DEAR FAMILY FILMS · FREE GUIDE

CHRISTMAS
Gift Bonus
see back page

Record Your Own Life Story

A simple guide to recording your life story on the phone or tablet you already own, plus 40 questions to get you talking. A lovely thing to do with your children or grandchildren.

1. Get ready
2. Set up your phone
3. Tell your story
4. Keep it safe
5. Your 40 questions
6. Need a hand? I can do it for you



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A NOTE FROM MICHAEL

One day, someone you love will press play.

A few years ago I filmed the life story of a close family friend. She had only one grandson, and he was just a baby at the time. One day, as he grows older, he'll press play and hear her tell him where she grew up, what she believed in, and how much she loved him.

That's when I realised how precious these recordings are, and why I wanted to help families make their own.

Imagine your own grandchildren, years from now, pressing play and hearing you tell them about your life, in your own voice. A gift that stays in your family for generations.

You don't need to be good on camera, and you don't need to do it all at once. All you need to do is be yourself.

Michael Jacovelli
Founder, Dear Family Films



Filming a life story at home


Behind the scenes on filming day


Learning what makes you, you

Doing it with family

> **You can do all of this on your own.** But if a son, daughter or grandchild can sit with you, it's even easier. They can press record and read the questions out, and you just talk. It's a lovely thing to do together.

And if you'd rather someone did it all for you, that's what I do. See the back pages.

STEP 1

Get ready

Gather these before your first recording.

- **Your phone or tablet**
  Charged up. Any phone that takes videos will do.
- **Something to rest it on**
  A small phone stand (about $20–30) or a stack of books.
- **A quiet room with a window**
  Somewhere comfortable where you won't be interrupted.
- **A few old photos**
  They bring back stories you haven't thought about in years.
- **This guide**
  Your 40 questions start on page 7.
- **Optional: a clip-on microphone**
  About $30–50. It clips to your top and makes your voice much clearer. Take your phone to JB Hi-Fi or Officeworks and ask for one that fits it, or ask a son, daughter or grandchild to help.

> **Tip:** choose the time of day you feel brightest. For many people, that's the morning, with a cup of tea beside them.

STEP 2

Set up your phone

Just these six things. They work on any phone or tablet.

1. **Turn the phone on its side**
   Rest it at eye level, about an arm’s length away.

2. **Sit facing the window**
   Let the daylight fall on your face. Don’t sit with the window behind you, or you’ll look like a shadow.

3. **Make the room quiet**
   Turn off the TV, radio and air con. Turn on Do Not Disturb so calls and messages won’t interrupt you.

4. **Switch to video, facing you**
   Open the camera, choose Video, then tap the button with the two curved arrows so you can see yourself on the screen.

5. **Press the red button to start**
   A timer starts counting at the top of the screen. Press the red button again to stop.

6. **Do a quick test**
   Record a few seconds and play it back. Can you see and hear yourself clearly? You’re ready.

> **Ask a helper:** if your phone feels fiddly, this page is a good job to hand to a son, daughter or grandchild. It only takes them a few minutes.

Still stuck? Call Michael on 0481 344 604 and I’ll gladly talk you through it.

STEP 3

Tell your story

A few simple habits make your recordings lovely to watch.

1. **Talk to someone you love**
   Picture a grandchild watching. Prop their photo beside the phone and begin with “I want you to know…”
2. **Read the question out loud first**
   It makes each recording easy to follow later.
3. **Tell stories, not just facts**
   Not only “I grew up in Footscray”, but the house, the street, the smells, what you did after school.
4. **One question at a time**
   Stop and start a new video for each question. Five or ten minutes is plenty.
5. **Bring out the photos**
   Hold an old photo up to the camera and tell the story behind it.
6. **Pauses and stumbles are fine**
   Keep going. The best memories often come after a moment of quiet.

> **If someone is helping:** ask the question, then just listen. “What happened next?” is the best follow-up there is.

Finding it hard to talk to a phone? That’s completely normal, and it’s exactly what I help with. Call Michael on 0481 344 604.

STEP 4

Keep it safe

Your recordings are precious. Three simple steps.

1. **Keep them together**
   Your videos are saved in your phone’s photo gallery. Put them in an album called “My Story”.

2. **Make a second copy**
   Ask a family member to copy them onto a computer or USB stick, so they’re never lost.

3. **Share with your family**
   Send your first video to a grandchild or your children. Their reaction will make you want to record the next one. A family member can send them to everyone, or I can help.

Before every recording

- ☐ Phone charged and on its side, at eye level
- ☐ You’re sitting facing the window
- ☐ TV off, and Do Not Disturb on
- ☐ A photo of someone you love beside the phone
- ☐ Your question ready to read out loud

> **Rather not be on camera?** Record your voice only, using your phone’s voice recorder. Your voice alone is a treasure.

