most difficult thing that ever happened to you?

How did you deal with it?

What do you think the turning points have been in your life?

What were you like then?

Are there times of your life that you remember more vividly than others? Why?

What have been the most influential experiences in your life?

Describe a person or situation from your childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life.

What, if anything, would you have done differently in your life?

What do you know now that you wish you’d known when you were young?

What have you thrown away in your life that you wish you hadn’t?

What have you held on to that’s important and why is it important?

What “junk” have you held on to and why?

Over time, how have you changed the way you look at life/people?

What advice did your grandparents or parents give you that you remember best?

Do you have a philosophy of life?

What’s your best piece of advice for living?

If a young person came to you asking what’s the most important thing for living a good life, what would you say?

How do you define a “good life” or a “successful life”?

Do you think a person needs to first overcome serious setbacks or challenges to be truly successful?

In what way is it important to know your limitations in your life or career?

If you had the power to solve one and only one problem in the world, what would it be and why?

What do you see as your place or purpose in life?

How did you come to that conclusion?

What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?

If you could write a message to each of your children and grandchildren and put it in a time capsule for them to read 20 years from now, what would you write to each?