

“Remind me...
about me!”



What makes me - ME...
my life...my likes
and my dislikes too!

My name:

“Remind me...about me!” ©

Your personal, living journal of your life, your preferences and about what makes you happy, and also those things that can make you unhappy!

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of the beautiful **Eva Deefholts** and to her carers of whom there were many.

By John Deefholts (Eva's son)

With thanks to:

My wonderful team of proof-readers and supporters - my family.

In particular, thanks to my:

- sisters Fay Lovett, Jeanne Beatty, Donna Jacobson and Sally-Anne Stephens,
- friends Julie Dayeh, Donna Britten, Alex Ahmadi and Sam Hays
- dear Aunty Patricia Beatty; and
- terrific mother-in-law Patricia Batger.

Special thanks to my loving wife, **Leanne Deefholts**

Remind me...about me © By John Deefholts

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Introduction

The threads of your life weave an interesting story that has value in its recollection for you, your friends and your family.

Living a full life often means the years roll by, while the aging process along with the risk of mishaps on the road, fun activities or unforeseen illnesses can have life changing consequences.

Indeed, the impact of stroke, physical disability, brain injury and dementia can be distressing. It can happen to anyone, anytime and everyone's story is unique.

Your life's memories will also be a family keepsake for future generations.

So, the essence of the book is the commonsense wisdom of:

“Live for today but plan for tomorrow.” Anonymous

In June 2011, I lost my mother Eva, who was in the late stages of frontal lobe dementia that resulted in loss of memory, changes in her personality and ultimately, withdrawal from engagement with others.

It was excruciating to watch this remarkable lady slowly decline in health and social interaction. Someone, that had raised seven children (with her soul-mate Colin) who loved and cared for each of them individually, in her own unique way,

It occurred to me upon reflection in the months after Mum's death, that it would have been invaluable to have had a journal such as this to refer to. Indeed, to show to her visitors and carers at the nursing home, in her own words about Eva's life and especially, her likes and dislikes.

It is for this purpose that I have prepared this journal, in the hope that it will prove to be a valuable asset for your family and carers if and when the time comes when you need care for any reason. It will take the guesswork out of what YOU are stimulated by and will make life far easier for all involved.

About Eva

With her gregarious personality, Eva would light up a room at social occasions; she had many friends and was truly a giver of herself. Generous to a fault, Eva lived her Catholic faith daily - in her actions not just in her words.

Eva was a wonderful teacher and during a career that spanned over fifty years from the age of sixteen, she taught thousands of children, delivering her lessons with energy and passion.

Eva's seven adoring children cared for her in many ways throughout her battle with dementia, which upon reflection, lasted for over ten years. Perhaps longer, if you include the early stages, when we simply felt she was getting on and thought nothing of it.

Whilst we all knew the main things Mum liked and enjoyed; we were never really sure - particularly once she began to withdraw.

Still, each of us had unique experiences with this precious lady, so we would sing her different songs, massage her hands and feet, tell her jokes and importantly remind her about her past.

I believe that this regular engagement with her and the recollections of her own life helped Mum to be happy during that period and certainly improved her life while she was with us.

A bit about memory loss

In researching the concept of engaging people with memory loss illnesses, I came upon a book that confirmed that a person's historical memories remain intact, despite their inability to retrieve recent memories and events.

I had heard this anecdotally in speaking with many people about dementia and Alzheimer's in terms of its affects but had no real proof that it was the case.

In his bestselling book, *Contented Dementia* ⁽¹⁾, Oliver James provides a revolutionary new way of treating dementia that engages patients by drawing upon their memories of days long gone by. James describes how dementia sufferers may not recall what happened in the present or recent past, however they have an incredible ability to recall things from their history.

The essence of the treatment is to stir the person's memory of what he/ she loved to talk about or was an expert at and thereby keep the person involved, indeed truly focused and re-living that activity daily. It seems simple and logical, but often people correct the person to bring them back to 'reality'.

It recognises that the person's reality may at times not be in the present and allows them to enjoy *their reality* to maintain *their* emotional wellbeing.