Got lots of recordings? I can turn them into a finished film your family will treasure. See page 11.

STEP 5

Your 40 questions

Tick each one off as you record it. Skip any you don’t want to answer. If a question brings up big feelings, it’s okay to stop and come back another day.

Early years

- ☐ Where and when were you born?
- ☐ What’s your earliest memory?
- ☐ Tell me about the house you grew up in.
- ☐ What were your parents like?
- ☐ Tell me about your brothers, sisters or cousins.
- ☐ What games did you play as a child?
- ☐ What did your family do on weekends or holidays?

Growing up

- ☐ What was school like for you?
- ☐ Who was your best friend, and what did you get up to?
- ☐ Which teacher do you still remember, and why?
- ☐ What did you do for fun as a teenager?
- ☐ What music did you love, and where did you go dancing?
- ☐ What did you want to be when you grew up?

Work

- ☐ What was your first job, and what did you spend your first pay on?
- ☐ What jobs have you had since?
- ☐ What work are you proudest of?
- ☐ Who was the best boss or workmate you ever had?
- ☐ What did work teach you?

Love and family

- [ ] How did you meet your partner?
- [ ] What do you remember about your wedding day, or the day you knew?
- [ ] What do you remember about becoming a parent?
- [ ] What traditions did your family have?
- [ ] What's the funny family story that always gets told?

Places and times

- [ ] Where have you lived, and which place felt most like home?
- [ ] What big events in history do you remember living through?
- [ ] What's changed most in your lifetime?
- [ ] What trip or adventure do you still think about?
- [ ] Tell me about your first car.
- [ ] What did things cost when you were young?

Life lessons

- [ ] What are you proudest of in your life?
- [ ] What was the hardest time, and how did you get through it?
- [ ] Who influenced you the most?
- [ ] What would you tell your 20-year-old self?
- [ ] What do you believe in most?

For your family

- [ ] What would your grandchildren be surprised to know about you?
- [ ] What did you sacrifice for your family?
- [ ] What lessons do you want to pass on?
- [ ] What do you hope your family remembers about you?
- [ ] What would you like to say to each of them?
- [ ] Have you told them lately how much you love them?

YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

Add your own

Anything else you’d love your family to know? Write it here.

Rather talk than film? Call Michael on 0481 344 604. A chat is always free.

WANT IT DONE FOR YOU?

Your story, made into a film your family will treasure

Recording yourself is a wonderful start. But talking to a phone on your own isn't always easy. With a little help, your stories become something your family will watch again and again. That's where I come in.

In their own words

"Doing this interview, I found that I have thought about things that just put a smile on my face. Memories have popped up that I forgot I even had."

— Rosemary, 76

"Some families wouldn't have a clue what their parents did. That is why it is so important to film your life story while you still can."

— Robina, 77

"I lived with my grandparents, yet I know nothing about them. Filming your life story has to do someone some good. You have wisdom and lessons to pass on."

— John, 87

"I can't thank you enough, Michael. You've been a blessing to me, and you have no idea what you have just done for me and other people."

— George, 62

THE EASIER WAY

You just talk. I’ll do the rest.

Recording yourself is a lovely start. But if it starts to feel like hard work, this is exactly what I’m here for.

What I take care of

- **A guided conversation**
  I ask the questions and gently guide you, so all you do is talk.
- **Filmed in your own home**
  Proper lighting, sound and cameras, set up in your lounge room.
- **A finished film, not raw footage**
  Edited with music and your photos woven through it.
- **Easy to keep and share**
  On a keepsake USB, plus a private link for the whole family.

Simple, gentle and completely guided

1. **A free phone chat**
   Call me and we’ll talk about what you’d like. No obligation.
2. **A visit to get to know you**
   I come to you, and we choose the stories and photos together.
3. **A relaxed filming day at home**
   I ask the questions, you just talk. With breaks and a cuppa.
4. **Your film, ready to share**
   In 3–4 weeks, on a keepsake USB and a private link.

READY FOR A HAND?

Book your free, no-obligation chat

Options to suit different budgets. I come to you, anywhere across Victoria.

Call or text Michael

0481 344 604

michael@dearfamilyfilms.com.au
dearfamilyfilms.com.au

Scan to see our films

CHRISTMAS GIFT BONUS

Call Michael, or text the word **CHRISTMAS**, by 8 November for 20% off the Keepsake or Legacy Package.

Show this guide to your children or grandchildren. You might be surprised how much they'd love to hear your stories.

