

100 Questions to Ask Your Parents While You Can

Small questions, big stories. Pick a few, ask one at a time, and record the answers in their own voice.

Before you start

1. Pick three, not thirty.
2. Ask for a moment, not a summary: "Take me to one time..."
3. Follow up: "What happened next?" "Who else was there?"
4. Let them skip anything.
5. Ask before you record, then keep the recording somewhere safe.

Childhood and the house you grew up in

1. ☐ What was the house you grew up in like? Walk me through the front door.
2. ☐ What did your kitchen smell like when you were small?
3. ☐ Who was in your family growing up, and where did you fit in?
4. ☐ What's your earliest memory?
5. ☐ What games did you play, and who did you play them with?
6. ☐ Was there a neighbor or relative you loved visiting? Why them?
7. ☐ What did you get in trouble for?
8. ☐ What was a normal Saturday like when you were ten?
9. ☐ What did you want to be when you grew up?
10. ☐ What's something from your childhood that doesn't exist anymore?

Your parents and grandparents

11. ☐ What were your parents like when you were young?
12. ☐ How did your parents meet?
13. ☐ What did your mother or father do for work?
14. ☐ What's a saying or phrase you heard from your parents all the time?
15. ☐ What do you know about your grandparents, and where they came from?

16. ☐ Are there family stories that get told at every gathering?
17. ☐ Is there a family recipe? Who made it best?
18. ☐ What's something your parents did that you swore you'd never do, and then did anyway?
19. ☐ What do you wish you'd asked your own parents?
20. ☐ Which relative do you think I'm most like?

School, friends and growing up

21. ☐ What were you like as a teenager?
22. ☐ Who was your best friend growing up? What did you two get up to?
23. ☐ Was there a teacher who changed something for you?
24. ☐ What music were you listening to at sixteen?
25. ☐ What was the first thing you bought with your own money?
26. ☐ Where did you and your friends go to get away from adults?
27. ☐ What's the bravest or most foolish thing you did when you were young?
28. ☐ When did you first feel like a grown-up?
29. ☐ What did your parents worry about with you, and were they right?
30. ☐ What did people get wrong about your generation?

Love and the people you chose

31. ☐ How did you meet the people who mattered most to you?
32. ☐ What was your first date like?
33. ☐ When did you know you were in love?
34. ☐ What made you laugh about the person you married or spent your life with?
35. ☐ What's the best advice you got about love, and did you take it?
36. ☐ Which friendships have lasted longest, and why do you think they did?
37. ☐ Who did you lose touch with that you still think about?
38. ☐ What does a good marriage or partnership need that nobody tells you?
39. ☐ Who has been there for you when things were hard?
40. ☐ Is there someone you never got to properly thank?

Work and what you were good at

- 41. ☐ What was your first job? How much did it pay?
- 42. ☐ How did you end up doing the work you did?
- 43. ☐ What were you proud of at work?
- 44. ☐ Who taught you the most about doing a job well?
- 45. ☐ What was the hardest job you ever had?
- 46. ☐ Was there a path you almost took instead?
- 47. ☐ What did you learn to do with your hands?
- 48. ☐ What's a skill you have that most people don't know about?
- 49. ☐ What did you do when you weren't working?
- 50. ☐ If you could have done any job at all, what would it have been?

Becoming a parent

- 51. ☐ What do you remember about the day I was born?
- 52. ☐ What were you most worried about when you became a parent?
- 53. ☐ What was I like as a baby, and as a little kid?
- 54. ☐ What's a story about me that I'm too young to remember?
- 55. ☐ What was the hardest part of raising us?
- 56. ☐ What did you get right as a parent that you're proud of?
- 57. ☐ Is there anything you'd do differently?
- 58. ☐ What did you hope for us that you never said out loud?
- 59. ☐ What's a tradition you started that you hope we keep?
- 60. ☐ What's the funniest thing one of us ever did?

Hard times and how you got through them

- 61. ☐ What was the hardest year of your life?
- 62. ☐ Who or what got you through it?
- 63. ☐ Have you ever been really afraid? What happened?
- 64. ☐ Is there a loss that changed you?
- 65. ☐ What's a mistake you learned the most from?
- 66. ☐ Was there a time you had to start over?

- 67. ☐ When have you surprised yourself?
- 68. ☐ How has the world changed in ways you didn't see coming?
- 69. ☐ What did you worry about that turned out not to matter?
- 70. ☐ What would you tell someone going through what you went through?

Places, food, music and the things you love

- 71. ☐ Where's the most beautiful place you've ever been?
- 72. ☐ If you could go back to one place for a single day, where would it be?
- 73. ☐ What song takes you straight back to a particular moment?
- 74. ☐ What's your favorite meal, and who makes it right?
- 75. ☐ What book, film or show has stayed with you?
- 76. ☐ What team did you cheer for, and why?
- 77. ☐ What's a small everyday pleasure you never get tired of?
- 78. ☐ Is there something you collected or kept for years?
- 79. ☐ What's the best trip you ever took?
- 80. ☐ What's a place from your life that's gone now? What was it like?

What you believe and what you've learned

- 81. ☐ What do you believe that you didn't believe when you were young?
- 82. ☐ What are you most grateful for?
- 83. ☐ What does a good life look like to you?
- 84. ☐ What's the best piece of advice anyone ever gave you?
- 85. ☐ What have you changed your mind about?
- 86. ☐ What do you think people worry too much about?
- 87. ☐ When do you feel most like yourself?
- 88. ☐ What makes you proud of our family?
- 89. ☐ What do you want your grandchildren to know about you?
- 90. ☐ What are you still curious about?

For later: messages and wishes

- 91. ☐ How would you like to be remembered?

- 92. ☐ What stories do you want us to keep telling about you?
 - 93. ☐ Is there something you've always wanted to tell me?
 - 94. ☐ Is there anyone you'd like to say something to that you haven't yet?
 - 95. ☐ What do you want us to know about how to take care of each other?
 - 96. ☐ Are there things, places or people you'd like us to look after?
 - 97. ☐ If we gather to celebrate your life someday, what should it feel like? What music should be playing?
 - 98. ☐ What should people bring, wear or eat?
 - 99. ☐ What would you want said to your grandchildren, or to great-grandchildren you may never meet?
 - 100. ☐ What do you hope we do with the rest of our lives?
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Rather not hold the clipboard?

Living Legacy gives your parent a private, unhurried interview with Rachelle or Nate, one question at a time. They type or record their answers, and nothing is shared until they approve it.

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