James cites many wonderful success stories of how this strategy improved the life of both carers and suffers. Whilst a further discussion of the book is outside the realms of this work, I highly recommend *Contented Dementia* to anyone interested in an effective and very respectful way to care for and treat those affected by dementia.

¹O. James, (2009), *Contented Dementia*, Vermilion- Ebury Publishing a Random House Group Company UK. P3, P4, p48, p62

What's in it for you (and yours)?

This book is not just for people that have dementia or may acquire it. It is for anyone that wishes to write about their own life, whatever the motivation.

This book is a personal, living journal of your life, your preferences and about what makes you happy and, those things that make you *unhappy!*

Here is an opportunity to summarise the things that make you - *You*.

It will be of great value to your family and your carers in the future as they will know how to provide you with the things you like, thereby giving them peace of mind that you are as content as possible.

This journal will also become a family treasure for your children and generations to come who will experience a part of you and will cherish your words and expressions.

You choose how you go about completing the book - either by yourself or with the help of one, two or more family and friends.

Given its personal nature, there are no rules - there are only suggestions on what you may wish to write about. It is recommended that you use your own natural expression and the common phrases that you are known for - go on have some fun with it!

Ensure you keep this in a safe place so that no one else reads it until you feel they need to. If this is the case, you should at least tell someone where it is and to also respect your wishes not to read it until a mutually agreed time.

Included is a section on spirituality (religion) and one on political preferences. These are optional and if it is offensive or not relevant, then leave them out *or* cross them out to make your point. These and other sections are to stimulate thought and provoke your memories but not to offend.

The purpose of the book

There are several purposes of this journal.

- Firstly, it is an opportunity to let your loved ones in on what your wishes and preferences are for your health, care and emotional wellbeing.
 - It's a practical guide to help others with helping you when you need it - they will appreciate it (and so will you just quietly!).
- Secondly, it gives you a chance to reflect, to collect your thoughts and to consider some important aspects about your own future and how it may impact those around you.
 - Unlike a Will, it is about your affairs while you are still on the planet.
 - It will also provide your future carers, particularly those that don't know you now, with an insight to who you are.
 - They will learn what you like and dislike and some of the things you did during your life.
- Finally, if you have children and grandchildren, it will remain a family keepsake in your memory further down the track.

The sooner it is started the better - so you can recall the most in a calm and enjoyable way - always knowing it can be added to and expanded upon as and when you wish.

So, grab a suitable beverage (from water to coffee to cognac) and sit down and spend some time on yourself!

Tips for completing and storing this journal

Practical tips:

- ☐ Firstly, remember this is your journal - so only fill in what *you* wish to.
 - Take a few minutes to check out the contents page so you know the key sections, indeed there are a broad range of sections.
 - Don't feel that you have to complete every single one.
- ☐ Secondly, you don't have to finish it all in one session.
 - In fact, it may be useful to make a start, then stop and make a few notes over a few days to help your thought process.
- ☐ Thirdly, use your own natural expressions and the common phrases for which you are known.
 - Don't worry about the formalities of writing and spelling - it's about you and your story,
- ☐ Most of all, please enjoy the experience of recalling the life you have lived - so far!

Journal format (printed or electronic or both?):

- ☐ The journal has been created in a 'book' format, you can print a blank version to complete by handwriting or, if you prefer, complete it electronically. In which case, remove the lines as you go.
- ☐ Originally it was to be printed, so it could be with you when you are older to enable others to learn about you and engage you in conversation.
- ☐ Many people like to hand write their personal thoughts and feelings.

- A printed version means you can take it with you to write in different settings. If this works for you, then do it.
- ☐ Alternatively, an electronic version has some advantages such as extra space for writing and inserting pictures.
 - You can also complete it on your phone, tablet or PC and then share it with others if you wish.
 - You can always print a copy or two whenever you are ready.

