

IDEAS FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

GENERAL QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS FAMILY HISTORY PROJECTS:

- Think back to when you were a child. Can you think of a time when you felt very special? Tell me about that time:
- What tradition was important in your family when you were growing up? Tell me about it.
- Share a time when you made a mistake that ended up being a good learning experience:
- Do you think you have ever witnessed a miracle? If so, tell me about it:
- What is your favorite Jewish holiday? Tell me how you celebrate this holiday and why you like it:
- What would you say is special about your family?
- What do you know about your family name? Are there stories about its history or origins?
- Share a story that has come down to you about your parents or grandparents?
- Share a story about how your family first came to the United States:
- Do you know any courtship stories? (about you, a parent, grandparent or other relatives- how they met and married)
- Share an ethical value or motto that helps guide your life. Why is it important to you?

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

- Who has been the most important person in your life? Can you tell me about him or her?
- What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you in your life?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
- What is your earliest memory?
- What is your favorite memory of me?
- What are the funniest or most embarrassing stories your family tells about you?
- If you could hold on to just one memory from your life forever, what would that be?
- If this was to be our very last conversation, what words of wisdom would you want to pass on to me?
- What are you proudest of in your life?

- When in life have you felt most alone?
- What are your hopes and dreams for what the future holds for me? For my children?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- How would you like to be remembered?
- Do you have any regrets?
- What does your future hold?
- Is there anything that you've never told me but want to tell me now?
- Is there something about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked?
- Is there any message you want to give to or anything you want to say to your great-great-great grandchildren when they listen to this?

FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES

- If you could interview anyone from your life living or dead, but not a celebrity, who would it be and why?
- What is your first memory of me?
- How would you describe me? How would you describe yourself?
- Is there anything that you've always wanted to tell me but haven't?

GRANDPARENTS

- Where did you grow up?
- Can you share a favorite memory from your childhood?
- Who were your favorite relatives? Why?
- Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?
- How did you and grandma/grandpa meet?
- What was my mom/dad like growing up? Can you share a funny story about him/her?
- Was she/he well-behaved?
- What is the worst thing she/he ever did?
- What were your parents like? Share a story about them.
- What were your grandparents like? Share a memory about them.
- Are you proud of me?

RAISING CHILDREN

- When did you first find out that you'd be a parent? How did you feel?
- Can you describe the moment when you saw your child for the first time?
- How has being a parent changed you?
- What are your dreams for your children?
- Do you have any favorite stories about your kids?

PARENTS

- Do you remember what was going through your head when you first saw me?
- How did you choose my name?
- What was I like as a baby? As a young child?
- Do you remember any of the songs you used to sing to me? Can you sing them now?
- What are your dreams for me?
- How did you meet mom/dad?
- Are you proud of me?

GROWING UP

- How was your relationship with your parents?
- Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?
- Do you have any siblings? What were they like growing up?
- What did you look like?
- How would you describe yourself as a child? Were you happy?
- What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
- Did you have a nickname? How'd you get it?
- Who were your best friends? What were they like?
- How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
- What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your childhood?

SCHOOL

- Did you enjoy school?
- What kind of student were you?
- What would you do for fun?
- How would your classmates remember you?
- Are you still friends with anyone from that time in your life?
- What are your best memories of grade school/high school/college/graduate school? Worst memories?
- Was there a teacher or teachers who had a particularly strong influence on your life? Tell me about them.
- Do you have any favorite stories from school?

WORKING

- What do you do for a living?
- Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
- Do you like your job?
- What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?

RELIGION

- Can you tell me about your religious beliefs/spiritual beliefs?
- Have you experienced any miracles?
- What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life?
- Do you believe in God?

FAMILY HERITAGE

- 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?

Adapted from: <http://storycorps.org/great-questions/#heritage>