Keep your journal safe - its personal:

- ☐ Some of the information in this journal is very personal and may affect your personal and financial security.
- ☒ Where you keep the journal is entirely up to you.
- ☐ Obviously given its personal nature, store it safely but DO tell someone you trust where it is, and what to do with it if you are incapacitated.
- ☐ Be careful with the section 'My confidential information'.
 - If the book is printed these pages could be given to a family member, Power of Attorney or lawyer to store safely.
 - **Do not** record passwords and PIN details in this journal.

Journal layout and structure:

- ☐ The sections have been set out as a guide for your convenience.
 - it is merely that - a guide, to what you may wish to write about,
 - skip what is not relevant or add / rename details as required.
- ☐ Spaces for photographs are for a standard 6' x 4' (15 x 10 cm) picture.
- ☐ An important section, 'My care (when I need it)'

- provides you with an opportunity to express your wishes about how you would like to be looked after, should the need arise.
- It will help your loved ones make choices on your behalf.
- It also outlines the everyday things you like most and least!

☐ The section, 'My medical information'

- let's you document your health situation and highlight any specific matters that others will need to be aware of in the future.
- There are sub-sections for medications and allergies so you can list foods or anything else that causes an adverse reaction for you.

☐ In the section, 'My vital statistics' there are tables that can help you monitor the changes in various things.

- For example, your height, weight and other body dimensions.
- There is a table for blood pressure, cholesterol and space for other details or information important to you.
- Another table lists your clothes and shoe sizes in case anyone wants to buy you a gift, so you get the right fit and look good too!

☐ The 'My notes' sections 'A to D' are intended for writing freehand about *whatever* you feel has not been covered previously.

- It can also be used if there is insufficient space in a particular section and you wish to elaborate on it.
- Simply cross-reference the page numbers - [*'Continued in My notes B section'*]

☐ The 'My attachments' page enables you to list any documents are related to this journal.

- If printed, you could store the documents / images in a plastic sleeve/s and store both the journal and the document in a box.

- Remember to itemise what is in the sleeve so that it can be easily retrieved.
- If stored electronically you can refer to the folder name and electronic address where the journal and electronic files are kept

☐ A sealable section 'My sealed message' has been included so you have the option to write a special message to someone that may only be opened at a point in time or after a certain event.

☐ **It's time to go for it!**

My personal details

My name: _____

What my friends call me: {Nicknames you like people to call you}

When and where I was born:

Here is a picture of me at / with: {Insert a photograph of yourself and a notation of where you were, the year/date and other relevant information}



My contact details:

Where I live now:

Dates {From / current} _____



Landline telephone: _____

Mobile telephone: _____

Email address/s: _____

Other: {Skype, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Google+, Tumblr...}

Other contact options: {Alternative contact details}

About me:

{Month, year and place of birth and any special things about you}

Here's a picture of:



My life's overview:

{Recommended to do this last, as a summary of what you would have recalled and noting the key aspects of your whole life - so far!}

[illegible]

Major events in my life:

{Life changing events and things I like to remember - remind me about this}

Major world events in my lifetime:

{Significant events. For example, Great Depression, Moon Landing, Olympic Games}

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



Events I'd prefer to forget:

(Please don't remind me about this)

My family

My mother:

{Year of birth / deceased, birth name and place of birth, resting place, anything else}

My father:

{Year of birth/ deceased, place of birth, resting place and anything else}

Here’s a picture of my parents at / with:



Here’s a picture of my family home in the year:



My siblings and where I fit in:

{Year of birth, place of birth and any special things about your siblings}

[illegible]

Here's are pictures of my sister/s and brother/s, at / with:



My childhood:

{Special memories of growing up}

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My family life:

{Recall life with your parents / siblings}

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Here's a picture of my parents at / with:



My partner/s

About your partner/s:

{Name, date and place of birth and any special things about your partner/s}

About us: {Recall how and where you met, interesting things about your relationship and what keeps you together}

[illegible]

My children

About my children:

{Name, date and place of birth and any special things about your children}

[illegible]

Here's a picture of:



Here's a picture of:



Where are they now as adults?:

{Your children as adults and their spouse/s}

[illegible]

My grandchildren

About my grandchildren:

{Name, date and place of birth and any special things about them}

[illegible]

Here's a picture of:



Here's a picture of:



Where are they now?:

{Your grandchildren as teenagers or adults and their spouse/s}

[illegible]

My friends

About my friends:

{Name, how you met, where they are now and why you call them a friend}

[illegible]

Here's a picture of:



Here's a picture of:



My pet/s

{Name and other relevant details about your pet/s}

Here's a picture of my pet/s at / with:



About my pet/s: {How you found them and what makes them special to you}

My education and qualifications

{Schools, college, university, academic achievements}

My non-academic achievements

{Any other skills and achievements you wish to note}

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My occupation

{Outline your career, profession, trade or how you spent most of your days}

[illegible]

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My business/s

Overview:

{Key aspects of any business you created or are involved with}

Other information about the business:

{Important people, places, things and inventions in the business}

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My passion/s

{Recall your life’s passion/s}

Here is a picture of:



My hobbies

{Outline your hobbies or things you do in your spare time}

Here is a picture of:



My recipes

{Your favourite recipes}

Here is a picture of:



My heroes and villains

My hero/es: {People you look up to/admire - famous or in-famous}

Other people I have known: {People you know / have known}

My villain/s: {People you don't like -famous or in-famous}

My vehicles

{Recall the cars, motor bikes, boats, caravans, dune buggies, cycles...}

Here is a picture of:



My favourite things

My favourite sayings or mottos in life:

{Values you live by or things you are known to say}

My favourite place/s and spaces:

{The places and spaces you like to go}

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My favourite home/s I've lived in:

{Highlight the home/s you have lived in}

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My favourite food/s and drinks:

{Highlight the dishes, drinks and flavours you like best}

[illegible]

My favourite restaurant/s:

{The places you like to eat when you are out}

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My favourite book/s:

My favourite author/s:

My favourite movies, plays, TV shows, podcast...:

My favourite actor/s, director/s, producer/s:

My movie/book/podcast genre preferences:

{Tick the genre you like, add you own styles and media type}

Classification	Movies	Books	Podcast	
Action				
Classics				
Drama				
Documentary				
Romance				
Music / Musical (Movies)				
Science Fiction				
Sports				
Thriller				
War				
Western				

My favourite art/ sculpture/ creative works:

{Highlight the creative works and artist you like best}

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

My favourite art gallery/ museum/ building / monument/s:

{The creative places you like to visit}

[illegible]

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My favourite music and musicians:

{Highlight the music and musicians you like most}

[illegible]

My favourite music venues:

{Where you like to listen to or learn about music}

[illegible]

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My music genre preferences:

{Tick the genre you like, and those you don't. You can also add you own}

Music Styles	Yes	No	Notes
Rock			
Opera			
Jazz			
Funk			
Hip Hop			
Country and Western			
Acoustics / Instrumental			
Pop			
R n B			
Heavy Metal			
Classical			
Vocal			
Twenties, Thirty, Forties			
Fifties, Sixties			
Seventies, Eighties,			
Nineties, Naughties			

My favourite sports:

{Highlight the sports and sports people you like best}

My favourite sports venue/ museum/ monument/s:

{The sports related places you like to visit}

Here is a picture of:

Here is a picture of:



My sports preferences:

{Tick the sports you like, and those you don't. You can also add you own}

Sports	Yes	No	Notes
Athletics			
Australian football			
Baseball			
Basketball			
Football (soccer)			
Golf			
Hockey			
Olympics			
Rugby union			
Rugby league			
Squash			
Surfing			
Swimming			
Tennis			
Yachting			

My favourite _____:

{Highlight the anything else that is important to you}

My favourite _____ venue/ museum/ monument/s:

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My travels (so far!)

{Outline your travels - so far}

[illegible]

Here is a picture of:



Here is a picture of:



My travel bucket list

{Outline the travels you still want to do}

Here is a picture of:



My stories I like to tell

{Any stories you are known to tell - fiction or non-fiction!}

[illegible]

My philosophy

{Your thoughts on Life, the Universe and indeed anything}

[illegible]

My spiritual side

The sacred place/s I like to visit:

{Church, temple, synagogue, mosque...}

My spiritual guide/s:

{Clergy, healer...}

My favourite prayers / spiritual passages / songs:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Here is a picture of:



My political side

My political views:

{Political Party I support and key beliefs}

My political heroes:

My political villains:

[illegible]

Here is a picture of:



My medical information

My health issues:

My medication:

My surgeries:

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My allergies and risk areas:

[illegible]

My medical contacts:

My doctor:

{Name, phone number/s, email address}

My Specialist for _____:

My Specialist for _____:

My Specialist for _____:

My Specialist for _____:

Other contact/s _____:

My care wishes (when I need it)

Above all do this for me:

Where I would like to live if I need care:

Wish list for my care:

Some things I need:

{Hearing aids, glasses, shoe inserts...}

Some things that I like:

{Foods/drinks, music/TV shows, colours, scent, types of clothing/fabrics...}

Some things that I don't like:

Things that **don't like me** - I must avoid:

{Causes pain, sneezing...}

Things that annoy me and get me angry:

My current diet routine and preferences

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snacks:

Other information:

My vital statistics

{Here you can monitor your statistics and clothes sizes over time}

Body measurements:

Dates>	Current:					
Height						
Weight						
Chest						
Waist						
Hips						
Neck						

Health indicators:

Dates>	Current:					
Blood pressure						
Cholesterol						
Blood sugar						
Body fat %						
Vision						
Hearing						

Clothing and shoes sizes:

Dates> Sizes	Current:					
Hat						
Neck						
Shirt/Blouse						
Pants						
Skirt						
Stockings						
Socks						
Shoes						
Gloves						
Bra						
Underpants						

My notes A | Continued from _____

{For any additional information not covered above. Remember to cross-reference to 'My notes A' in the section with insufficient space above}

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My notes B | Continued from _____

{For any additional information not covered above. Remember to cross-reference to 'My notes D' in the section with insufficient space above}

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My notes C | Continued from _____

{For any additional information not covered above. Remember to cross-reference to 'My notes C' in the section with insufficient space above}

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My notes D | Continued from _____

{For any additional information not covered above. Remember to cross-reference to 'My notes D' in the section with insufficient space above}

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My family trees

My ancestors:

{Draw / insert image re your ancestors - grandparents, parents, siblings)

My descendants:

{Draw/ insert image re your descendants - partner/s, children, grandchildren)

My confidential information

{Ensure you discuss this section with those you trust, as it contains private and sensitive information that could be recorded in a more secure place}

My name and date of Birth:

My next of kin: (*emergency contact*)

My Medicare number, card reference and expiry MM/YY:

My Centrelink number and case manager:

My passport details:

My drivers licence/ photo ID card details:

My other licence details:

Other personal information:

My doctor/s:

My specialist doctor/s:

My spiritual guide {Priest or equivalent}:

My life insurance {Insurer, member ID}:

My health insurance {Insurer, member ID}:

My superannuation {Fund name and member ID}:

My lawyer:

My accountant:

My Tax File Number (TFN):

My financial advisor:

My Power of Attorney:

My Guardian:

My Executor of my will:

My bank information {Saving account details, mortgages, credit cards}

[Do not include passwords and PIN numbers]

My property/s - I own {Where are the deeds, other owners and mortgage}:

My car/s:

My other main assets:

My property insurance:

[illegible]

My sealed message

This is a suggested section if you wish to make a request to someone or provide a gift to someone, upon a particular event.

Use a separate document that you would print and seal in an envelope and store it in a safe place.

For example:

If I move to smaller premises, please donate ... or give as a gift... my furniture... painting...to...

Please note, this is not a last will and testament and is not legally binding.

Considerations:

- Who needs to know about this message?
- Where will you store this message?
- How will the message get to the appropriate person?
- Is the trigger for unsealing the message clear and unambiguous?

Label for the envelope:

To be opened by:

Upon event / date:

My attachments

- For a printed journal
 - List the document names below.
 - Then insert documents and images listed below into a plastic sleeve or envelope and store with the journal.
- For an online version
 - List the document names below.
 - Then create a folder to store with your journal.

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